

RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

Activity Guide for Recreation Leaders

Asset-Building Nutritional and
Physical Activity Program Ideas
for Children Ages 6 to 12



CONTENTS

Introduction	1	Commitment to Learning.....	45
How to Use this Guide.....	2	Activity #17: Move Like an Animal	45
Canada's Guide to Healthy Living.....	2	Activity #18: The Digestive Tunnel	46
The 40 Developmental Assets	3	Activity #19: Stick to Healthy Choices	47
The Power of the 40 Assets	3	Bonus Activity #20: Have You Ever Tried This?	52
The 40 Developmental Asset Framework	3	Activity Sheet #5: Look What I Know!	53
Assets and Positive Health Promotion	4	Newsletter #5: Committing to Learning More	54
Build Assets Every Day	4	Positive Values.....	56
40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood	5	Activity #21: Valuing Physical Activity.....	56
Support	6	Activity #22: Fill Your Bucket Well.....	57
Activity #1: Follow the Leader to Move Your Body	6	Activity #23: It All Matters	58
Activity #2: Lots of Food Choices.....	7	Bonus Activity #24: Caring Hands	59
Activity #3: Support Around Us	8	Activity Sheet #6: How I Value Health	60
Bonus Activity #4: On the Right Track	9	Newsletter #6: Teaching Positive Values	61
Activity Sheet #1: Lots of Great Support	12	Social Competencies	63
Newsletter #1: Supporting Each Other	13	Activity #25: Move a Little More	63
Empowerment	15	Activity #26: Nutrition Facts	70
Activity #5: Star Kids	15	Activity #27: So Tired.....	72
Activity #6: Eating Throughout the Day	17	Bonus Activity #28: Diverse Snacks.....	73
Activity #7: Every Step Counts	22	Activity Sheet #7: As Easy as One, Two, Three.....	74
Bonus Activity #8: Filling a Food Bank.....	23	Newsletter #7: Building Essential Skills	75
Activity Sheet #2: Empowered by Healthy Choices	24	Positive Identity	77
Newsletter #2: Empowering Each Other	25	Activity #29: Fortunately, Unfortunately	77
Boundaries and Expectations.....	27	Activity #30: A Healthy Me	78
Activity #9: Use It or Lose It	27	Activity #31: What's Good for Me.....	71
Activity #10: How Much?	28	Bonus Activity #32: A Fun Purpose	82
Activity #11: Stomp Out Bad Health Habits	29	Activity Sheet #8: Star Qualities	83
Bonus Activity #12: A Healthy Role Model	30	Newsletter #8: Helping Kids Build a Strong Sense of Self	84
Activity Sheet #3: A Step in the Right Direction	31	Appendices.....	86
Newsletter #3: Setting Boundaries and Expectations.....	32	Handout #1: Canada's Guide to Healthy Living	86
Constructive Use of Time	34	Handout #2: The Truth about Eating Healthy and Staying Active	87
Activity #13: The Power of Music	34	Handout #3: Stay Active Together	88
Activity #14: Sandwich	35	Handout #4: Eat Healthy Together	89
Activity #15: Where, Oh Where?.....	36	Handout #5: A Worthwhile Activity	90
Bonus Activity #16: Health Emphasis	41	Handout #6: 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood	94
Activity Sheet #4: About YMCA Activities	42		
Newsletter #4: Doing Constructive Activities.....	43		

INTRODUCTION

Sometimes it's easy to picture where we want children at our YMCA and in our community to go. We want them to be fit. We want them to make healthy eating choices. We want them to be active. We want them to be a healthy weight.

- But the vision we have for the future isn't always what we see right now.
- Childhood obesity rates in Canada are rising.
- Research shows that Canadian children are less active today than they were 10 years ago.
- Children may find TV, computer games, and video games more exciting than physical activity.
- Fast food and unhealthy food are available everywhere.

Despite the current trends, we can educate children to take a different path—a healthy path. We can provide asset-building activities that help children in our YMCA make better eating choices and engage this age group to be more physically active (and help them stay physically active if they already are).

Raising Healthy Kids: Activity Guide for Recreation Leaders can help you do all that. This guide is about:

- Doing simple, creative activities that promote better nutrition and physical activity.
- Having fun while children learn more about healthy choices.
- Building Developmental Assets, which help all kids to succeed.
- Getting kids excited about making healthy choices.

Raising healthy kids is about helping 6- to 12-year olds make healthy food and activity choices while also supporting them to make positive choices that help them succeed in life. This guide not only promotes positive health behaviours, but it also builds other essential skills that kids need to succeed.

How to Use this Guide

This *Raising Healthy Kids: Activity Guide for Recreation Leaders* provides 32 ready-to-use asset-building activities, eight activity sheets, eight newsletters, and six handouts that encourage elementary-age children to eat healthy and be physically active. The guide is divided into eight sections for the eight categories of assets. These eight sections include the asset categories of: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

Depending on the length of your program, consider focusing on one asset category at a time. Highlight the eight categories of assets over an eight-week period. For example, do activities on the support assets the first week (activities #1-#4), the empowerment assets the second week (activities #5-#8), and so on. If you have a shorter timeframe, focus on two categories each week over the course of four weeks.

If possible, do a weekly reinforcement of the previous week's learning since the typical individual needs to hear something six times before the learning is stored into his or her memory.

Each asset-building section includes four activities, an activity sheet, and a newsletter to send home with children to use with their families:

1. The first activity focuses on physical activity.
2. The second activity highlights a nutrition activity.
3. The third activity emphasizes both physical activity and nutrition.
4. The fourth activity is a bonus activity that is optional. This activity requires more preparation, such as a longer period of time, more materials, or the recruitment of an additional volunteer. Although these bonus activities may require more work, the dividends they provide are great.

The activity sheet is something you can use during your program at your YMCA. Or you may want to send the activity sheet home with children to use with their families. Use the activity sheet to reinforce what you're teaching children through the activities.

The Ideas for Healthy Families newsletter gives creative, practical ways for families to get active together, eat healthier together, and build Developmental Assets. Encourage families to use the newsletters so that they can emphasize healthy habits together and reinforce what you're teaching in your program.

The appendices include six handouts that families can use to eat healthier and stay active. Distribute these handouts so that

parents can work with you to reinforce the behaviours children are learning in your YMCA program. If you wish to have an even greater impact, consider having a parent meeting—or individually seek out parents one by one to talk about the importance of healthy eating and staying active. Some YMCA leaders create a parent session where they also introduce parents to the 40 Developmental Asset framework. They distribute the list of 40 Developmental Assets (which is included in this guide) and show how building assets also promotes healthy living.

Canada's Guide to Healthy Living

Healthy Living: Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity by Health Canada outlines what children need to be healthy. The guide focuses on nutrition and physical activity.

For healthy eating, Health Canada recommends having:

- Five to 12 servings of grains each day,
- Five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits every day,
- Two to four servings (depending on your age) of milk products each day, and
- Two to three servings of meats and alternatives every day.

The number of servings depend on your age, how physically active you are, your gender, and your body size. For example, children up to age 9 are encouraged to have two to three servings of milk products every day. Young people between the ages of 10 and 16 are encouraged to have three to four servings.

For physical activity, Health Canada suggests choosing a variety of activities from these three groups:

- Strength activities for two to four days a week.
- Endurance activities for four to seven days a week.
- Flexibility activities for to four to seven days a week.

Health Canada recommends accumulating 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy. The time needed depends on the amount of effort the physical activity requires. For example, children can do 30 minutes of physical activity a day as long as the activity is vigorous, such as playing basketball or hockey. Sixty minutes is suggested for physical activity that requires less effort, such as light walking and stretching. Experts suggest that individuals add up their activity in at least 10-minute time periods.

For a copy of *Healthy Living: Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*, visit www.eatwellbeactive.gc.ca. This web site also includes more information about healthy eating and physical activity.

THE 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS

Although eating well and being physically active help children thrive, kids also need Developmental Assets to grow up well. Researchers at the Minneapolis-based Search Institute have surveyed more than 2.2 million young people in Canada and the United States since 1989 to see what they need to succeed. Through this extensive research, researchers have identified 40 Development Assets that are proven to raise children well.

The Power of the 40 Assets

Researchers have found that young people who have more Developmental Assets are:

- **More likely to act in positive ways that we value**—such as maintaining good health, helping others, and exhibiting leadership.
- **Less likely to get into trouble**—such as having problems at school, getting into fights, and using tobacco.
- **More likely to bounce back after difficulty**—such as dealing with a bully, getting injured, coping with the death of a grandparent, or having parents divorce.

The core message of asset building is that the more assets a child has, the more likely he or she will grow up well. Children with at least 31 of the 40 Developmental Assets are more likely to thrive. They're less likely to get into trouble. They're more likely to be resilient when difficulties arise.

Although this sounds simple, it actually is not. In surveying more than 2.2 million young people, researchers have found that only eight percent of kids have 31 or more assets. The average young person has only 18.6 assets.

The 40 Developmental Asset Framework

What are these 40 Developmental Assets? They are important factors, such as caring adults, child programs, and honesty. They are specific factors that you can build during your YMCA programs—and when you see children in your community.

The asset framework is a multifaceted vision of healthy child and adolescent development. It is a framework that shows what kids need to succeed from birth through age 18.

In the asset framework, the categories are organized along two key dimensions: external assets and internal assets.

External assets are factors that surround young people to guide them to behave in healthy ways and to make wise choices. These assets are provided by many people and organizations, including families, schools, your YMCA, neighbours, religious congregations, and other organizations. The first 20 Developmental Assets make up the external assets, and they're included in four categories: support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time.

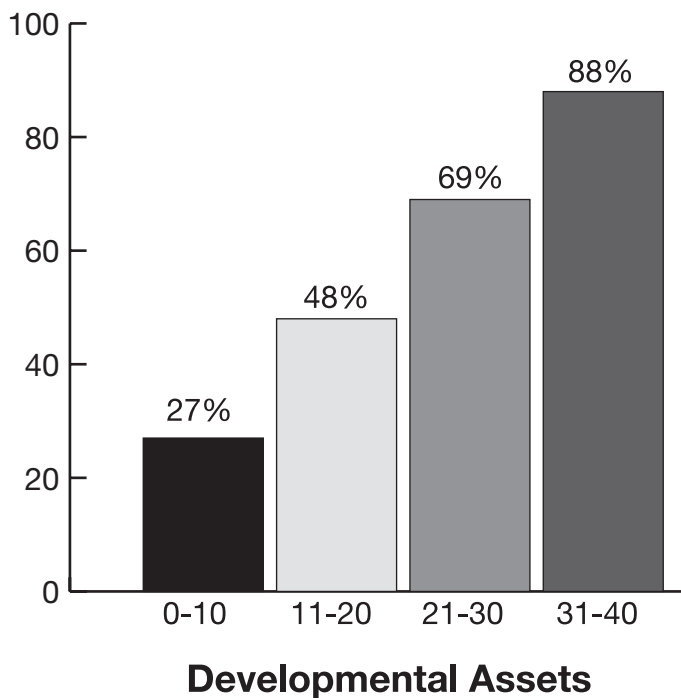
Internal assets are the commitments, values, competencies, and self-perceptions that must be nurtured within young people to give them “internal compasses” to guide their behaviours and choices. The other 20 Developmental Assets make up the internal assets, and they're included in four categories: commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, and positive identity.

See the list 40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood. Post this list, and use it in your programming and in your daily interactions with young people.

Assets and Positive Health Promotion

The 40 Developmental Assets clearly make a difference in helping kids make positive health choices. When researchers examined kids with 10 Developmental Assets or less, they found that only 27 percent paid attention to healthy nutrition and exercise. Kids with more Developmental Assets made more healthy choices. Forty-eight percent of kids with 11 to 20 Developmental Assets valued healthy nutrition and physical activity. That percentage jumped to 69 percent of kids with 21 to 30 assets and 88 percent of kids with 31 to 40 Developmental Assets. (Learn more about the assets by visiting www.search-institute.org/assets.)

Making Healthy Choices by Developmental Asset Quartiles



Because of the power of Developmental Assets, researchers recommend that all kids have 31 or more of the Developmental Assets. As a YMCA leader, you can do a lot to build assets in children. This guide outlines how. In addition, you can connect with other asset builders in Canada. Sixteen asset-building community initiatives are building assets in Canada. (See www.search-institute.org/communities/canada.html for a community near you.)

The asset-building movement is growing in Canada. Currently 30 Canadian communities in seven provinces have researched the Developmental Asset levels of the young people in their area. Many of these communities are now doing creative things to raise healthy kids. (Learn more about Canadian asset-building champions at www.assetchampions.com. Click on ABC Stories.)

Many Canadian YMCAs are also building assets. YMCA Canada is part of the Abundant Assets Alliance, which is an alliance between YMCA Canada, Search Institute, and YMCA of the USA. For more information on asset building the YMCA way, visit www.abundantassets.org.

Build Assets Every Day

As you build Developmental Assets and encourage children to eat healthier and stay active, remember that you can go beyond your YMCA program to do more. Besides emphasizing asset building in your YMCA program, build assets when you see children outside of your program (and build assets in their parents). Learn children's names. Greet each child when you see him or her. Smile at children when you're walking down the hall—or when you're out in the community. Asset building is about valuing and caring about kids at all times, not just when they're in your programs. Children take note when you notice them at the grocery store, the community library, or your local park. Parents will be more likely to sign up their kids for more YMCA programs when you acknowledge them as well. Asset building is about making positive steps that continue to compound and grow. You can start building assets today and take positive steps to build strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
3. Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
4. Caring neighbourhood—Child experiences caring neighbours.
5. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. Community values children—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
8. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
9. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
10. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighbourhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
12. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighbourhood boundaries—Neighbours take responsibility for monitoring the child's behaviour.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behaviour.
15. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behaviour.
16. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
18. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in extra curricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
19. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
20. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
22. Learning engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
23. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time.
24. Bonding to adults at school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
25. Reading for pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

Positive Values

26. Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
27. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
28. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
29. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
30. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behaviour.
31. Healthy lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

Social Competencies

32. Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
33. Interpersonal competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
34. Cultural competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
35. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
38. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.
39. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
40. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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SUPPORT

The way we communicate, affirm, and interact with children highlights some of the concrete ways we support children. Ideally, children receive an abundance of support—not only from their families—but also from many people (both adults and their peers) across many settings, such as your YMCA, their school, their neighbourhood, their other programs, and their community.

Six developmental assets make up the category of support. These include:

Asset #1: Family support

Asset #2: Positive family communication

Asset #3: Other adult relationships

Asset #4: Caring neighbourhood

Asset #5: Caring school climate

Asset #6: Parent involvement in schooling

To build the support assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #1: Follow the Leader to Move Your Body

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Support

Age Group: Ages 6 to 10 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: None

Learning Outcomes: Children will take turns being a leader. Children will identify who encourages them to do physical activity

Activity: Explain that you're going to do an activity where you move in different ways. Have kids spread out around the room. Name different ways to move (one at a time):

- Zig zag as you run
- Hop
- Skip
- Run fast
- Walk backward slowly
- Move like you have one sore leg
- Run like you're being chased by a lion

Stop the activity. Explain that you're going to name one child at a time. When the child is named, he or she should yell out a way to move and everyone else will do what that child says.

Start the activity. Name one child at a time. Make it a point to name each child in the room at least once.

End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- How did you like being a leader to name a way to move? Probe and ask why they did or did not like being the leader.
- What do you like best about being active?
- Who encourages you to be active?
- How do others encourage you to be active?
- Which of the activities that we did today will you tell your family about? How can you try these at home with your family?

Activity Adaptation: If you have an older age group, such as children ages 10 to 12 years, create an obstacle course together. Have each child (either individually or in pairs) design one part of the obstacle course. Then put it all together and try it.

Activity #2: Lots of Food Choices

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Support

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: Small to medium-sized groups (12 children or fewer)

Materials Needed: Locations of your YMCA vending machines, water fountains and café (if your YMCA has one); paper; and pens.

Learning Outcome: Children will name people and places that support them to make good food choices

Activity: Give each child a piece of paper and a pen, marker or pencil. Have children write or draw pictures of what they usually pack for a school lunch (or what they eat if they go home for lunch).

When children finish, have them circle the healthy foods. Then ask:

- When you look at the number of circles that you have, are there a lot, some, or a little?
- What do you do right in planning healthy menus?
- How could you make your lunches healthier?

If your YMCA has vending machines, have your group visit the vending machines and identify the healthy food and drink choices. If children wish there were more healthy choices, ask them for ideas and write them on a list.

Ask:

- When you buy something from a vending machine, what do you usually buy? Why?
- How hard is it to make healthy choices with vending machine food and drinks? Why?

If your YMCA has water fountains, have your group find each one. Encourage children to use these drinking fountains when they're thirsty. (If any water fountains aren't working properly, make a note of that on your list.)

If your YMCA has a café, visit it. Look at the food and drink choices. Ask children questions such as these:

- Overall, how would you label the choices: healthy or unhealthy? Why?
- What other healthy choices would you like to see at the café?
- How often do you visit the café? Why?

End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- What helps you make good food choices?
- Which people encourage you to make good food choices?
- How can we support each other to make more good food choices?
- How can you talk to your families about making good food choices?

Activity Adaptation: If you want the children to give feedback to your YMCA, create an activity where they use postcards. Encourage children to name at least one good thing that your YMCA is doing in regards to nutrition. If they wish to make a suggestion, encourage them to write it in a way that's positive.

A postcard to your YMCA could say, "I like how you have healthy foods in our vending machines. Could you add Fig Newtons®, low-fat popcorn, low-fat granola bars or fruit bars as another healthy choice?"

Hand deliver any postcards to your YMCA General Manager, Centre Manager or CEO. If you made notes about drinking fountains that aren't working, contact your maintenance staff.

Activity #3: Support Around Us

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Support

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A beanbag (or make your own beanbag by placing dried beans into a sock and closing it with a knot)

Learning Outcome: Children will name individuals who want them to eat healthy and be active

Activity: If you have 12 or more children present, create two or three groups of six to 10 children. Have children sit in a circle. Give one child in each group a beanbag. Say something like, “A lot of people want us to eat healthy and to be active. When you’re ready to toss the beanbag to someone in the circle, name one person who wants you to eat healthy or to be active.”

Start the activity. Most children will probably name a parent, someone at your YMCA, or a teacher. When they get stuck, encourage them to think of other people such as aunts, uncles, grandparents, siblings, neighbours, and coaches.

End the activity by asking:

- Who gives you the most support to eat healthy? Why?
- Who gives you the most support to get exercise? Why?
- Why is it important to have people support you to eat healthy and be active?
- How can you support people in your family to eat healthy and be active? What’s one thing you can say today?

Activity Adaptation: If you have a group of older children (ages 10 to 12), adapt this activity to make it more complex. After naming individuals who support children to eat healthy or be active, have children name examples of what people say to be supportive. After a few children have done this, encourage the group to move faster, tossing the beanbag quickly and quickly naming examples of support.



Bonus Activity #4: On the Right Track

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Support

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: The accompanying Eat Right sheet, the accompanying Exercise Right sheet, markers, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that it is important to keep eating right and to keep active, not just do these activities once or once in a while

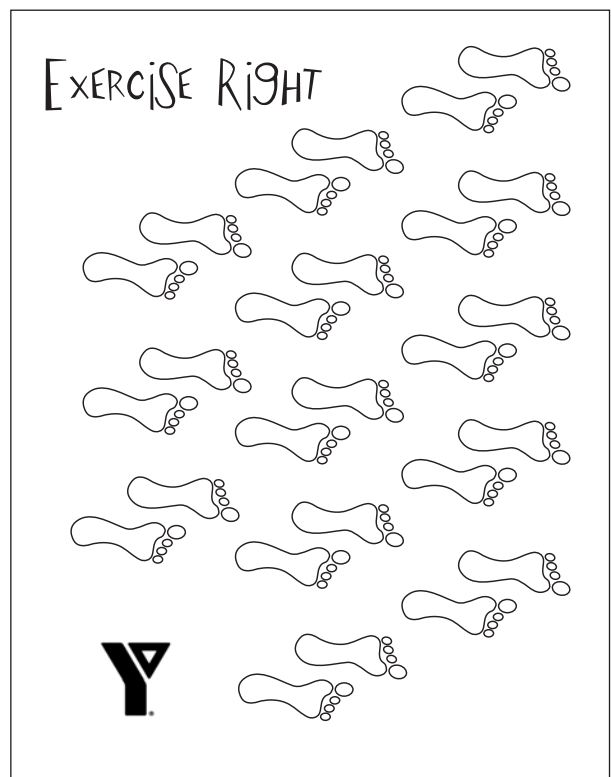
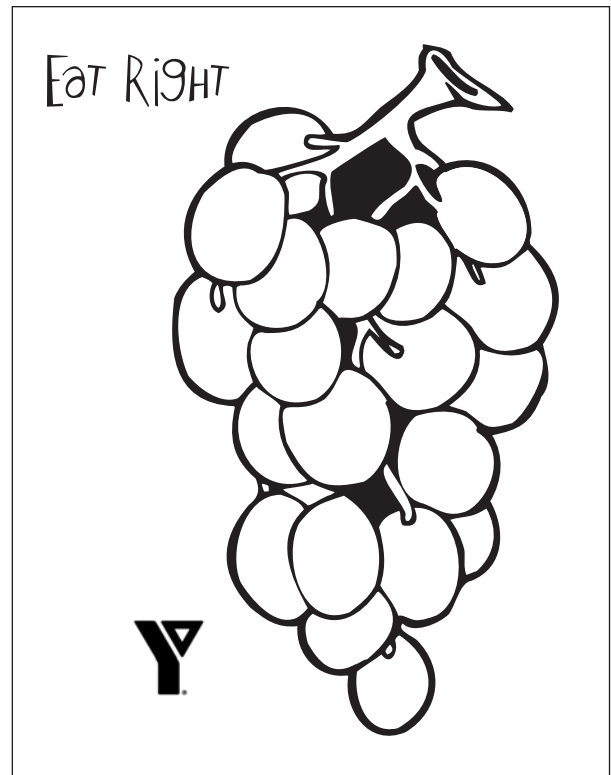
Activity: Post the accompanying Eat Right sheet and the accompanying Exercise Right on a wall or bulletin board. (Use masking tape to hang each sheet.) Have markers available for the kids to use. If you have a large group (12 children or more), post two Eat Right sheets and two Exercise Right sheets in your room.

Have kids identify one way they have eaten right lately. When they have thought of something, have them write their name in one of the grapes on the Eat Right sheet.

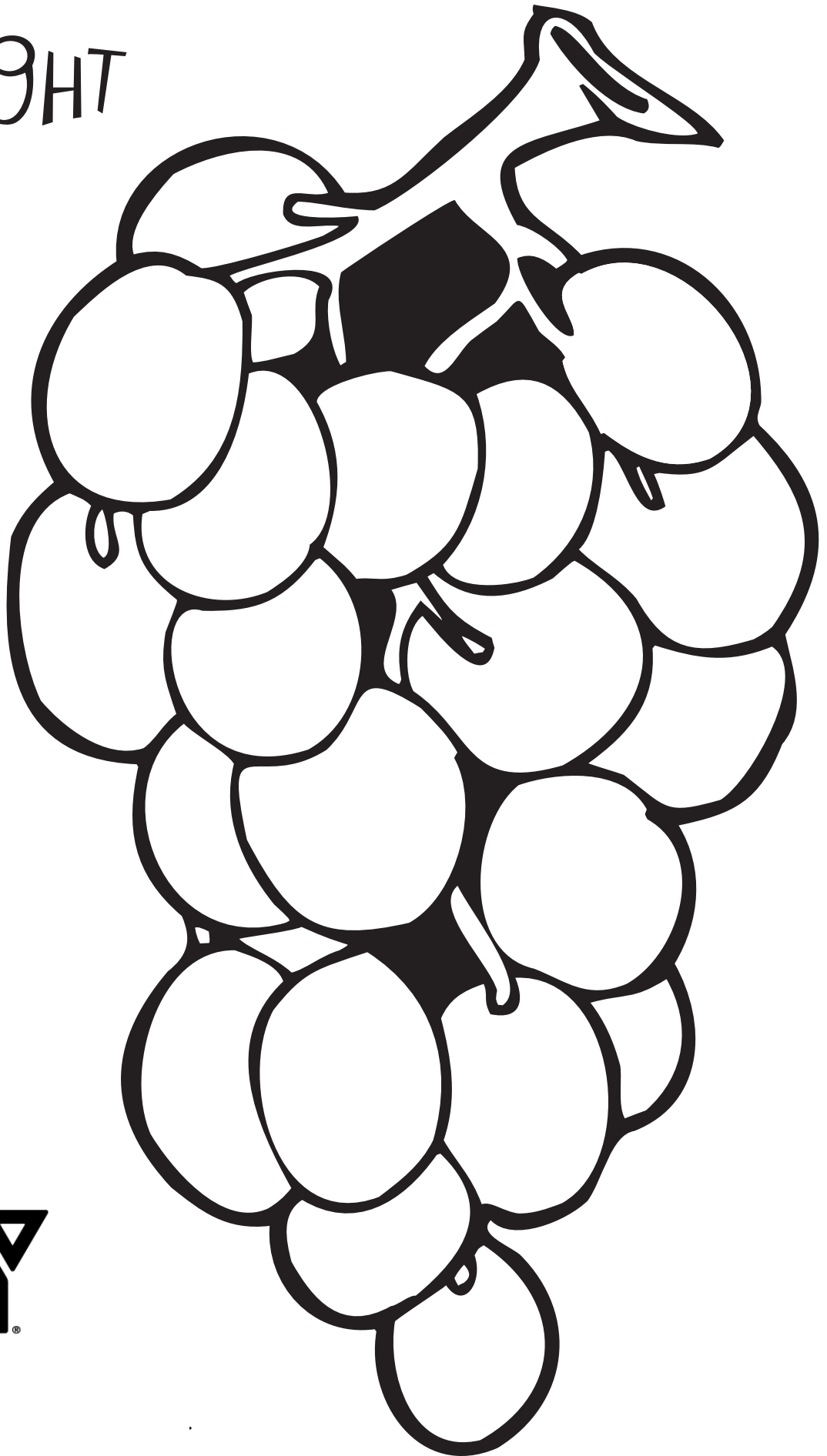
Then have kids identify one way they have been active lately. Have them write their name in one of the footprints on the Exercise Right sheet.

Keep the Eat Right and Exercise Right sheets posted. The next time you get together, repeat the activity again. See how long it takes to fill up all the grapes and the footprints.

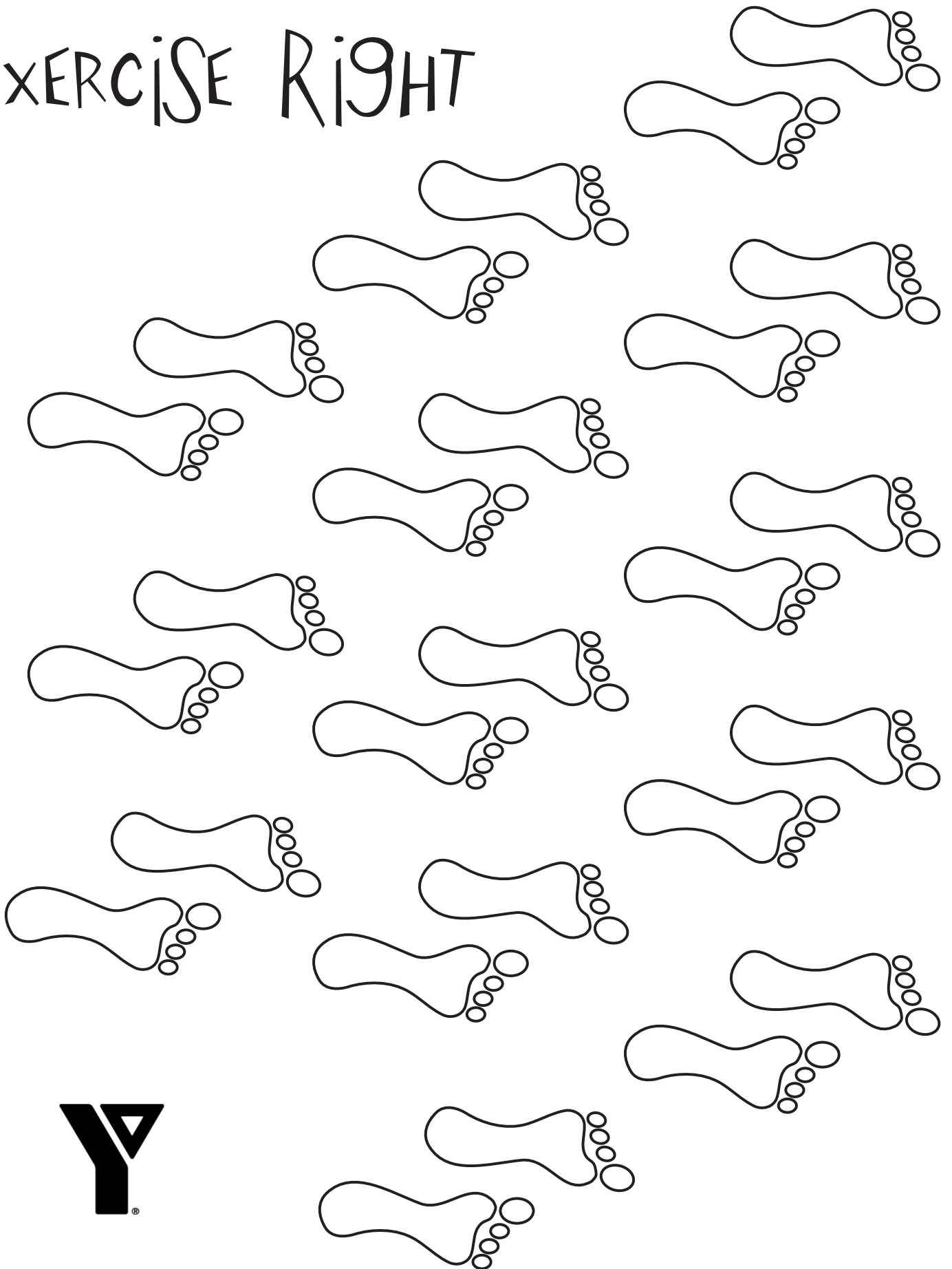
Activity Adaptation: After you complete this activity as a group, consider making copies of the Eat Right and Exercise Right sheets to send home with each child. Encourage children to use these sheets at home with their families.



Eat Right



EXERCISE RIGHT



Activity Sheet #1

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD SUPPORT ASSETS

Talk about Great Support


When you feel supported, you are more likely to eat healthy. You are also more likely to stay physically active. Complete this activity sheet to name ways that others help you to be healthy.

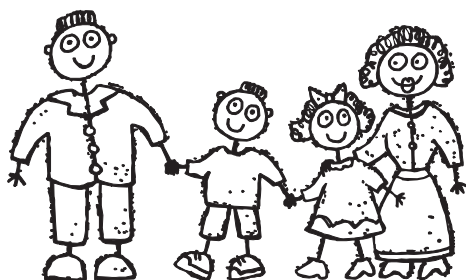
A Venn diagram consisting of three overlapping circles. The top-left circle is labeled "At Home", the top-right circle is labeled "At My YMCA", and the bottom circle is labeled "At My School". Each circle contains a small diamond shape for writing. The circles overlap in various combinations, creating a central area where all three overlap, and several other areas where two or one circle overlaps.

At Home

At My YMCA

At My School





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 1

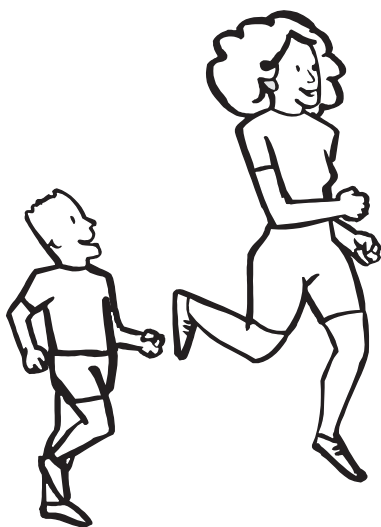


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Supporting Each Other

Healthy living is much easier when we have a lot of support. When family members encourage each other to eat healthy and to be active, we're more likely to make healthy choices. Support each other by:

- Talking about healthy choices.
- Setting family health goals, such as taking a family walk four to five times a week (or more).
- Asking each other questions about health.
- Sharing your successes and struggles.
- Spending time together.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Eat a meal together at the table. Keep the TV off.
- Cook a meal together.
- Enjoy an extra serving of vegetables today.
- Incorporate something from each food group in your dinner preparation. Talk about the food groups and what food represents each.
- Manage portion sizes. (The ideal plate = 1/2 fruits and vegetables, 1/4 grain products, 1/4 meat or an alternative and a glass of milk.)



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Take a family walk together.
- Chase each other around your home or neighbourhood.
- Visit a nearby park or playground.
- Encourage each other to be more active every day.



Quick Tip

Listen proactively

to what your

children have

to say and respond

to what they

have to say.



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. How can we best support each other to eat healthier?
2. Which physical activity would be fun to try as a family?
3. How can we help each other when we're tempted to make unhealthy choices?

Build Assets Together

Minneapolis-based Search Institute has identified 40 Developmental Assets that all kids need to succeed. Researchers have surveyed more than 2.2 million young people in Canada and the United States and have found that the more Developmental Assets that kids have, the more likely they are to make healthy choices.

Six Developmental Assets are key support assets. These include:

- #1 Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
- #2 Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
- #3 Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
- #4 Caring neighbourhood—Child experiences caring neighbours.
- #5 Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging environment.
- #6 Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

Support each other in making healthy food and exercise choices by building these six key assets.

GOOD NEWS

68% of kids say that they have asset #1: family support.

CHALLENGING NEWS

28% of kids say they have asset #2: positive family communication.

EMPOWERMENT

A key developmental need for children is to be valued and feel valuable. Children have a lot to contribute, and when we value their contributions, we empower them to develop into successful individuals.

Four developmental assets make up the category of empowerment. These include:

Asset #7: Community values children

Asset #8: Children as resources

Asset #9: Service to others

Asset #10: Safety

To build the empowerment assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #5: Star Kids

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Empowerment

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: The accompanying “I Can sheet,” markers, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will identify fun, easy ways they can get physical activity

Activity: Photocopy the “I Can sheet” so that each participant will have one. If possible, photocopy the sheet onto yellow paper.

Before you use the “I Can sheet,” have children spread out throughout the room. Explain that when you mention a physical activity, children should start to do it. Name an activity one at a time. You might like to demonstrate first so the children understand. Suggest activities such as these:

- I can run around the room.
- I can do sit-ups.
- I can jump.
- I can do push-ups.
- I can skip.
- I can walk backward.
- I can hop on my right foot.
- I can hop on my left foot.
- I can march.

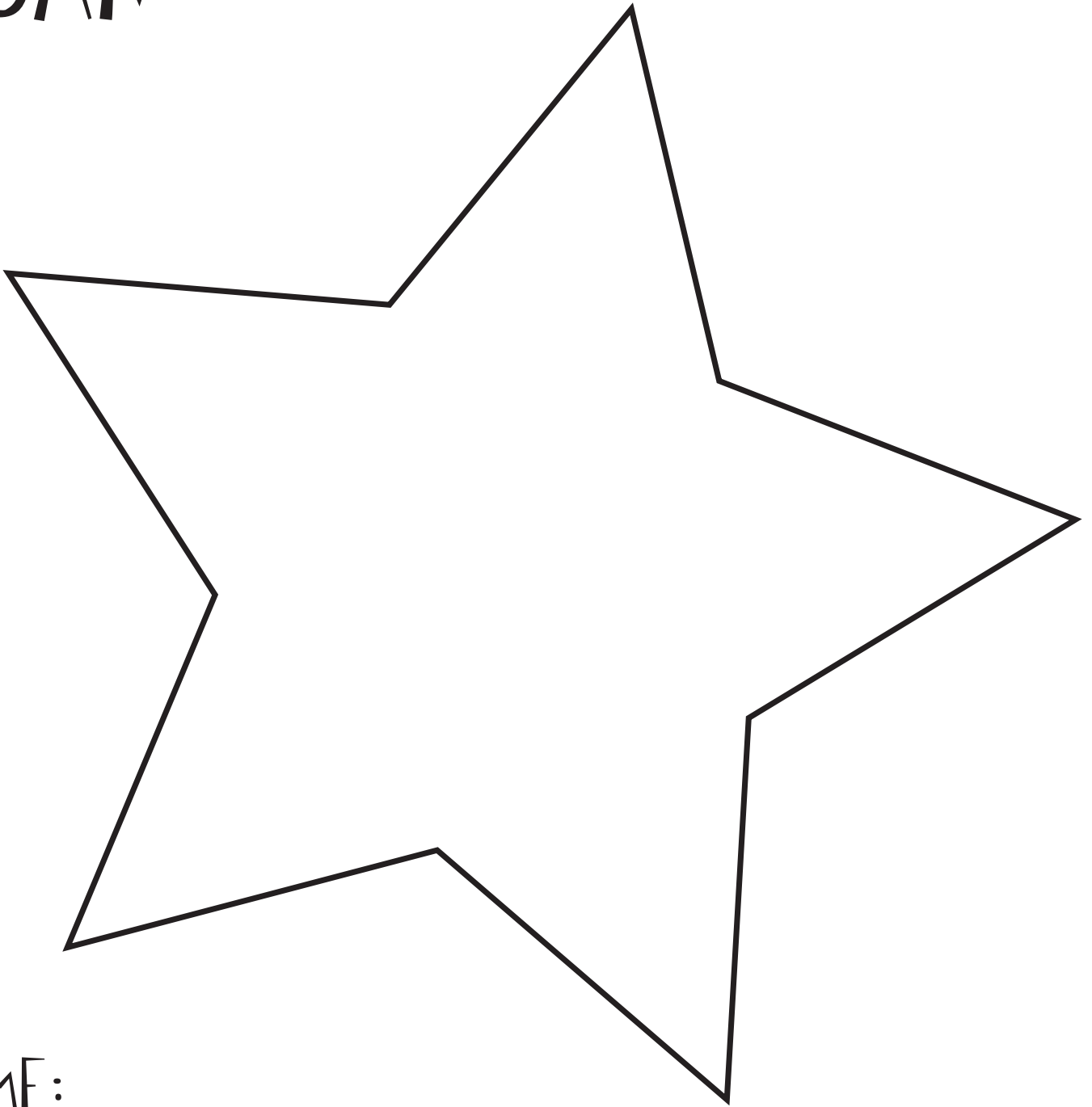
When you finish, have a brainstorming session with the children. Ask them for ideas of physical activities that they could do that they like. Examples might include playing at the park, skateboarding, hockey, Frisbee®, swimming, dancing, soccer, biking, basketball, lacrosse, and walking.

Give each child a copy of the “I Can sheet” and a marker. Have children add their names and a physical activity to the stars. (Encourage young children to draw a picture of the physical activity instead of writing it.) Then display the “I Can sheets” so that the children (and if possible, others at your YMCA) can see them.

Periodically check in with the kids to see how often they get to do the activity they mentioned. End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- How often do you get to do this activity?
- What do you like best about this activity?
- What would make it easier to do this activity more often?
- Which activity could you do with your family?

i CAN:



NAME:



Activity #6: Eating Throughout the Day

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Empowerment

Age Group: Ages 8 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A marker for each child, masking tape, the four accompanying sheets: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack

Learning Outcome: Children will identify foods they eat as healthy or unhealthy choices

Activity: Before you do the activity. Print out the four accompanying sheets: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and snack. If you have access to a photocopier with different coloured paper, photocopy the four accompanying sheets so that each one is on a different colour. Then hang the four sheets on four different walls of your program area.

Give each child a marker. Have a quarter of your group stationed at each sheet. Say something like, “When I tell you to start, think about what you ate for that meal or snack. Use the most recent meal or snack. For example, if you’re at the breakfast sheet, remember what you ate for breakfast. Let’s say you ate oatmeal, and you think oatmeal is a Great Choice. Then write oatmeal or draw a picture of oatmeal under the category of Great Choice. If, however, you skipped breakfast, you might write skipped breakfast or draw a big zero under the category of Will Choose Better Next Time. When you have finished writing or drawing, move clockwise to the next sheet and write on it. When you’re finished writing on all four sheets, come back to the middle.”

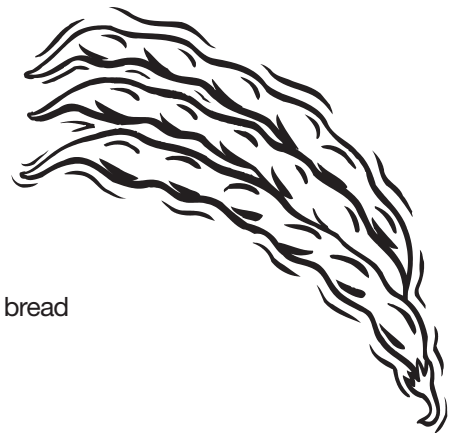


Do the activity. When everyone has finished, move the four sheets so that they’re side by side. End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- Which meal is easiest to eat healthy? Why?
- Which meal is easiest to eat unhealthy? Why?
- Is it easy to eat healthy snacks? Why or why not?
- Why is it better to label our not-so-good choices as Will Choose Better Next Time?
- How can we try to make more positive eating choices?
- What can we tell our families about eating healthy when we get home?

Alternative Activity: If you have younger children (children ages 6 to 8), consider doing this activity as an up-down activity. Have children spread throughout the room and squat. One at a time, name a food. If children think it is a healthy food choice, they should jump and stand. If they think it is an unhealthy food choice, they should sit down. Consider naming foods, such as these:

- Orange juice
- Potato chips
- Salad
- Ice cream
- Pop
- Apple
- Whole-wheat bread
- Doughnuts
- Yogourt
- Chicken
- Candy
- Cake
- Fish
- Milk
- French Fries
- Rice



BREAKFAST



Great Choice

Will Choose Better Next Time



Great Choice

Will Choose Better Next Time



Great Choice

Will Choose Better Next Time

SNACK



Great Choice

Will Choose Better Next Time

Activity #7: Every Step Counts

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Empowerment

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Lots of paper clips, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that everything they eat and every physical activity they do (or do not do) affects their health

Activity: Place a pile of paper clips in the middle of the group. Say something like, “Every time we eat right, we make good choices. Every time we are physically active, it matters.”

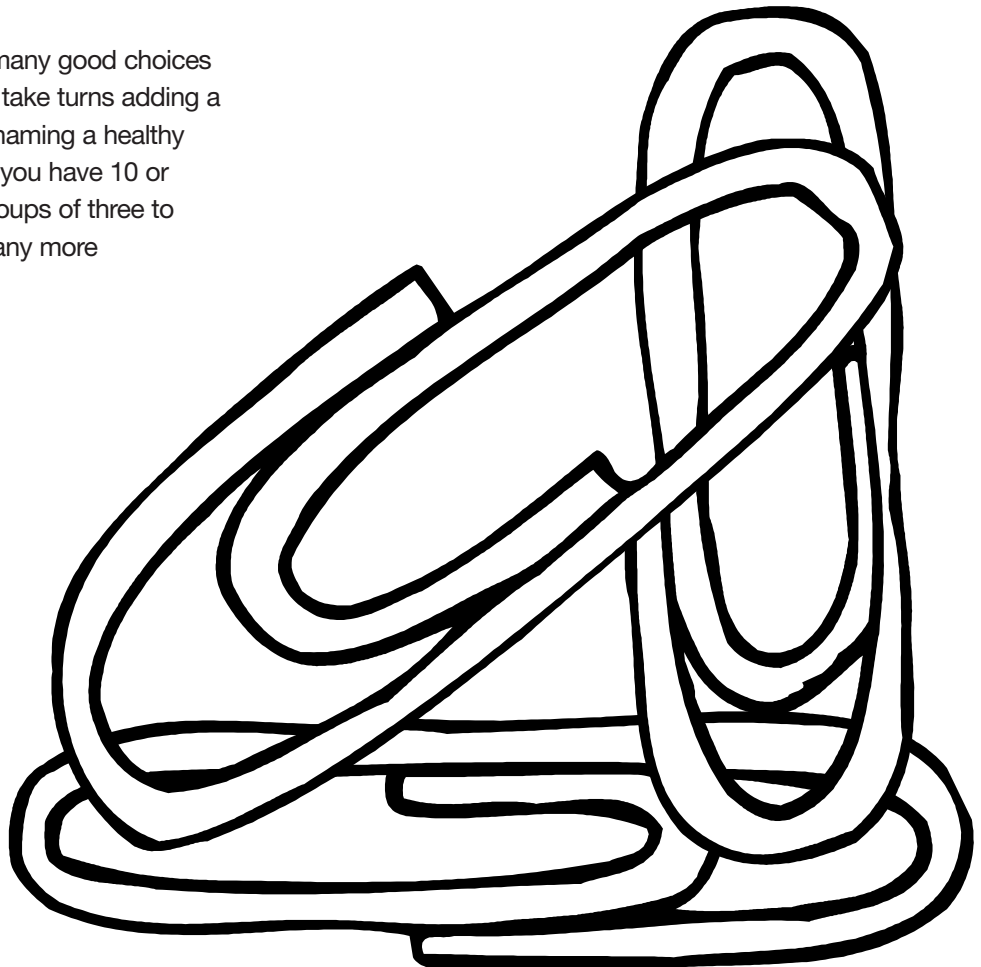
Hold up a paper clip in each hand. Say something like, “Today, I ate _____ (name a healthy food). That was a good choice.” Raise the paper clip in your left hand. Say something like, “Today, I _____ (name a physical activity that you did). That also was a good choice.” Raise the paper clip in your right hand. Then link the two paper clips together.

Say something like, “Let’s see how many good choices we’ve made lately.” Have each child take turns adding a paper clip or two to the chain while naming a healthy food or a healthy activity (or both). If you have 10 or more children present, form small groups of three to five children so children can have many more opportunities to participate.

End the activity by hanging up the paper-clip chain. Say something like, “When we make more healthy choices than unhealthy choices, that matters. Yes, sometimes we will eat food that isn’t the healthiest. Yes, sometimes, we’ll watch TV instead of exercising, but if we make more healthy choices than unhealthy choices, it all adds up.”

Optional: Consider adding paper clips to your chain each time you get together. See how long the chain can become. Or you can be creative and have the children make paper chains for this activity!

Activity Adaptation: If you have a group of older children (ages 10 to 12), consider having them visit other places in your YMCA to ask people about their healthy food choices. Have them explain that they’re making a paper-clip chain and that each paper clip represents a healthy food choice eaten. See how long the chain can get by involving more people in your YMCA.



Bonus Activity #8: Filling a Food Bank

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Empowerment

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Food donations from your YMCA or your program. (Optional: transportation to your local food bank)

Learning Outcome: Children can help people in need by making healthy food donations

Activity Adaptation: Consider having children in your program create a YMCA-wide food drive. Have children make posters to promote the event. Set up bins at the entrance and in key places of your YMCA. You also can create a one-page list of suggested donations, copy the list and post them on large paper bags for people to take home and fill with donations.

Activity: Encourage participants to bring healthy food donations to give to your local food bank. If possible, check with your local food bank to request a list of most-needed items. Most food banks like to receive canned fish (tuna, salmon), canned meat (corn beef etc.), beans, peanut butter, cereal, juices, pasta, canned vegetables, soups and canned fruit.

If possible, see if you can arrange for transportation so that the children can visit and volunteer at a local food bank. (Many children have participated in food drives, but few have actually volunteered at a food bank.)



EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD SUPPORT ASSETS

Making Healthy Choices

We eat healthy when we choose to eat healthy foods that we like. We stay active when we do physical activities that we love. In each object below, write your favourites.

My Favourite Team Sport



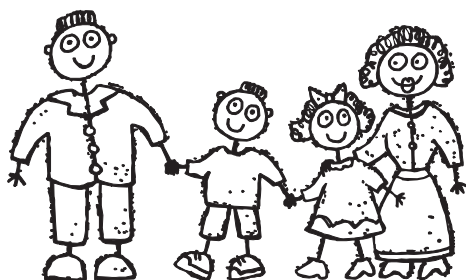
My Favourite Vegetable

My Favourite Fruit



My Favourite Physical Activity
to do with my Family





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 2



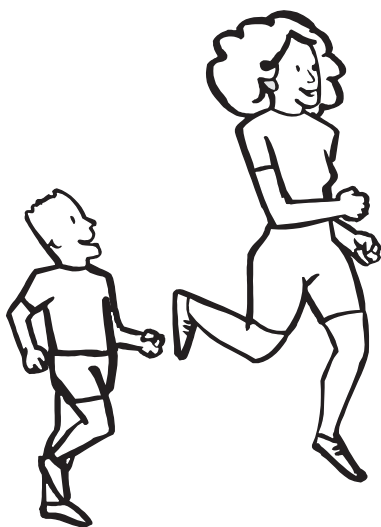
Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Empowering Each Other

When we feel empowered, we know we can do the right thing. When we act empowered, we do the right thing. We're more likely to eat healthy and get physical activity when we are empowered to make healthy choices.

Empower each other by:

- Learning how to cook something new together.
- Visiting the library and researching new ideas for family physical activity.
- Attending a YMCA family event.
- Turning a household chore into a physical activity, such as dancing as you dust.
- Naming ways you help each other feel valuable and empowered.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Try a new food that you've never tried before.
- Have the kids plan an upcoming meal (Don't forget to use Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating when planning. For a free copy, visit www.eatwellbeactive.gc.ca.)
- Drink more water and less pop.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Do something outside. Build a snow fort. Walk in the rain. Jog in the park. Rake leaves.
- Play a game of tag or hide and seek.
- Ask your child to make up a game. Play it together.



Quick Tip

**Ask your child for
an idea of how
to make healthier
choices as a family.
Follow through and
make the idea
become a reality.**



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. How can we empower each other to be more active?
2. Which community service project would be fun to try as a family?
3. How can we value the effort each family member is making to eat healthy?

Build Assets Together

Minneapolis-based Search Institute discovered that when kids have more assets, they're more likely to:

- Act in positive ways that we value (such as making good health choices and succeeding in school)
- Avoid or resist risky behaviours (such as hitting someone or getting into trouble)
- Bounce back after difficulty (such as coping after getting hurt or suffering a loss)

Four Developmental Assets are key empowerment assets. These include:

- #7** Community values children—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
- #8** Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
- #9** Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
- #10** Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in his or her neighbourhood.

Empower each other to make healthy food and exercise choices by building these four key assets.

GOOD NEWS

51% of kids say that they have asset #10: safety.

CHALLENGING NEWS

22% of kids say they have asset #7: community values youth.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Support and empowerment need to be balanced with consistent attention to boundaries and expectations. Children need clear messages about which standards are in bounds (such as respecting other people) and which standards are out of bounds (such as resolving conflicts aggressively). Not only do children need clear messages about boundaries and expectations, they also need adults who will monitor and enforce boundaries with appropriate discipline.

Six developmental assets make up the category of boundaries and expectations. These include:

- Asset #11: Family boundaries
- Asset #12: School boundaries
- Asset #13: Neighbourhood boundaries
- Asset #14: Adult role models
- Asset #15: Positive peer influence
- Asset #16: High expectations

To build the boundaries and expectations assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #9: Use It or Lose It

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Boundaries and Expectations

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A foam ball, masking tape, and one quarter coin for every six children

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that physical activity can keep their bodies healthy

Activity: Before you do the activity, tape one quarter to a foam ball with masking tape for every six children. Have children form a circle with each group having about six children.

Explain that you're going to play catch. Give one child the ball and have him or her throw it to someone across the circle. Most likely, the ball will not go where the child wanted it to go. Keep playing for a short while.

Say something like, "When we stop exercising and being physically active, our body becomes like this foam ball. Our

body starts to do things that we don't want it to do. It may get heavy. It may get sluggish. It may move slower than we're used to."

Ask a child to remove the quarter. Do the activity again.

End the activity by asking children questions such as these:

- How is the ball different without the quarter?
- How can we keep our bodies in good shape by getting physical activity on most days?
- Which easy, fun physical activities could we do to keep our bodies healthy?
- How can you keep your body healthy at home?

Activity #10: How Much?

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Boundaries and Expectations

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: None

Learning Outcome: Children will learn to discern which foods are healthier than others

Activity: Say something like, “It’s easy to label foods as good foods and bad foods. Yet, Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating says it’s more helpful to think about how much you eat of different kinds of foods. For example, it’s okay to eat a little of a chocolate bar as long as you’re eating a lot of vegetables. It’s also good to know that some healthy foods are better to eat in moderate amounts (or some amounts) rather than a lot of amounts. Canada’s Food Guide makes it clear by saying we should eat a lot of grains, vegetables, and fruit. We should eat moderate amounts of meat and milk products.”

Explain that you’re going to play a food game. Demonstrate three different stances: sitting down and curling up in a ball (which means a little), sitting tall (which means some), and standing up and spreading out your arms wide (which means a lot). Say that you are going to name a food and kids should do one of three stances: a little, some, or a lot.

After you name each item, ask children (who chose a different response) why they made their decision. You may have children choosing different postures for different reasons. (It’s okay if a child chooses A Little for a healthy food that he or she does not like.)

Name foods such as these:

- Salad
- Yogourt
- Chocolate
- Apple
- Pop
- Broccoli
- Peanut butter (Note: If you have any children with a peanut allergy, they may say that they shouldn’t eat any peanut butter or only a little, depending on the severity of their allergy.)
- Rice
- Ice cream (Note: Older children may say that a low-fat ice cream could be eaten since it is also a milk product.)
- Strawberry
- Candy
- Milk (Note: Some children may have a milk allergy.)
- Orange juice
- Tofu
- Carrots
- Fish (Note: Some children may have a fish allergy.)
- Potato chips
- Chicken
- Cereal
- Beans
- Doughnuts
- Bread (Note: Some children may have a wheat allergy.)

End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- How do you decide whether to eat something a lot, a little, or some?
- What do you do with a food that tastes good but you shouldn’t eat a lot of it?
- What do you do with a food that doesn’t taste good but is healthy for you?
- How can you eat a healthy diet?
- What can you tell your family today about eating a healthy diet?

Activity #11: Stomp Out Bad Health Habits

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Boundaries and Expectations

Age Group: Ages 6 to 10 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: None

Learning Outcome: Children will decide which habits are healthy or unhealthy

Alternative Activity: If you have an older group (with children ages 10 to 12 years), create small groups. Give each group paper and something to write with. Have groups divide the paper into two columns: healthy habits and unhealthy habits. Have groups list as many healthy habits and unhealthy habits as they can think of. When groups finish, compile the lists into one long list. Ask questions such as these: How many habits were named? Which list was easier to create: healthy habits or unhealthy habits? What can we learn from this?

Activity: Say something like, “There are a lot of things that can get in the way of eating healthy and getting physical activity. What are some of those things?” Encourage children to name a lot of examples, such as unhealthy food tasting good, TV, too easy to eat fast food, video games, some physical activities are boring, being tired, not having time to eat, computer, being too busy, etc.

Have the children spread out around the room. Say that you’re going to play a game. When you name an unhealthy habit, children should stomp around the room, like they’re stomping out the unhealthy habit. When you name a healthy habit, children should skip and clap around the room.

Play the game. Name habits such as these:

- Watching TV all Saturday morning (Stomp.)
- Eating salad (Clap and skip.)
- Drinking water (Clap and skip.)
- Skipping being active (Stomp.)
- Eating fast food (Stomp.)
- Eating food from the four food groups (Clap and skip.)
- Skipping breakfast (Stomp.)
- Going outside to play (Clap and skip.)
- Inviting a friend over to play together (Clap and skip.)
- Drinking a lot of pop (Stomp.)
- Not eating the vegetables on your plate (Stomp.)
- Going for a walk with your family (Clap and skip.)

Bring children together. Say something like, “This week, let’s stomp out unhealthy habits. Instead, let’s make healthy choices that are worth clapping and skipping about.”



Bonus Activity #12: A Healthy Role Model

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Boundaries and Expectations
(Asset #14: Adult Role Models)

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A volunteer guest who would be willing to talk about the impact of being active and eating well on their life. Some volunteers to consider might be someone who is active at your YMCA such as a nutritionist, a teacher, a firefighter, police officer, physician, an elite athlete who trains at your YMCA or a member who has a great story to share.

Learning Outcome: Adults teach children about health by the examples they set. Children will see and hear a positive health role model

Activity: Invite a volunteer to speak to the children about being a healthy role model. Encourage children to ask questions. Some helpful questions could include:

- How do you keep making healthy choices when you don't feel like it?
- Has there ever been a time when you made more unhealthy choices than healthy choices? What happened?
- How do you make time for physical activity and healthy eating?

If possible, see if your volunteer can lead children in a nutrition activity or physical activity. A police officer or athlete, for example, could lead the children in a makeshift training obstacle course. A nutritionist could help the children prepare a healthy snack.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"Young people don't need critics. They need role models."

- John Wooden

"The object of teaching a child is to enable him to get along without his teacher."

- Elbert Hubbard

"If you must raise your voice, do it to cheer someone on."

- Anonymous

"There is no doubt that a small group of people can change the world.

In fact, it is the only thing that ever has."

- Margaret Mead

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD SUPPORT ASSETS

A Step In The Right Direction

Eating healthy and getting regular physical activity requires that we take a step in the right direction. That also means that sometimes we have to take a step away from things that get in our way. In the footprints below, write an example of what keeps you on track to eat healthy and to get physical activity.

Take a step toward healthy eating

Idea #1—Eating Healthy

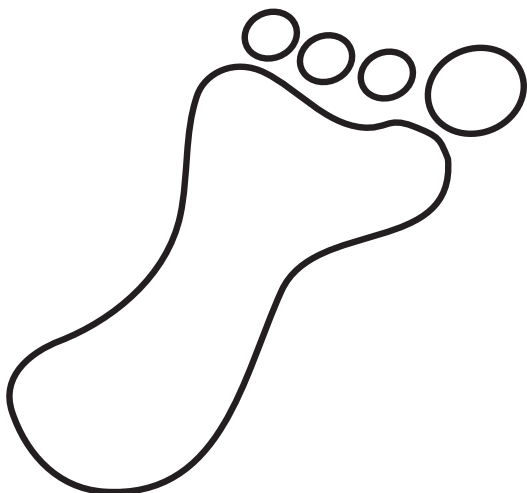


Idea #2—Eating Healthy



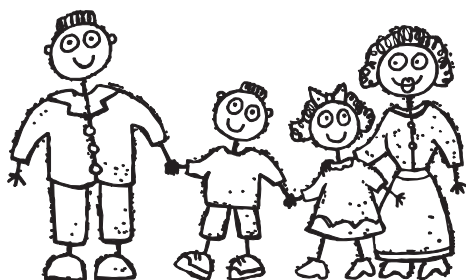
Take a step toward physical activity

Idea #1—Getting Physical Activity



Idea #2—Getting Physical Activity





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES!

NEWSLETTER # 3

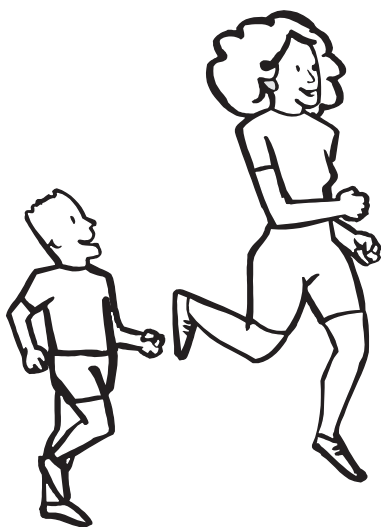


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Setting Boundaries and Expectations

A key component to eating healthy and getting physical activity involves setting boundaries and expectations. Kids (and adults) need to know what's healthy, what's not—and what's okay to do occasionally. Consider trying these ideas:

- Be clear about boundaries. Set time limits for TV viewing, computer use, and other electronic devices. It's ideal to do something else after every 30 minutes to an hour.
- Buy more vegetables, fruits, low-fat cheeses, and crackers for snacks. Avoid buying junk food.
- Identify your three favourite family physical activities. Do them on a regular basis. Choosing what's good for you is as important as a boundary as knowing what's not good for you.
- Eat three meals a day. Try to eat meals together as a family as often as you can.
- Serve healthy snacks, such as low-fat popcorn and low-fat granola bars.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Prepare a meal from another country or culture. (Your local library will have recipe books.)
- Clean out a food cupboard, refrigerator, or freezer. Toss expired and unhealthy foods.
- Set out a fruit bowl on your table with apples, oranges, and bananas.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Race to the bus stop or car together. Skip. Hop. Make up a game as you wait for the bus.
- Go bowling.
- Make TV watching more active. Get up during every commercial and do jumping jacks or dance. Do leg lifts or curl ups while you watch a show.



Quick Tip

Get to know your children's friends.

Find out what they do to eat healthy and stay active.



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. What gets in the way of us eating healthy? What about getting physical activity?
2. How can we ensure that we eat five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits every day?
3. Who is a positive role model for healthy eating and exercise?

Build Assets Together

The asset categories of support and empowerment are even more effective when kids also have assets that emphasize boundaries and expectations. Family members need to know what's in bounds for healthy choices (eating foods from the four groups and getting physical activity every day) and what's out of bounds (watching too much TV and eating a lot of junk food).

Six Developmental Assets are key boundaries and expectations assets. These include:

- #11 Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
- #12 School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
- #13 Neighbourhood boundaries—Neighbours take responsibility for monitoring the child's behaviour.
- #14 Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behaviour.
- #15 Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behaviour.
- #16 High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do his or her best at school and in other activities.

Set clear boundaries and expectations to eat healthy and to stay active by building these six key assets.

GOOD NEWS

63% of kids say that they have asset #15: positive peer influence.

CHALLENGING NEWS

27% of kids say they have asset #14: adult role models.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

Children are more likely to thrive when they're involved in constructive activities. Ideally, these activities will connect children to principled, caring adults who nurture their skills and creativity through stimulating activities, lessons, and supervision.

Four developmental assets make up the category of constructive use of time. These include:

Asset #17: Creative activities

Asset #18: Child programs

Asset #19: Religious community

Asset #20: Time at home

To build the constructive use of time assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #13: The Power of Music

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Constructive Use of Time

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A tape player with music (or a CD player or an mp3 player that has speakers), a variety of music that your children would like

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that fast-moving music that they like can help motivate them to exercise

Activity: Say something like, "Researchers have found that when we listen to music as we exercise, we're more likely to move more and for a longer period of time. In fact, many athletes listen to music to keep them moving."

Explain that you're going to do an activity where children move to the music. Play one kind of music (one at a time) and lead children in movement. For example:

- Play fast music and run around or break dance.
- Play marching music and march.
- Play soft music and breathe and stretch.
- Play slow music and do bent knee curl-ups or push-ups.
- Play loud music and do jumping jacks.

Optional: Lead the children in a song they all know while you do some type of physical activity.

End the activity by asking children questions such as these:

- Which kind of music got your heart beating the fastest? Why?
- Which kind of music made you want to stop moving? Why?
- Which kind of music was good for stretching? Why?
- Which kind of music was good for building your strength, such as doing curl-ups or push-ups? Why?
- If you could pick the best music to exercise to, what would it be? Why?

Activity Adaptation: For older children (children ages 10 to 12), ask them to bring in their favourite fast-moving music. Play their music choices while going through a variety of movements, such as a routine that involves walking, jogging, knee lifts, doing sit ups, doing push-ups, leg lifts, etc. Consider having those children comfortable doing so take turns in leading the group in an activity. Think about having a YMCA fitness leader come in to lead an activity with the older children. Talk about how important it is to find fast-moving music that you like to move to. "Research has found that people who exercise to music get more physical activity than people who exercise without any music."

Activity #14: Sandwich

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Constructive Use of Time

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: None

Learning Outcome: It is important to include everybody. Everyone can eat healthy, and everyone can get physical activity

Activity: If you have 10 children or fewer, assign them each as an ingredient in a sandwich in this order: bread, bread, peanut butter, jelly, bread, bread, peanut butter, jelly, lettuce, and tomato. (For example, if you have only six children present, you would assign four breads, one peanut butter, and one jelly. If you have eight children present, you would assign everything except the lettuce and tomato.)

If you have between 11 and 20 children, assign them each as an ingredient in a sandwich in the order above for the first 10 children. Then add (in order): bread, bread, turkey, cheese, onions, bread, bread, cheese, spinach, and green pepper.

If you have between 21 and 30 children, assign them each as an ingredient in a sandwich in the order above for the first 20 children. Then add (in order): bread, bread, peanut butter, jelly, bread, bread, cheese, turkey, tomato and lettuce.

Say something like, “Sandwiches can be part of a healthy diet. Let’s play sandwich. Does everyone know which ingredient you are?” Have children do a demonstration first. Ask for two children who are two pieces of bread to stand. Then have a peanut butter stand between them. Say something like, “When I name a peanut butter sandwich, call out your ingredient and create the sandwich that I have requested. Some of you may be in the sandwich, but some of you may not. Also, we may have enough to make two different sandwiches, so pay attention.”

Do the activity. Name these sandwiches one at a time:

- Jelly sandwich
- Lettuce sandwich
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Veggie sandwich
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Tomato sandwich
- A sandwich with everything on it (every child should be in the sandwich)

If you have 20 or more children playing, add these sandwiches to the mix:

- Turkey and cheese sandwich
- Peanut butter and cheese sandwich
- Turkey sandwich with lettuce and tomato
- Cheese sandwich

Optional: Name other sandwich combinations, such as peanut butter and lettuce or jelly and onions. Be creative. See if you can name a sandwich that will make the kids giggle or groan.

End the activity by saying a sandwich with everything on it, so that every child is in the sandwich. Talk about how important it is to include everybody and not to leave anyone out. Everyone can eat healthy, and everyone can get physical activity. Being healthy is for everybody.

Activity #15: Where, Oh Where?

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Constructive Use of Time

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: The four accompanying sheets: YMCA, Home, School, and Friend's House, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will discover which places encourage them to make healthy choices

Activity: Before you do this activity, print out the four accompanying sheets: YMCA, Home, School, and a Friend's House. If you have access to a photocopier with different coloured paper, print out each sheet on a different coloured paper. Then hang each sheet with masking tape in four corners of your room.

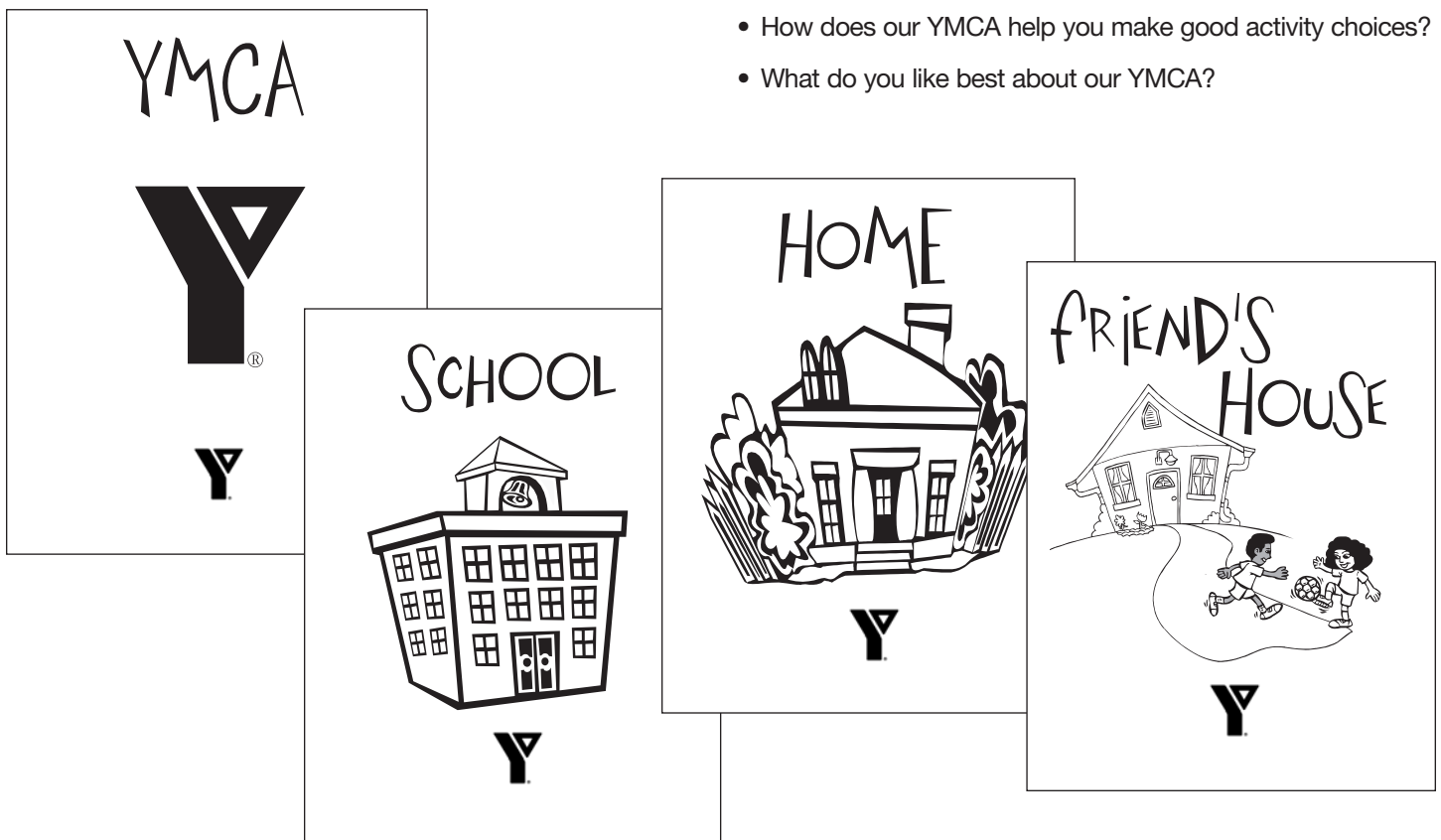
Point out the four sheets and what they say. Say something like, "We spend most of our time at one of these four places: our YMCA, at home, at school, and at a friend's house. I'm going to name some healthy and some unhealthy habits, and I want you to run to the place where the health habit I named is most likely to happen. Ready?"

Name healthy and unhealthy habits, such as these (one at a time):

- Where you are most likely to eat healthy meals
- Where you are most likely to play on the computer
- Where you are most likely to be active indoors
- Where you are most likely to watch TV
- Where you are most likely to eat unhealthy snacks
- Where you are most likely to be active outdoors
- Where you are most likely to eat unhealthy meals
- Where you are most likely to eat healthy snacks
- Where you are most likely to read books
- Where you are most likely to be taken to a fast food restaurant
- Where you are most likely to play video games
- Where you are most likely to be reminded to eat healthy
- Where you are most likely to be reminded to be active

End the activity by asking children these questions:

- How does our YMCA help you make good eating choices?
- How does our YMCA help you make good activity choices?
- What do you like best about our YMCA?



YMCA



SCHOOL



HOME



FRIEND'S HOUSE



Bonus Activity #16: Health Emphasis

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Constructive Use of Time

Age Group: Varies, depending on what you choose

Group Size: Varies, depending on what you choose

Materials Needed: Administrative support for setting up one-time and short-term nutrition and physical activity classes for your community

Learning Outcome: Children will explore a health topic in depth, depending on what you choose

Activity: Some program leaders have created a special class or one-time program to promote health, depending on what they see as a need. For example, one program leader heard from parents that their kids were getting antsy from the long winter and wanted a worthwhile, alternative physical activity. The program leader started a jump-rope fundraiser to “jump for health.” Children came for a two-hour jump-rope fundraiser and did various jump-rope activities.

Other programs leaders have tapped into the expertise of their program’s participants. For example, in one class, the leader learned that one child had earned a black belt in karate. The leader worked with the child to design a one-time activity for the class where the child taught other participants some basic karate moves. (Sometimes you can even get the karate instructor to come in and teach children basic moves. This often leads to more children wanting to do that physical activity and promotes that activity.)

Some YMCAs and school boards have taken the idea of special programming a step farther. Program leaders have worked with program directors to promote healthy eating and physical activity by offering one-time and short-term classes for children and their families to take in the community. Some have even secured funding so they could offer these classes for free or for a small nominal fee.

Some examples of nutrition and physical activity classes that you could offer through your YMCA:

- A six-week, one-hour floor hockey class for elementary-age children during the winter
- A one-time family cooking class
- A two-time family dance class
- A six-week, one-hour running club for older-elementary-age children who are interested in running long distance or preparing for a fun run
- A six-week family yoga class
- A six-week, one-hour kickball club for elementary-age children
- A one-time family hike at a nearby conservation area, park, or hiking trail
- A one time healthy cooking snack class for kids (Call it Kids in the Kitchen.)
- A one-time family canoe experience at a nearby lake or conservation area
- A one-time family snow-shoeing walk in January
- A six-week, one-hour international cooking class for kids
- A 10-week, triathlon training program for parent and child

Activity Sheet #4

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD SUPPORT ASSETS

About YMCA Activities

How much do the activities in your YMCA program help you eat healthy and get active? Please take this survey to find out.

For each statement, checkmark one box. Checkmark whether you agree or disagree with the statement.

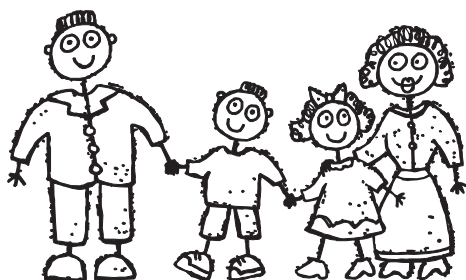
Statements about Healthy Eating

	Agree	Disagree
1. My YMCA program teaches me how to eat healthy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. My YMCA program teaches me about the four food groups.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. My YMCA program makes healthy eating fun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. My YMCA program makes healthy eating easier.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. My eating has become healthier because of the YMCA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Statements about Getting Physical Activity

	Agree	Disagree
6. My YMCA program teaches me how to be physically active.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. My YMCA program introduces me to many physical activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. My YMCA program makes physical activity fun.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My YMCA program gets me excited about physical activity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I have become more physically active because of the YMCA.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FAMILIES!

NEWSLETTER # 4

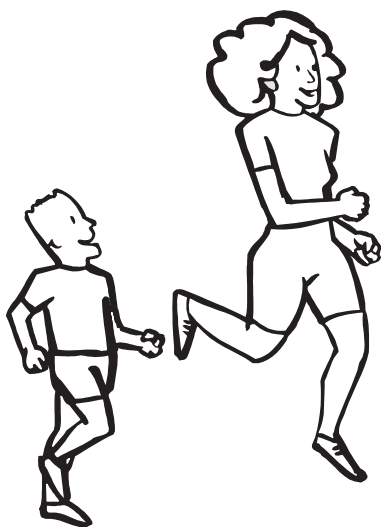


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Doing Constructive Activities

It's a balancing act. Kids need meaningful, structured activities to develop skills, but they need the right amount and the right mix. A soccer team might be right for one child—but not for another. Consider trying these ideas:

- Have your child rank his or her structured activities from most favourite to least favourite. Find out what's different between the activities.
- Talk together about how busy each family member is. How much family time are you getting to spend as a family? How happy is each person with his or her activity level?
- Look for structured activities that are stimulating and have caring adult leaders.
- If one season of the year is very busy (such as winter during hockey season), consider having another season that is more relaxed so that you can spend more time together as a family.
- Balance structured activity time with free playtime.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Monitor what you're drinking. How much pop, juice, and coffee are you drinking? How does that compare to water?
- Eat whole-wheat grains. (Try whole-wheat bagels, muffins, and bread.)
- Take a cooking class together. See if your local YMCA, community centre, or grocery store has a class to offer.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Toss a Frisbee® outside.
- Ask your children's friends (and their parents) for their favourite recreational programs. See if there's one you can do together.
- Sign up for a family activity through your local YMCA.



Quick Tip

Ask about
new classes
and programs
at your local YMCA.



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. Which YMCA activities and programs do you enjoy most? Why?
2. Which YMCA leader do you admire most? Why?
3. Which activities and programs help you to eat healthy and get physical activity? Why?

Build Assets Together

When children spend their time in meaningful ways, they're more likely to grow up healthy. Search Institute researchers have discovered creative activities (such as music, the arts, and theatre), youth programs (such as YMCA programs, community programs, and sport teams), a religious community, and having positive time at home with their family are key assets that kids need to succeed.

Four Developmental Assets are key constructive use of time assets. These include:

- #17 Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
- #18 Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in extra curricular activities or structure community programs for children.
- #19 Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
- #20 Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interactions with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

Do constructive activities to eat healthy and to stay active by building these four key assets.

GOOD NEWS

58% of kids say that they have asset #19: religious community.

CHALLENGING NEWS

21% of kids say they have asset #17: creative activities.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING

Curiosity, the ability to internalize new knowledge, and the discipline of learning are all important elements of healthy development. With our ever-changing society, children who develop a commitment to learning will be more likely to succeed.

Five developmental assets make up the category of a commitment to learning. These include:

Asset #21: Achievement motivation

Asset #22: Learning engagement

Asset #23: Homework

Asset #24: Bonding to adults at school

Asset #25: Reading for pleasure

To build the commitment to learning assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #17: Move Like an Animal

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Commitment to Learning

Age Group: Ages 6 to 10 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: None

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that their imagination can help them to be more physically active

Activity: Have children spread out across the room. Say something like, “We need to have physical activity to be healthy, and so do animals. Let’s pretend we’re certain animals getting our daily physical activity.”

Name animals one at a time and have children move like each animal around the room:

- Cat
- Bird
- Penguin
- Fish
- Crab
- Crocodile
- Horse

- A human who stretches
- A human who is strong and building muscle
- A human exercising his or her heart

End the activity by asking children questions such as these:

- How can we use our imaginations to be more physically active?
- If you could choose an animal to be, which animal would you choose? Why?
- Which type of activity is your least favourite: stretching, strength building, or exercising your heart? Why?
- Which type of activity is your favourite: stretching, strength building, or exercising your heart? Why?

Activity #18: The Digestive Tunnel

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Commitment to Learning

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Five balls of yarn of five different colours, five rulers, and five pairs of scissors

Learning Outcome: Children will learn how long their digestive system is

Activity: Create five groups of children. Give each group one ball of yarn, a ruler, and one pair of scissors. (If you have a small group of less than 10 children, have children work together as one group and complete each part of the activity together.)

Say something like, “When we eat food, we tend to forget about it once we swallow it. The truth is that the food is just beginning a very long journey in our bodies. Today we’re going to do an activity to see how long of a journey that is.”

Give each group a ball of yarn, a ruler, and a pair of scissors. Assign each group one part of the digestive system, and have them measure the length of their part with the yarn and ruler and cut that length from their yarn.

- Mouth to back of throat 10 cm (or about 4 inches)
- Esophagus 25 cm (or about 10 inches)
- Stomach 20 cm (or about 8 inches)
- Small intestine 700 cm (or about 276 inches)
- Large intestine 150 cm (or about 59 inches)

After each group has cut the yarn, have groups work together (in order) to tie the end of their yarn to the next group. Thus the mouth group will have one end open and the other end tied to the esophagus. The esophagus will tie the other end to the stomach. The stomach will tie the other end to the small intestine. The small intestine will tie the other end to the large intestine. The large intestine will have the other end open.

Have children spread out the large yarn onto the floor so they can see how long it is. Then have children line up at the end where the mouth is. One at a time, have children name a healthy food and then run the entire yarn path to the end. After one child starts running, have the next child in line count aloud to 10 and then name a healthy food before running. (Soon you’ll have all children running.)

If children enjoy running, have them run again. This time have them name foods according to a food group. Do grains first. Then name vegetables and fruits. Then identify milk products. Then name meats and alternatives.

End the activity by asking the children questions such as these:

- How long is our digestive system? (If children measure and add their portions, they should come up with about 905 cm or 357 inches.)
- Why does it matter to eat healthy foods instead of unhealthy foods?
- What do you think would happen if food gets stuck in one part of our digestive system?
- How does drinking water help keep our digestive system healthy?
- How can we remember to eat more foods from the four food groups?

Activity #19: Stick to Healthy Choices

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Commitment to Learning

Age Group: Ages 8 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Lots of small sticky notes, pencils, and the four accompanying sheets: Eat more of these foods, Eat less of these foods, Do more of these activities, Do less of these activities, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will name healthy and unhealthy foods and identify healthy and unhealthy physical activities

Activity: Before you do this activity, print out the four accompanying sheets: Eat more of these foods, Eat less of these foods, Do more of these activities, Do less of these activities. If you have access to a photocopier with different coloured paper, print each sheet on a different coloured paper. Hang them up with masking tape around your room.

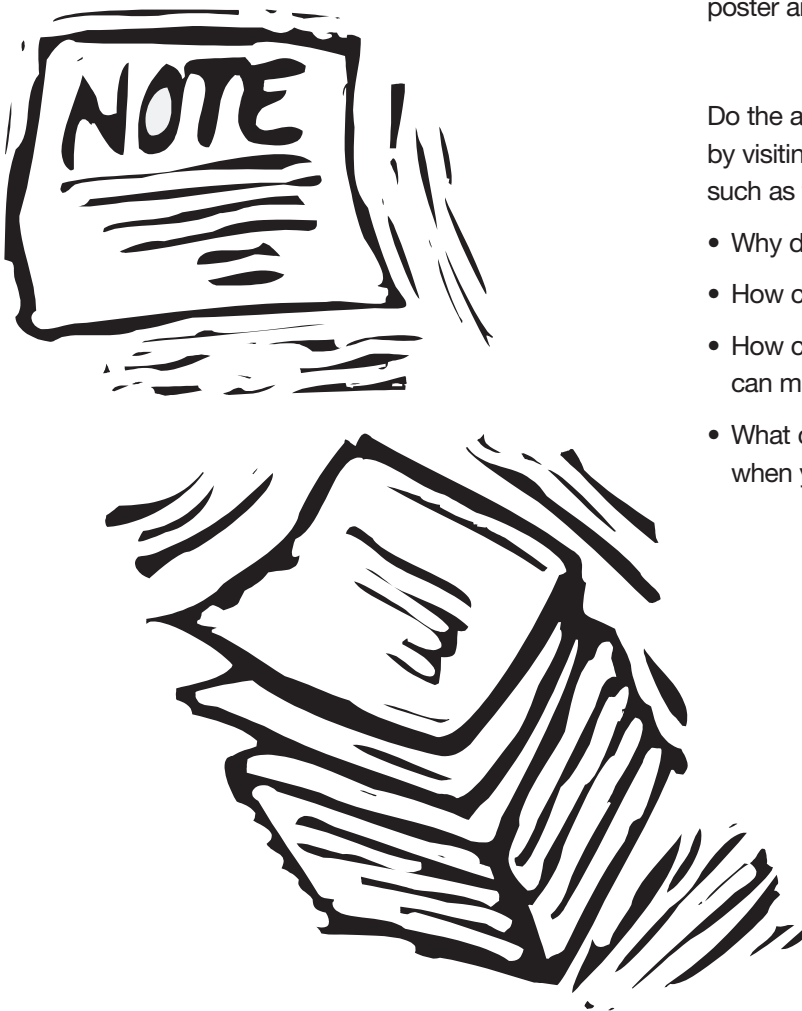
Have lots of small sticky notes available at each poster and pencils for the children.

Say something like: “Every day we have a lot of choices to make in terms of what to eat and how much physical activity to get. On the walls are four categories.” Point out the four categories and what they say. If possible, walk to each one so that children can clearly see the choices. Have one quarter of the children stationed at each poster around the room.

Say something like: “When I tell you to go, write on one sticky note one food or activity that fits that poster. Then stick the sticky note onto the poster. When you finish, go to the next poster and do the same.”

Do the activity. When all the children finish, end the activity by visiting each poster with the children. Ask questions such as these:

- Why did you put the items that you did on this poster?
- How can you do more of (or less of) these?
- How can you learn more about healthy choices so that you can make more healthy choices?
- What can you teach your family about healthy choices when you get home?



Eat MORE OF THESE FOODS



Eat LESS of THESE foods



DO MORE OF THESE ACTIVITIES



DO LESS OF THESE ACTIVITIES



Bonus Activity #20: Have You Ever Tried This?

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Commitment to Learning

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Less well-known foods that many children haven't tried, such as jicama (a vegetable), mango (a fruit), clementine (a fruit), amaranth crackers (a grain), or other unusual foods. You can find most of these at your local grocery store, market, or health food store. Have a knife and other utensils so that children can sample these healthy foods.

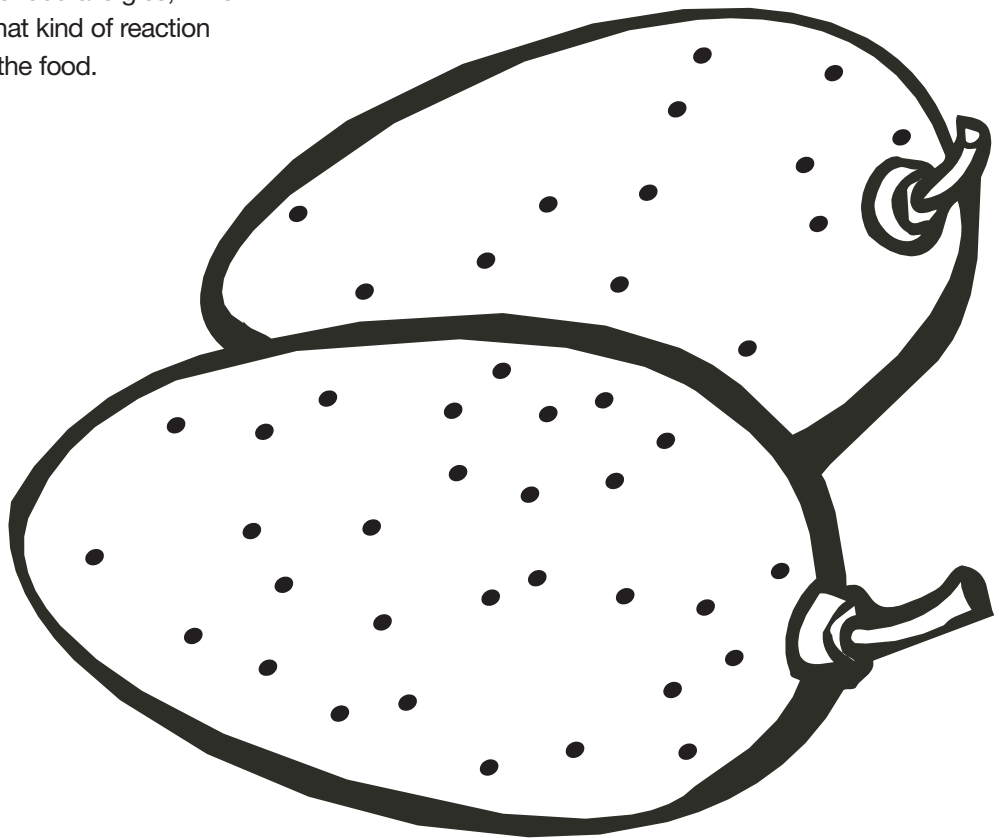
Learning Outcome: Children will try new foods and see what they think of these foods

Allergy Alert: Be aware when introducing new foods that the foods do not contain high-risk allergy items. Ninety percent of food allergies are from these eight common foods: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Read food ingredients carefully since a food item may appear to be safe, but a food allergy could be lurking in a trace ingredient. Some allergic reactions can result in hospitalization or death. Ideally, check with parents to learn who has food allergies, which foods the child is allergic to, and what kind of reaction (including severity) the child has to the food.

Activity: Have the children wash their hands and then help you either cut up or place these foods so that children can try them (try making a kebob with wooden skewers). Consider trying one type of food at a time so that you can talk about each one. Some children will be more willing to try different foods than other children will be. Don't push or force any child to try a food, just encourage children to do so.

Ask questions such as these:

- Do you like this food? Why or why not?
- Did you think you would like this food before you tried it? Why or why not?
- On a scale of one to 10 with one being not great and 10 being really great, how would rate this food?
- Which food would you like to introduce to your family?



Activity Sheet #5

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD COMMITMENT TO LEARNING ASSETS

Look What I Know!

See how much you know about healthy eating by filling out this activity sheet.

List or draw as many green, red or orange vegetables as you can:

List or draw as many fruits as you can:

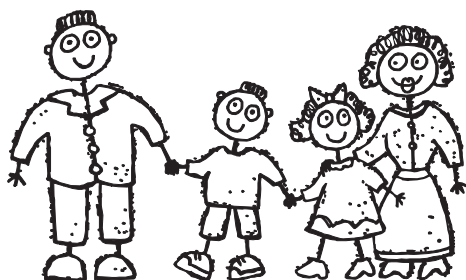
List or draw as many healthy milk products as you can:

List or draw as many healthy meats as you can:

List as many healthy eating habits as you can:

You can always learn more. Visit your local library. Do research on the Internet. Ask your YMCA program leader for helpful resources. The more you can learn about healthy eating, the more likely you'll be to eat healthy.





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 5

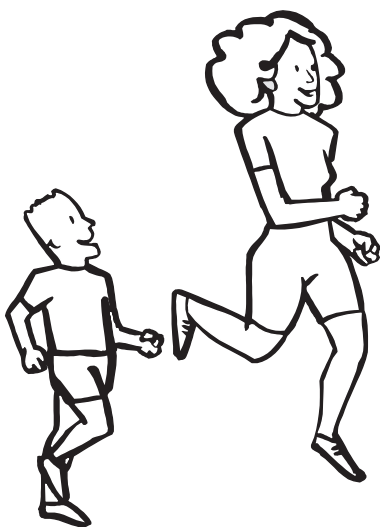
Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets



Committing to Learning More

Learning and understanding more about the positive impact of good nutrition and increased physical activity and seeing results of our actions can help to keep us enthused and motivated. When we become curious about new health ideas, we open ourselves up to new possibilities. Consider trying these ideas:

- Check out a videotape or DVD from your local library that shows a form of physical activity you haven't tried before. Look at your YMCA Activity Guide and try something new. Consider trying Tai Chi, yoga, or Pilates.
- Read books or magazines about family nutrition and family fitness and try some of the suggested ideas or activities.
- Set goals for eating healthier and getting physical activity. For example, set a goal of eating five to 12 servings of grains in one day or getting 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity.
- Try challenging your children to walk up the stairs in a new way. Walk sideways. Or walk up with your toes pointed inward (or outward).
- Ask a friend, family member, or neighbour for their favourite recipe. Try it and ask how your family enjoyed the new recipe.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Make each dinner plate colourful when you place food on it. Serve chicken (brown), salad (green), strawberries (red), summer squash (yellow), milk (white), and whole-wheat bread (brown).
- In the spring, plant a vegetable garden. In summer, eat what you harvest.
- Eat two to three servings of meats or proteins today.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Go swimming together.
- Park your car as far away from the entrance as possible when you go places. Enjoy the extra walk.
- Use a hula-hoop. See how long each family member can keep it up and moving.



Quick Tip

Show your
enthusiasm
and consistent
reinforcement of
healthy eating and
physical activity.
See how these
positive behaviours
affect your kids
over time.



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. What motivates you the most to get physical activity? Why?
2. What do you find most challenging about healthy eating? Why?
3. How does our YMCA motivate us to make healthy choices?

Build Assets Together

People who are curious learn more about health. They keep learning and trying new things, which keeps them motivated to eat healthy and to stay active.

Five Developmental Assets are key commitment to learning assets. These include:

- #21 Achievement motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
- #22 Learning engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
- #23 Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time.
- #24 Bonding to school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
- #25 Reading for pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

Learn more to eat healthy and to stay active by building these five key assets.

GOOD NEWS

65% of kids say that they have asset #21: achievement motivation.

CHALLENGING NEWS

22% of kids say they have asset #25: reading for pleasure.

POSITIVE VALUES

Positive values are important internal compasses that guide children to make principled choices. The first two positive values involve caring for others. For the well-being of any society, it is critical that children learn how to suspend personal gain to promote the welfare of others. The other four positive values identify aspects of personal character. These six developmental assets are consistent with the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility.

Six developmental assets make up the category of positive values. These include:

Asset #26: Caring

Asset #29: Honesty

Asset #27: Equality and social justice

Asset #30: Responsibility

Asset #28: Integrity

Asset #31: Healthy lifestyle

To build the positive values assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #21: Valuing Physical Activity

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Positive Values

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Something to play music with (a tape recorder, radio, CD player, or mp3 player with speakers)

Learning Outcome: Children will learn the difference between light-effort, moderate-effort, and vigorous physical activities

Activity: Say something like, "Health Canada says we need 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy. When we value our health, we value the importance of being physically active."

Say something like, "Health Canada has named a number of physical activities that we can do to be healthy. Let's try some physical activities that are easy to do. These are activities that Health Canada says we should do about 60 minutes worth every day."

Lead the children in doing these light-effort activities:

- Light walking
- Stretching

Say something like, "Sometimes we don't have 60 minutes for physical activity. If you don't have that much time, Health Canada suggests doing these moderate physical activities for 30 to 60 minutes a day."

Lead the children in doing these moderate-effort activities:

- Brisk walking
- Biking (have children lie on their backs and hoist their legs into the air and do the bicycle)
- Swimming (lead children in moving around the room doing the arm strokes for the freestyle, the back stroke, the breast stroke, the butterfly, and the side stroke)
- Dancing (put on music)

Say something like, "Sometimes we have even less time to do physical activity. Health Canada says we can do vigorous activities for 20 to 30 minutes a day. These activities will get your heart pumping fast."

Lead the children in doing these vigorous-effort activities:

- Aerobics
- Jogging
- Fast dancing
- Sprinting from one end of the room to the other

Ask, "How can you add more physical activity into your life and help your parents be more active too?"

End the activity by saying something like, "There are other vigorous activities that we also can do, such as hockey, basketball, and fast swimming. All of these physical activities are about valuing our health. When we value our health, we make time for physical activity."

Activity #22: Fill Your Bucket Well

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Positive Values

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Two buckets, a bunch of bouncy balls or ping-pong balls, a permanent marker, a clock or watch that can measure seconds

Learning Outcome: Children will learn which foods are healthy

Activity: Before you do this activity, write a healthy food on each ping-pong ball with a permanent marker. Try to include an approximate number of healthy foods from each food group. Consider writing healthy foods such as these. For grains: bread, cereal, bagel, pasta, and rice. For vegetables and fruit: tomato, pear, salad, apple juice, and carrots. For milk products: yogourt, cheese, milk, and cottage cheese. For meats and alternatives: fish, chicken, legumes (beans), tofu, and peanut butter.

Form two teams of an equal number of players. If you have an odd number of children, have the team with one less child to choose one child who will go twice.

Have the children form two lines. Give each child a bouncy or ping-pong ball. Create a stash of more bouncy or ping-pong balls at the front of the line for each team. Place a bucket about three feet in front of the first person in each line.

Say something like, “Each one of these balls is a healthy food choice. It may be a pear, a salad, a piece of whole wheat bread, a piece of chicken, or a glass of milk. It’s a food from one of the four food groups. Over here is a bucket. Think of it as your stomach. Your goal—as a team—is to bounce as many of these balls into your bucket. In other words, you want to fill your stomach with healthy food choices.”

Explain that you’re going to play the game for two minutes. When you say go, the first person in line will either throw or bounce the ball toward the bucket. If the ball gets in, the person runs to the back of the line while the second person tries. If you miss the bucket, run after the ball while the second person tries to throw the ball. (Yes, this activity will get crazy with a lot of bouncy balls and running children, but that’s what makes it fun.) When a child misses and catches up with the ball, he or she must stop in that position and try to get the ball into the bucket. Explain that when the first person in line moves up through the line again, he or she should pick up another ball in the stash and play again when it is his or her turn.

Do the activity. After two minutes, stop the activity. Count the number of balls in each bucket. Most likely there will not be a lot of balls in the bucket. Say something like, “At first when we try to eat healthy, we may not do well. In fact, it’s easier to value healthy eating habits than it is to actually have healthy eating habits. That’s why it’s important to keep trying again.”

Do the activity again. Children will gradually get the feel of the activity and will get more balls into the bucket.

End that activity by saying, “Valuing healthy eating is the first step. Acting on that value is the second step. The third step is trying to have good eating habits every day. I know that you all can do it.”

Activity #23: It All Matters

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Positive Values

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A straw, pencil, and paper cup for each child, lots of small pieces of paper (about 3 cm by 3 cm or 1 inch by 1 inch). (Optional: a paper cutter to cut the pieces of paper)

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that all their health choices matter

Activity: Before you do this activity, cut paper into 3 cm by 3 cm (or 1 inch by 1 inch) squares. (The size doesn't need to be exact, but the pieces need to be small. Consider using a paper cutter to cut a lot of pieces quickly.)

Give each child 10 pieces of paper, a straw, and a paper cup. Have kids spread out their 10 pieces of paper.

Say something like: "On five pieces of the paper, I want you to either draw a picture or write a word of a healthy food."

Encourage children to identify one thing on each paper and to write five different things. If they have trouble thinking of ideas, have a brainstorming session as a group. Give children time to write or draw their five healthy foods.

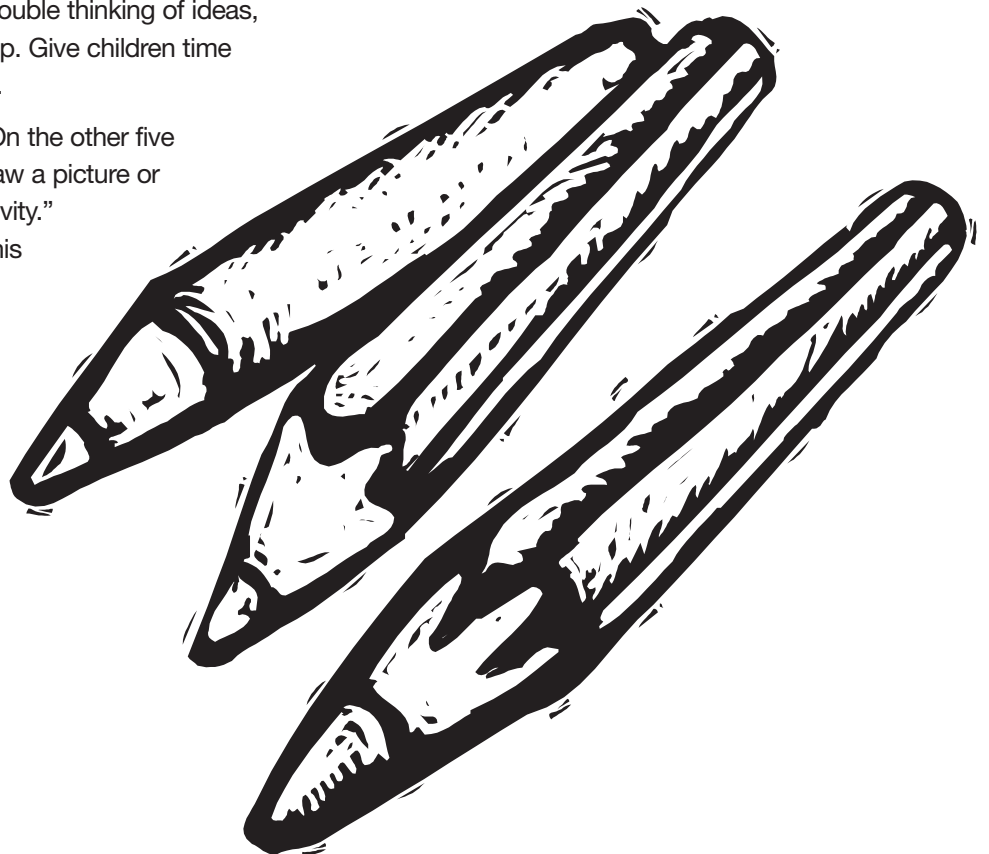
Once they finish, say something like, "On the other five pieces of paper, I want you to either draw a picture or write a word about getting physical activity."

Again, give children time to complete this part of the activity.

Ask one child to demonstrate using the straw to pick up a piece of paper and place it in the cup without using his or her hands. (The child will need to suck in air and make sure the entire hold of the straw sits on the paper to create a suction to pick it up.) After the demonstration, have the child empty the cup so everyone's paper pieces are on the table or floor (wherever you're doing the activity).

Say something like, "Everything we do in terms of what we eat and how much activity we get matters. In other words, it all matters. When we walk to the bus stop, that matters. When we drink water or orange juice instead of pop, that matters. When we eat three healthy meals a day that matters. When we take time to do physical activity—it matters. Think of each of these pieces of paper as one small health choice that you make. When I tell you to start, begin picking up each piece of paper with your straw and placing it in your cup."

Do the activity. When the children have finished, end the activity by saying, "All of our choices matter. When we make a lot of healthy choices, we live healthier lives. When we value our health, we value our lives."



Bonus Activity #24: Caring Hands

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Positive Values

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A piece of 21 1/2 by 28 cm (or 8 1/2" x 11") paper for each child, a marker for each child, masking tape

Learning Outcome: Children will make a commitment to valuing their health

Then create a display. Place the title in a prominent place. Then have the children use masking tape to hang up their traced hands.

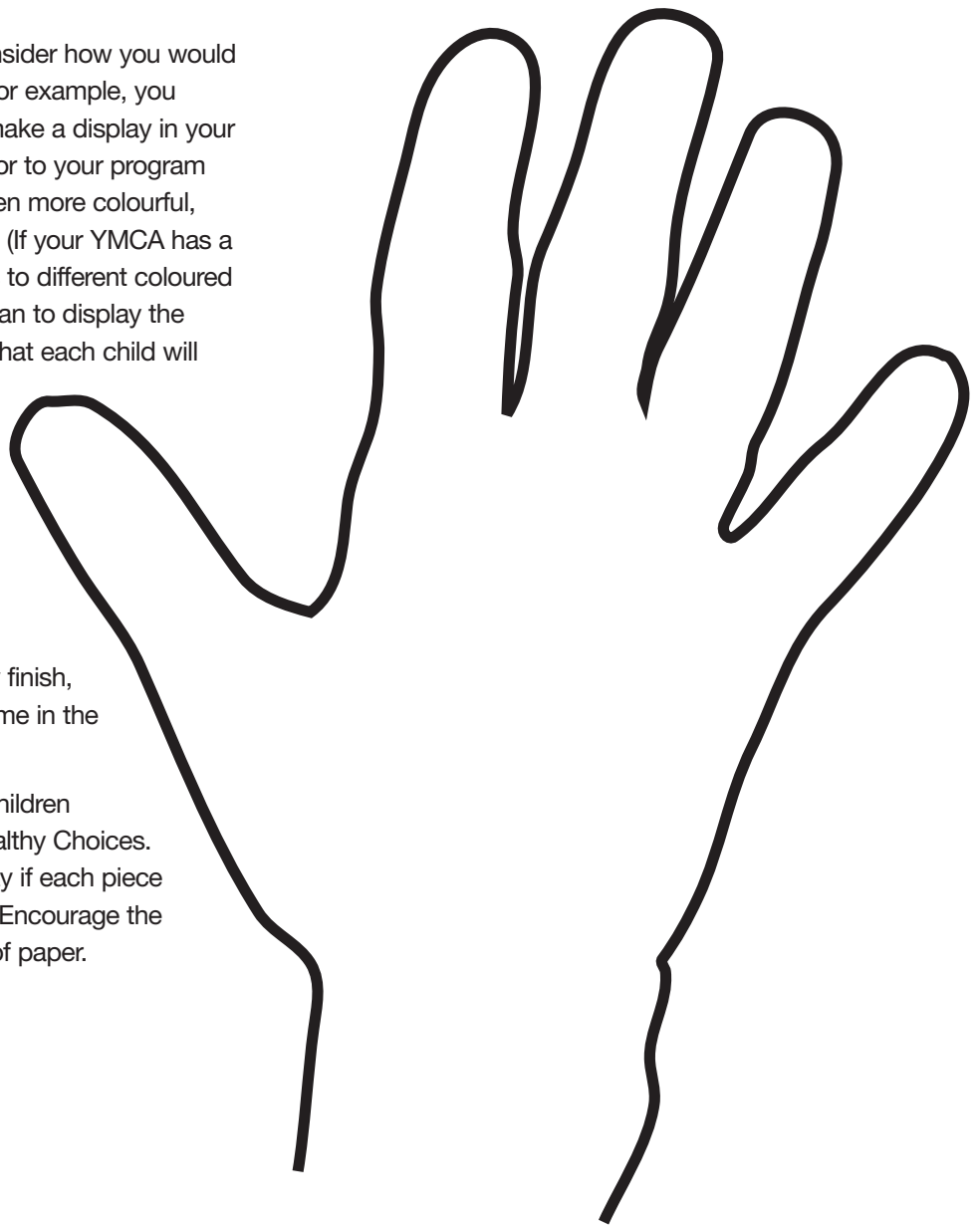
End the activity by saying something like, "When we value health, we make good choices. At our YMCA, we all value health. That means we value the choices we make when we eat and the choices we make when we get physical activity."

Activity: Before you do this activity, consider how you would like to create a display of this project. For example, you might want to create a bulletin board, make a display in your YMCA's front lobby, or surround the door to your program with the hands. To make the display even more colourful, consider using different coloured paper. (If your YMCA has a photocopier, you may also have access to different coloured paper.) Once you decide on how you plan to display the hands, get enough pieces of paper so that each child will have one.

Give each child a piece of paper and a marker. Say something like, "We're going to show that we value our health. Take the marker and draw an outline of one of your hands on your blank piece of paper."

Give children time to do this. Once they finish, say something like, "Now write your name in the middle of the hand that you traced."

If you have extra pieces of paper, ask children to create papers that say: We Value Healthy Choices. (It may be more effective for your display if each piece of paper has one of those words on it.) Encourage the children to decorate those four pieces of paper.



Activity Sheet #6

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD POSITIVE VALUES ASSETS

How I Value Health

The YMCA has four core values: caring, responsibility, honesty, and respect. Positive values also are key Developmental Assets that kids need to succeed. Show how much you value health by completing the sentences below. If your YMCA has other values add those too.

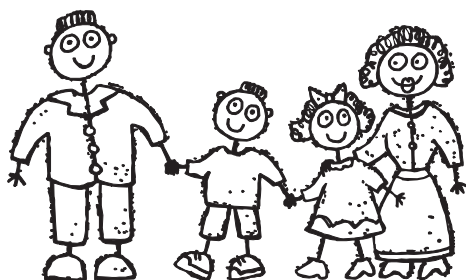
I **care** about getting physical activity by:

I take **responsibility** to eat healthy by:

I am **honest** and know what is most difficult for me to eat healthy is:

I **respect** my body's need for physical activity by cutting back on:





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 6

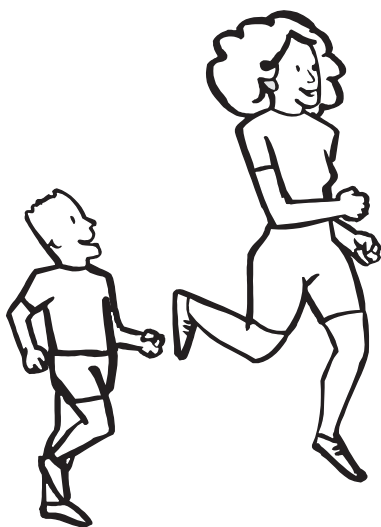


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Teaching Positive Values

Helping your children develop positive values such as caring, respect, responsibility, and honesty is as important as teaching your children to eat healthy and stay physically active. Not only do we want our children each to develop a healthy body, but we also want them to develop a healthy mind and spirit. Consider trying these ideas:

- Talk about positive values on a regular basis. Emphasize caring. Respect your children and teach them to respect others. Be honest. Take responsibility.
- Show how the YMCA's four core values: caring, honesty, responsibility, and respect also help us to make healthy choices. When we care for and respect ourselves, we take responsibility to eat healthy and stay active. We're honest about the progress we make.
- Create a daily health routine with your children. Eat three healthy meals a day. Brush your teeth in the morning and the evening. Get some physical activity every day. Get enough sleep each night.
- Be honest about your likes and dislikes. It's easier to eat healthy when you eat healthy foods that you like (rather than trying to eat ones you dislike). You're also more likely to stay physically active when you choose favourite activities.
- Demonstrate your value for health by having regular physical exams and dental visits. Make sure everyone in your family gets regular exams.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Value the four food groups. Encourage family members to eat five to 12 servings of grain products, five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits, two to four servings of milk products (depending on your age), and two to three servings of meat every day.
- When you snack, try to eat from two of the four food groups. For example, have low-fat cheese on whole-wheat crackers or an apple with some peanut butter.
- Cut back or eliminate the number of sweets and salty snacks that you eat each day.



Quick Tip

**Model your value
for health by eating
healthy and getting
regular physical
activity. Celebrate
your success.**

GOOD NEWS

68% of kids say that they have asset #28: integrity.

CHALLENGING NEWS

45% of kids say they have asset #31: healthy lifestyle.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

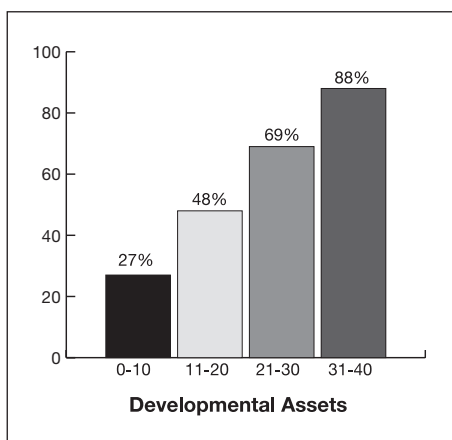
- Go biking together.
- Take the stairs instead of using elevators and escalators.
- Enter a walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon as a family to raise money for a good cause. Train together before the event so that the walk-a-thon or bike-a-thon seems fun and easy.

Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. Why do you value healthy eating?
2. Why do you value getting regular physical activity?
3. How do your values affect the choices that you make?

Build Assets Together



The 40 Developmental Assets clearly make a difference in helping kids make positive health choices. When researchers examined kids with 10 Developmental Assets or less, they found that only 27 percent paid attention to healthy nutrition and exercise. Kids with more Developmental Assets made more healthy choices. Forty-eight percent of kids with 11 to 20 Developmental Assets valued

healthy nutrition and physical activity. That percentage jumped to 69 percent of kids with 21 to 30 assets and 88 percent of kids with 31 to 40 Developmental Assets.

Six Developmental Assets are key positive values assets. These include:

- #26 Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people
- #27 Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
- #28 Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
- #29 Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
- #30 Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behaviour.
- #31 Healthy lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

These six developmental assets are consistent with the YMCA's core values of caring, honesty, respect, and responsibility. Learn more to eat healthy and to stay active by building these six key assets.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES

Children need a set of personal skills and life perspectives to negotiate through the maze of choices that face them each day. The social competencies assets equip them to form healthy relationships and to make positive choices.

Five developmental assets make up the category of social competencies. These include:

Asset #32: Planning and decision making

Asset #33: Interpersonal competence

Asset #34: Cultural competence

Asset #35: Resistance skills

Asset #36: Peaceful conflict resolution

To build the social competencies assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #25: Move A Little More

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Social Competencies

Age Group: Ages 8 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: The seven accompanying sheets: 10 bent leg sit-ups, Jog in place, 10 jumping jacks, 10 knee lifts, 10 push-ups, rest, and 10 side leg lifts, masking tape, and music

Learning Outcome: Children will see that adding creativity to physical activity can help them be more likely to be active

Activity: Before you do this activity, print out the seven accompanying sheets: 10 bent leg sit-ups, Jog in place, 10 jumping jacks, 10 knee ups, 10 push-ups, rest, and 10 side leg lifts. If you have access to a photocopier with different coloured paper, print out each sheet on a different coloured paper. Then place the sheets in a circle on the floor (like they would stopping places for doing an activity similar to the cake walk). If you have a large group, print out two or three copies of each sheet and make a larger circle on the floor.

Point out the sheets on the floor and what they say. Say something like, “We can plan to get physical activity, but sometimes that can get boring. When we decide to be creative with physical activity, we are more likely to do it.”

Explain that you’re going to play a game. Demonstrate the activity. Have children spread out in the circle with each child standing on a different piece of paper. (It is okay if some papers do not have a child.) When you start the music have children walk around the circle clockwise. When the music stops, they need to stop on the closest square, read what the square says and do that physical activity, such as 10 jumping jacks or jogging in place.

Demonstrate how the game works. Play the game. Do it a number of times so that children have the chance to do different activities when the music stops. You can vary the activity by having the children pick new activities to add to the circle of choices. Simply make a new sheet with markers.

When you’re finished, ask questions such as these:

- Why is it important to plan time to do physical activity?
- How can you decide to be creative in other ways to be physically active?
- How can you plan to get physical activity at home?

10 BENT LEG SIT-UPS



jog
in PLACE



10
jumping
jacks



10 KNEE LIFTS



10
PUSH-UPS



REST



10
SIDE LEG
LIFTS



Activity #26: Nutrition Facts

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Social Competencies

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Bring in canned, boxed, and bagged foods that have nutrition labels. Try to bring in at least one item from the four food groups (such as a canned fruit, pasta, a milk carton, and peanut butter). Also bring in an unhealthy food, such as candy, chips, cookies, or pop.

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that labels with Nutrition Facts can give them a lot of health information

Activity: Display the canned, boxed, and bagged foods. Ask something like, “How can we know how nutritious certain foods are?” Hopefully, one child will know that food has nutrition labels called “Nutrition Facts.” If not, show the nutrition facts label of one of the foods and have the children find the labels on the other foods you brought in.

As a group, have children discover and learn about the different aspects of the nutrition facts label. Consider talking about these elements if you have young children between the ages of 6 to 8:

- Serving size (Many people assume that small food items are one serving, but that isn’t always the case.)
- Protein (This helps with the meat food group.)

Consider talking about these additional elements of the food label if you have children between the ages of 8 to 10:

- Sodium (Ideally you want this number low.)
- Vitamins (Look at the list of vitamins and the percentages. Unhealthy foods will have low percentages of vitamins whereas healthy foods will have larger percentages.)

Consider talking about these additional elements of the food label if you have children between the ages of 10 to 12:

- Total fat (Saturated and trans fat are unhealthy fats. Ideally you want those numbers to be low.)
- Carbohydrate (Ideally you want this number low, although you want the Fibre category to be high, if possible.)

If you have a group of eight children or fewer, do this next part as one group. If you have a larger group, have the children work in small groups and have enough samples of the different foods for each group to work with.

Have the children rank the foods you brought lining them in order of what’s most healthy to what’s least healthy. Note that some children may have different viewpoints on the same food. Encourage them to make their case for their decisions.

End the activity by saying something like, “Every day we make food choices. When we take time to read food nutrition fact labels, we can make even better choices about the foods we eat.”

Activity #27: So Tired

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Social Competencies

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Low-fat cheese and whole-wheat crackers for snack

Learning Outcome: Children will learn that their energy levels change throughout the day, and they can choose certain activities to boost their energy

Allergy Alert: Be aware when providing snacks that the foods do not contain high-risk allergy items. Ninety percent of food allergies are from these eight common foods: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Read food ingredients carefully since a food item may appear to be safe, but a food allergy could be lurking in a trace ingredient. Some allergic reactions can result in hospitalization or death. Ideally, check with parents to learn who has food allergies, which foods the child is allergic to, and what kind of reaction (including severity) the child has to the food.

Activity: Ask something like, “What do you do when you get tired?” Once children have responded, say something like, “Our body goes through daily rhythms. We all know that we need enough sleep at night, but during our waking hours, we have more energy at some times than other times.”

Have children spread out around the room. Ask something like, “How do you know what’s best to do when you’re tired?” Once children have responded, say something like, “Sometimes we need to experiment with healthy activities when we feel tired during the day. Let’s lie down for a brief moment.” Turn off the lights.

Say something like, “We’re going to relax for a few minutes. Close your eyes. Don’t worry, I’m not going to make you take a nap. We’re going to focus on our breathing. Take a deep breath in as I count to three. One. Two. Three. Now slowly breathe out as I count to three. One. Two. Three. Notice your face. Make a face. Tighten all those muscles in your face. Now relax and breathe. Now notice your feet. Tighten your muscles by moving your feet around. Then let your feet go limp. Do the same with your stomach. Pull it in. Then let it relax. Now your hands. Make a fist and squeeze tight. Then relax. Take another deep breath in as I count to three. One. Two. Three. Now slowly exhale. One Two. Three.” Note: speak in a quiet, calm voice when you are talking about relaxation and breathing.

Ask the children to open their eyes and slowly sit up. Turn on the lights. Ask something like, “How do you feel? How can relaxation during the day help us when we feel tired?”

Ask the children to get on their feet. Lead the children through these exercises one at a time:

- Do 10 jumping jacks.
- March around the room.
- Do 10 sit-ups (with knees bent).
- Skip around the room.
- Do 10 push-ups (from the knees is ok).
- Run around the room as fast as you can.

Have the children sit down. Ask them questions such as these: “How can physical activity help when you feel tired during the day? Which physical activities give you the most energy?”

Serve children a snack of low-fat cheese and whole-wheat crackers. (Don’t forget to have children wash their hands before eating or have a hand sanitizer available to clean hands.) Say something like, “Sometimes our bodies get tired during the day when we’re hungry. Eating a healthy snack like low-fat cheese and whole-wheat crackers (unless you are allergic to these foods) can give us energy.”

When children finish their snack, end the activity by asking these questions:

Which healthy activities are worth trying when you feel tired during the day? Hopefully, children will say relaxation, physical activity, and healthy snacks because of the activity you just lead them through.

- Why is it easy to sit in front of the TV when we’re tired?
- How can we make better choices when we need energy?

Bonus Activity #28: Diverse Snacks

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Social Competencies

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

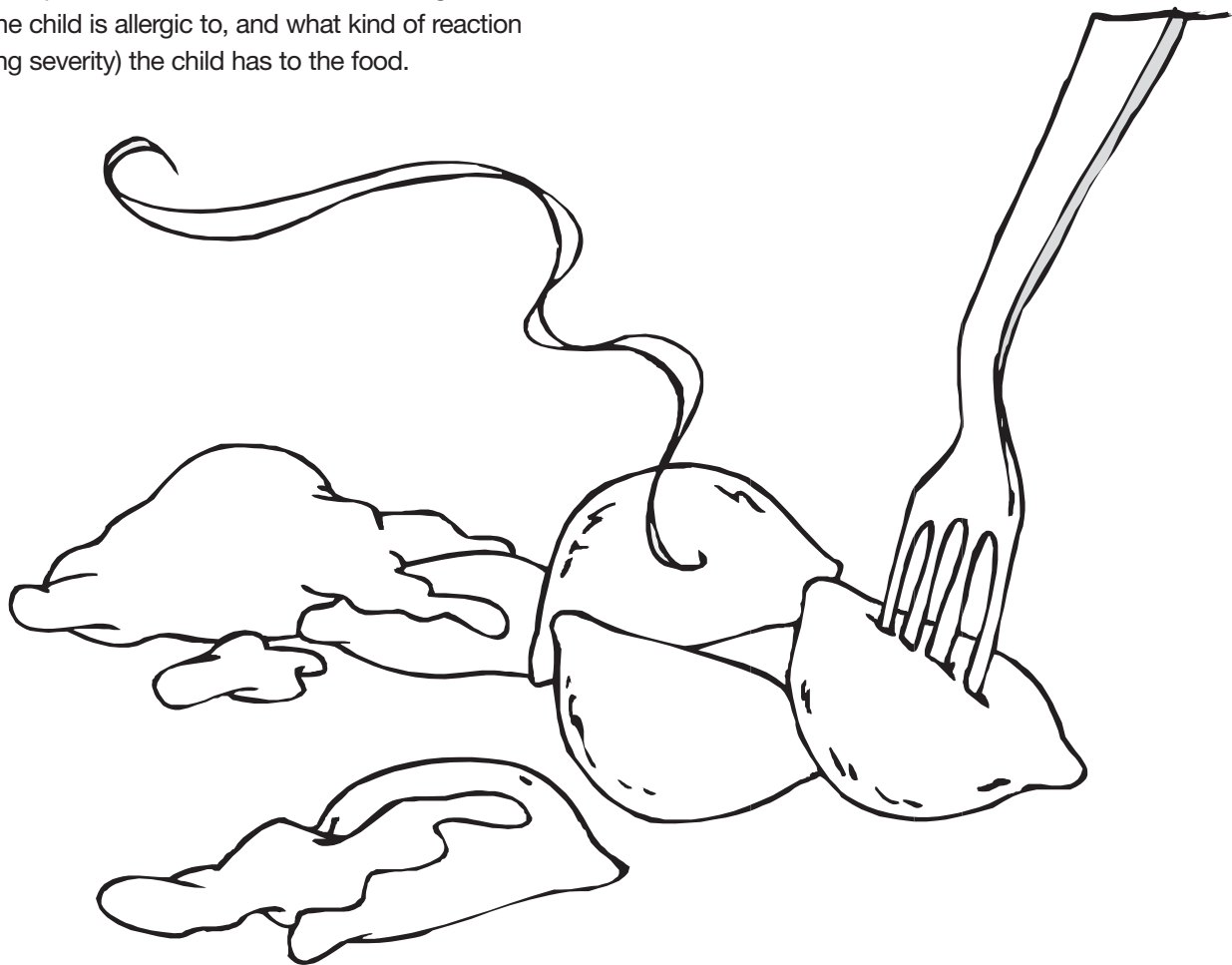
Materials Needed: Invite volunteers who can bring healthy snacks that represent diverse cultural origins

Learning Outcome: Children will try a variety of healthy snacks

Allergy Alert: Be aware when providing snacks that the foods do not contain high-risk allergy items. Ninety percent of food allergies are from these eight common foods: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, wheat, soy, fish, and shellfish. Read food ingredients carefully since a food item may appear to be safe, but a food allergy could be lurking in a trace ingredient. Some allergic reactions can result in hospitalization or death. Ideally, check with parents to learn who has food allergies, which foods the child is allergic to, and what kind of reaction (including severity) the child has to the food.

Activity: Before you do this activity, arrange for one or more volunteers to bring in healthy snacks with a multi-cultural flavour. For example, you may have a parent, YMCA volunteer, or community resident who would enjoy doing this.

Children (just like adults) can get into food ruts and eat the same foods over and over. Introducing them to new foods (especially foods from different cultures) can encourage them to be adventurous and have more variety in their diets.



Activity Sheet #7

EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD SOCIAL COMPETENCY ASSETS

As Easy as One, Two, Three

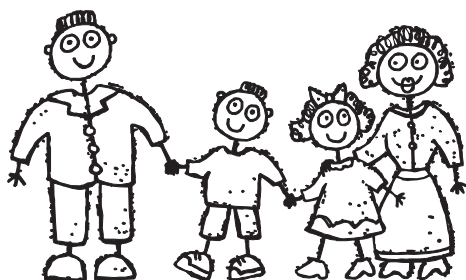
You can decide to eat healthier and get physical activity by setting goals. Once you decide, begin to act. All it takes is three easy steps.

Step #1: Decide on your health goal. (For example: Eat more vegetables.)

Step #2: Choose when to do your health goal. (For example: During lunch and dinner.)

Step #3: Decide where to do your health goal. (For example: At the table where our family eats.)





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 7

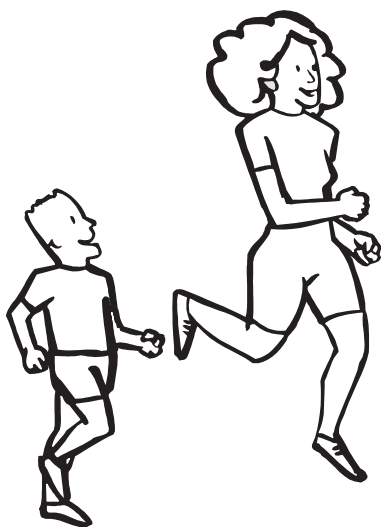


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Building Essential Skills

Helping your child build essential skills will help your child succeed in the future. Successful people have good people skills, and they also have personal skills that help them move forward, deal with difficulties, and reach their goals. Consider trying these ideas:

- Set health goals as a family. Set one eating goal, such as eating together as a family one more time this week than last. For a physical fitness goal, try a new activity or be active together for a longer period of time.
- Include others in eating healthy and physical activity. Invite an extended family member over for dinner. Ask a friend to do a physical activity with you.
- Broaden your eating habits. Try foods from another culture, such as Indian, Mexican, Chinese, Ethiopian, or Lebanese food.
- Resolve conflicts peacefully. Talk about your feelings. Don't use food as a way to comfort yourself when you're upset. Go for a walk or jog or do something else active when you have pent-up energy.
- Invent new rules for common games, such as tag, hide and seek, or relay races.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Give family members healthy choices for food. For example, let your child choose between two food options: having cooked carrots or broccoli.
- Watch serving sizes. It's often tempting to make servings too large.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. Even if you're not hungry, try to eat at least a little.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Walk your dog together. If you don't have a dog, ask a neighbour if you can walk his or her dog.
- On a warm day, run through the sprinkler. On a windy day, fly a kite. On a cold day, build a family of snow people.
- Plan a family getaway that's active. Go hiking. Go camping. Go biking.



Quick Tip

Plan a meal. If you already plan meals, plan one meal together. With your children, create the menu, the shopping list, and then shop and cook together.



Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. How do you decide what to eat for meals? For snacks?
2. Which friends help you make healthy eating and physical activity choices?
3. How does being angry affect how you eat and be active? What about when you're sad? Happy?

Build Assets Together

To grow up well, children need essential skills. They need to have strong social skills so they can get along well with a diversity of people. They need skills that help them plan and make decisions. They need skills that help them resist danger and resolve conflicts peacefully.

Five Developmental Assets are key social competencies assets. These include:

- #32** Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
- #33** Interpersonal competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
- #34** Cultural competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
- #35** Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
- #36** Peaceful conflict resolution—Child seeks to resolve conflicts nonviolently.

Learn more to eat healthy and to stay active by building these five key assets.

GOOD NEWS

45% of kids say that they have asset #33: interpersonal competence.

CHALLENGING NEWS

29% of kids say they have asset #32: planning and decision making.

POSITIVE IDENTITY

The positive identity assets focus on children's view of themselves—their own sense of power, purpose, worth, and promise. A critical task of childhood is for children to discover who they are and what they want to become.

Four developmental assets make up the category of positive identity. These include:

Asset #37: Personal power

Asset #38: Self-esteem

Asset #39: Sense of purpose

Asset #40: Positive view of personal future

To build the positive identity assets, try the following activities in your YMCA program.

Activity #29: Fortunately, Unfortunately

Focus: Physical Activity

Asset Category: Positive Identity

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A ball for every seven children

Learning Outcome: Children will identify positive things and things that get in the way of being physically active

Activity: Have children form groups of seven (or eight). Give each group a ball and have each group form a circle so that children in the group can toss the ball to each other.

Say something like, "We're going to play a game. The first person with the ball will start by saying something positive about being physically active. That person will begin talking by using the word fortunately. For example, someone might say, 'Fortunately, I have recess at school to be physically active.' Or you can say something else that is a positive."

Have children in the groups toss the ball to each other, saying one fortunate thing about physical activity. After about a minute, stop and say something like, "Now I want you to say something that gets in the way of physical activity. Begin by using the word unfortunately. For example, someone might say, 'Unfortunately, I really like watching TV.' Or you can say something else that gets in the way of physical activity."

Do the activity again. After about a minute, stop. Have the groups then alternate what they say between positive things (by saying fortunately) and things that get in the way (by saying unfortunately). Do the activity again.

End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- Which examples were easier to think of: things that make it easy to get physical activity or things that get in the way? Why do you think that is?
- How can we emphasize more of what makes it easy to be active than the things that get in the way?
- What one thing can you do to get physical activity today?

Activity #30: A Healthy Me

Focus: Nutrition

Asset Category: Positive Identity

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: A bunch of dice (ideally have a dice for every six children), paper and pencil for each child, copies of the accompanying sheet Look at Me so that each group has one

Learning Outcome: Children will learn the path of digestion

Activity: Before you do the activity, print out copies of the accompanying sheet “Look at Me” so that each group has one.

Have children form groups of six to seven. Give each child a piece of paper and a pencil. Give each group the accompanying sheet “Look at Me” and a dice.

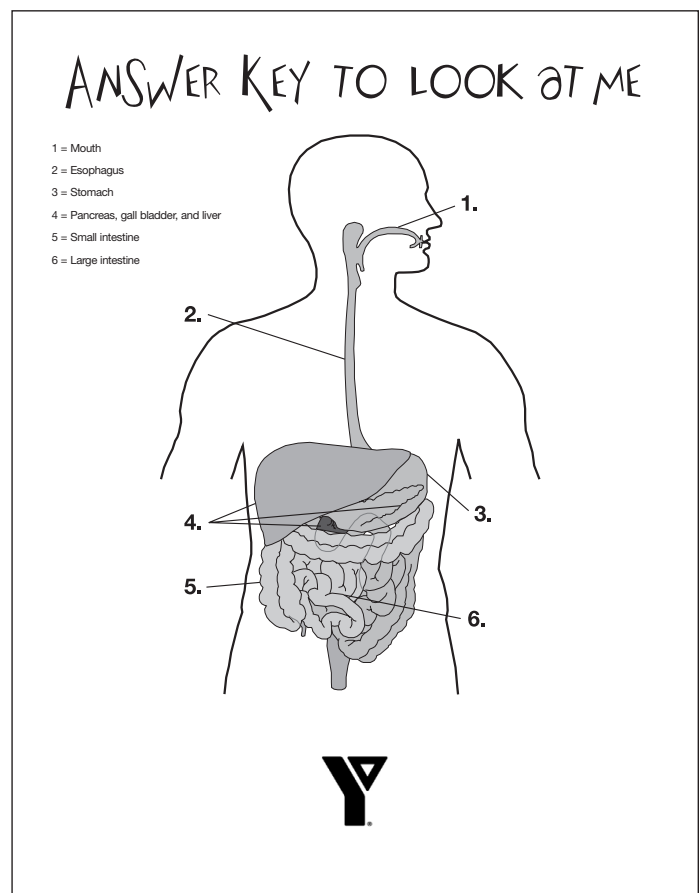
Say something like, “When we eat healthy foods, we help our bodies to be healthy. We’re going to do an activity where you will draw the path that food travels in our body to make us healthy. We’re going to take turns rolling the dice. Match the number you get on the dice with the number listed on the accompanying sheet “Look at Me”. You will want to get one of each number on the dice. If you roll the dice and get a number that you’re already drawn, you have to wait until the next turn.”

Before you do the activity, show children the art sample that has all the parts of digestion drawn in. Point out that the numbers from one to six are in order of digestion: Food goes into the mouth first (#1). Food then goes into a long tube called the esophagus (#2). After the esophagus, food travels to the stomach (#3). Enzymes from three organs (the pancreas, gall bladder, and liver) spray the food to help it digest better (#4). Food then goes into the small intestine (#5) where the healthy parts are absorbed into our blood stream. Waste then travels through the large intestine (#6) and then out of our body.

Do the activity. When a child rolls a one, he or she should draw a mouth (but nothing else). Continue the activity until children have drawn the complete path of digestion: mouth, esophagus, stomach, pancreas, gall bladder, liver, small intestine, and large intestine.

End the activity by asking questions such as these:

- How does eating healthy food make your body strong and healthy?
- How does eating healthy food make you feel good about yourself?
- What’s the next healthy food that you hope to eat today?



LOOK @T ME

1 = Mouth

4 = Pancreas, gall bladder, and liver

2 = Esophagus

5 = Small intestine

3 = Stomach

6 = Large intestine



ANSWER KEY TO LOOK AT ME

1 = Mouth

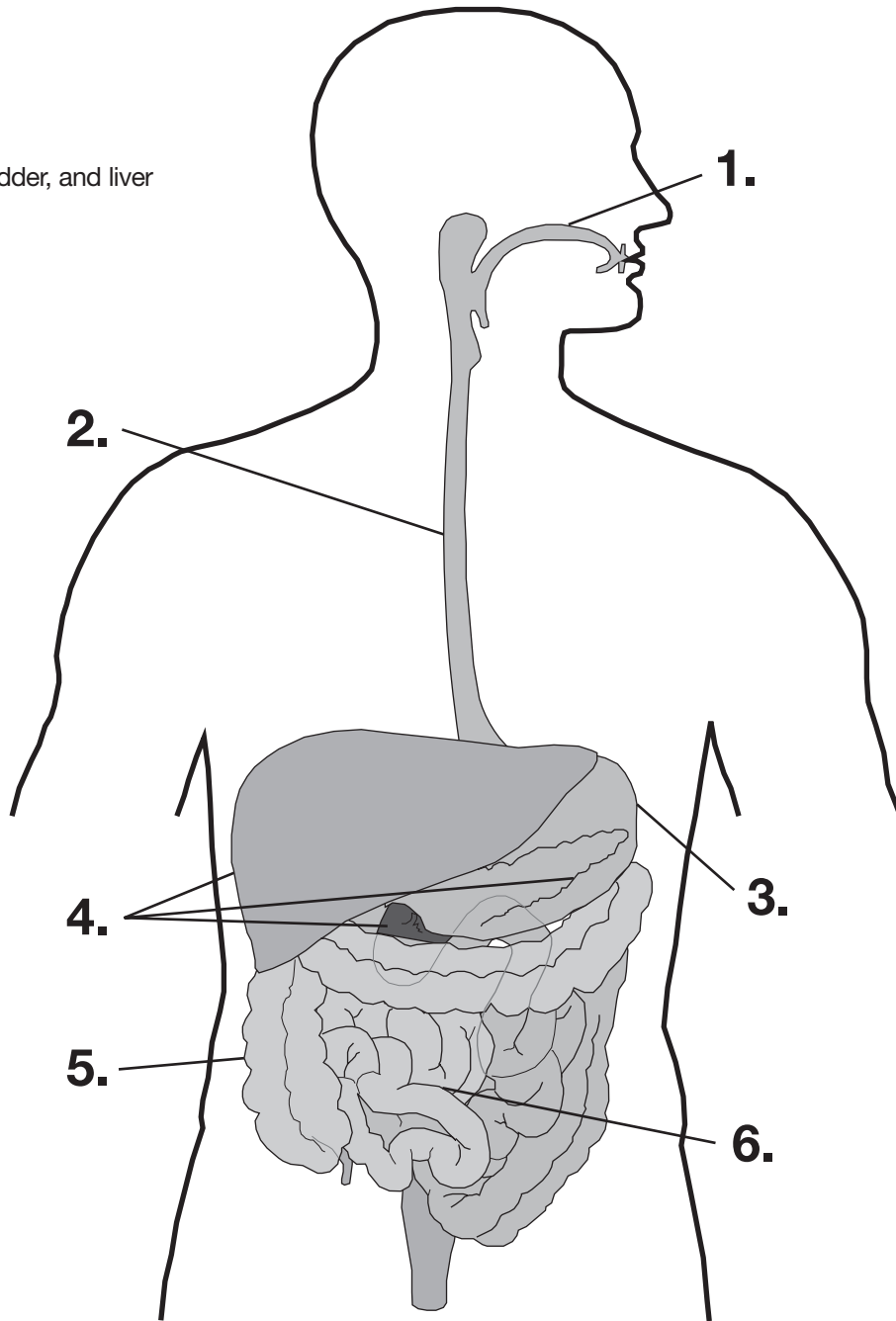
2 = Esophagus

3 = Stomach

4 = Pancreas, gall bladder, and liver

5 = Small intestine

6 = Large intestine



Activity #31: What's Good for Me

Focus: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Asset Category: Positive Identity

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

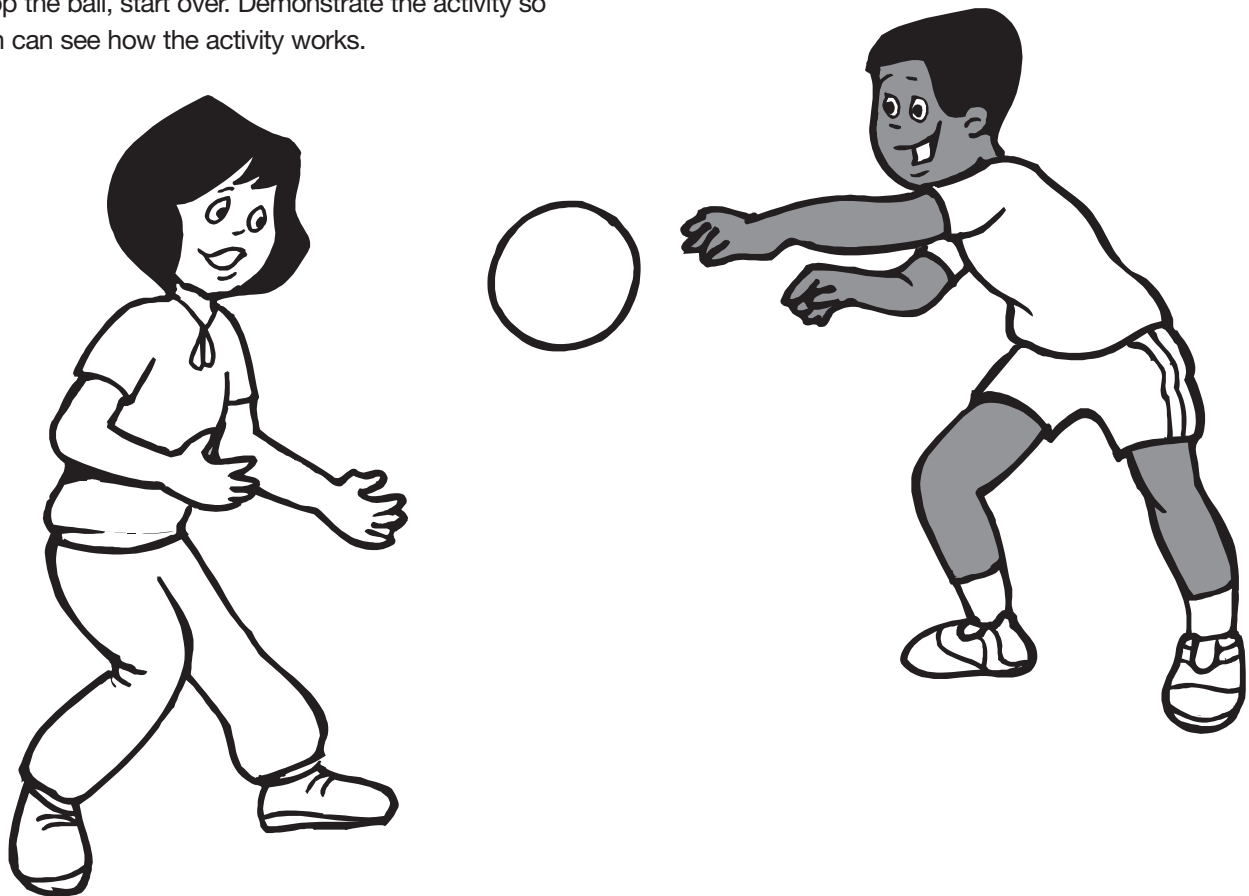
Materials Needed: A ball for every two children

Learning Outcome: Children will identify habits that make them strong and healthy

Do the activity. After a few minutes, end the activity by having all the children stand in one large circle and hold hands. Say something like, "I am so proud of all the positive health habits you've named. Each one can make you a strong, healthy person. Doing more than one can make you even stronger and healthier."

Activity: Ask children each to find a partner. If you have an extra child, create a group of three. Give each group a ball.

Say, "Eating healthy foods and getting physical activity helps us become strong, healthy people. Face your partner and stand about 1 metre apart (or three feet). Each time you throw the ball to your partner, name a healthy food, physical activity, or other healthy health habit that makes you strong and healthy. As you name things count. For example: 1. Get enough sleep. 2. Eat apples. 3. Skip to the bus stop. See how many health habits you can name without dropping the ball. If you drop the ball, start over. Demonstrate the activity so children can see how the activity works.



Bonus Activity #32: A Fun Purpose

Focus: Physical Activity and/or Nutrition

Asset Category: Positive Identity

Age Group: Ages 6 to 12 years

Group Size: All sizes of groups

Materials Needed: Depends on what the children choose

Learning Outcome: Children will choose a fun activity that will promote health

Activity: Have children gather together. Say something like, “To build the positive identity assets, it’s important for us to find a fun purpose that keeps us going and motivated. Since we’re emphasizing good nutrition and physical activity, let’s brainstorm ideas of what our group could do to be healthy.”

If children do not have ideas, you might suggest ideas, such as these:

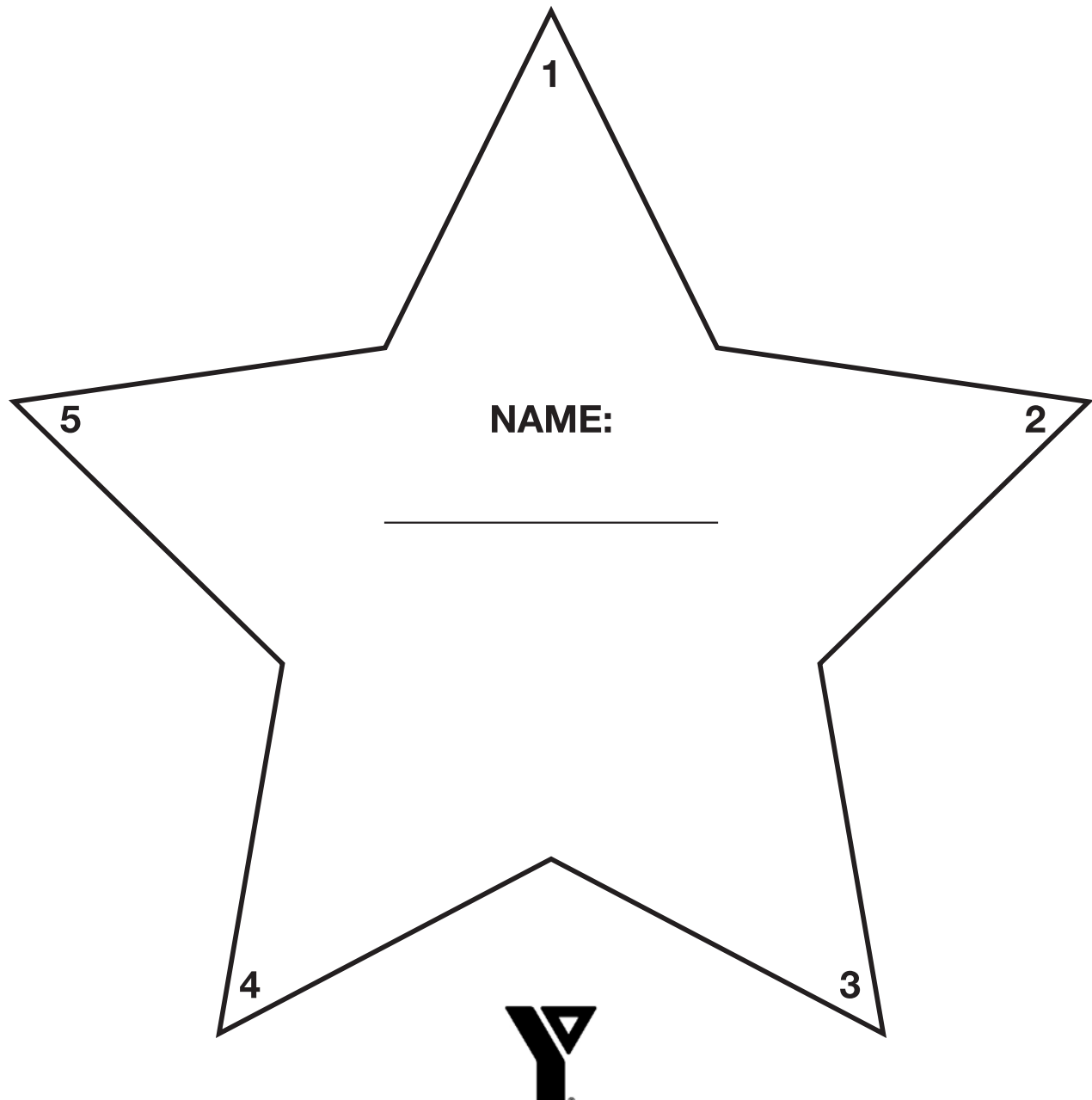
- Create a jar (or chart) where children can record every time they eat a fruit or vegetable. For example, they can add marks to a poster or they could add a marble or paper clip to a jar. Together watch the totals go up.
- Develop a fun obstacle course for children to race through to get physical activity.
- Design a tournament, such as a kickball or floor hockey tournament where kids (and even adults) can compete.
- Mix a fruit salad together. Have each child bring a different fruit and see what you can make.



EAT HEALTHIER, BE ACTIVE, AND BUILD POSITIVE IDENTITY ASSETS

Star Qualities

You are already doing a number of things to take good care of yourself. You eat healthy. You get regular physical activity. In the star below, write five things that you are doing right for your health. Try to include examples of healthy eating and physical activity. Consider other good choices you make, such as not watching a lot of TV and not drinking a lot of pop.



1


2

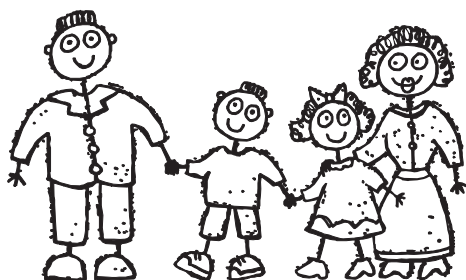
3

4

5

NAME:





IDEAS FOR HEALTHY families!

NEWSLETTER # 8

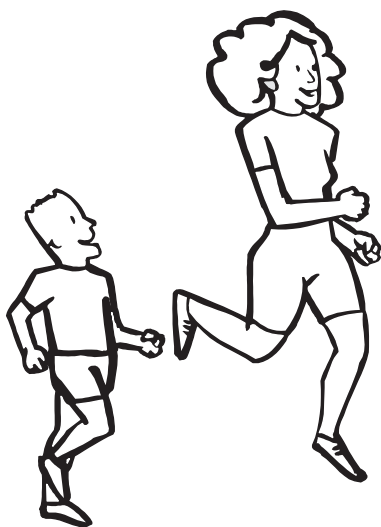


Practical Ideas for Eating Healthier, Getting Active, and Building Assets

Helping Kids Build a Strong Sense of Self

Kids who feel good about themselves and their abilities are more likely to take good care of their health. How you respond to your child greatly affects his or her identity. Love and care for your child while also giving clear boundaries that you enforce consistently. Consider trying these ideas:

- Give your child the chance to try a variety of physical activities. See which ones your child enjoys and do those on a regular basis.
- Find out how your child feels about his or her body. Does your child feel satisfied with his or her height? Weight? Fitness? If not, work together to set and meet a specific health goal.
- Visit your local YMCA as a family. Ask your child what he or she wants to do. Then as a family, do that together.
- Dream big about health goals. Does your child want to compete in a race? Play on a team? Learn how to ski? Talk about your health dreams and then start working toward them.
- Notice what your kids do right instead of focusing too much on what they do wrong. Point out the good choices they're making in eating healthy and being physically active.



Eat Healthy Together

Try these ideas to eat healthy together:

- Cook foods in healthy ways. Bake, roast, stir-fry, or steam foods instead of deep-frying or pan frying foods.
- Offer raw vegetables when your child is hungry between meals. Have cut-up carrots, celery, peppers and radishes on hand for snacking.
- Encourage family members to drink water when they're thirsty.



Quick Tip

Help your child create an “All About Me” book. In a blank notebook or scrapbook, have your child include information about favourite healthy foods, physical activities, school activities, and their dreams and hopes for the future.



Get Active Together

Try these ideas to get active together:

- Schedule time for physical activity, just like you schedule time to eat meals together and do homework.
- Keep a jump rope and soccer ball in your car. If you need to wait for an appointment or meeting, stop at a local park and get a little physical activity.
- Ask your local parks and recreation department for a list of community parks and playgrounds. Then visit them for walks and times to play.
- Establish family routines. For example: make every Sunday afternoon an outdoor family adventure for hiking. Discover the different parks in your community.

Talk Together

Ask each other these three questions:

1. How does eating healthy affect how you feel about yourself?
What about getting regular physical activity?
2. Which physical activities help you feel good about yourself? Why?
3. What gets you excited about healthy eating?

Build Assets Together

Kids need a positive self-esteem to feel good about themselves, but they need more than a healthy self-esteem. They also need to try activities to discover what they're talented at and what interests them. They need hopes and goals so that the future looks like an exciting place to go.

Four Developmental Assets are key positive identity assets. These include:

- #37** Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
- #38** Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person that he or she is.
- #39** Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
- #40** Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Learn more to eat healthy and to stay active by building these four key assets.

GOOD NEWS

72% of kids say that they have asset #40: positive view of personal future.

CHALLENGING NEWS

42% of kids say they have asset #37: personal power.

RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

H A N D O U T # 1

Canada's Guide to Healthy Living

Healthy Living: Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity by Health Canada outlines what children need to be healthy. The guide focuses on nutrition and physical activity.

For healthy eating, Health Canada recommends having:

- Five to 12 servings of grains each day,
- Five to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits every day,
- Two to 4 servings (depending on your age) of milk products each day, and
- Two to 3 servings of meats and alternatives every day.

The number of servings depend on your age, how physically active you are, your gender, and your body size. For example, children up to age 9 are encouraged to have two to three servings of milk products every day. Young people between the ages of 10 and 16 are encouraged to have three to four servings.

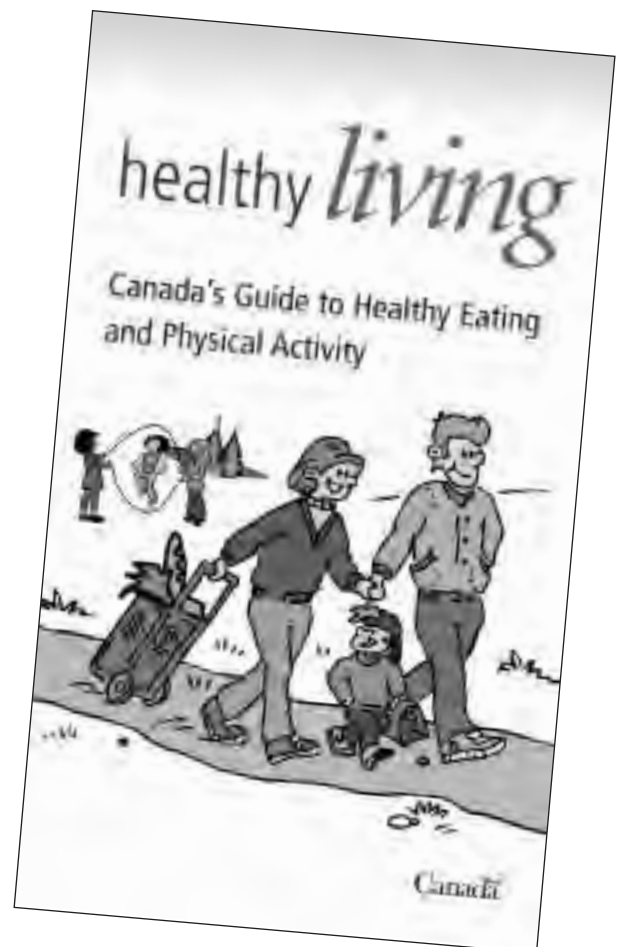
Grains include bread, cereal, bagel, pasta, and rice. Vegetables and fruit could be fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits. Salads and juices also make up the vegetable and fruit food group. Milk products are yogourt, cheese, and milk. The meat and alternative group includes fish, poultry, meat, nut butters, legumes, and tofu.

For physical activity, Health Canada suggests choosing a variety of activities from these three groups:

- Strength activities for two to four days a week.
- Endurance activities for four to seven days a week.
- Flexibility activities for to four to seven days a week.

Health Canada recommends accumulating 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity every day to stay healthy. The time needed depends on the amount of effort the physical activity requires. For example, children can do 30 minutes of physical activity a day as long as the activity is vigorous, such as playing basketball or hockey. Sixty minutes is suggested for physical activity that requires less effort, such as light walking and stretching. Experts suggest that individuals add up their activity in at least 10-minute time periods.

For a copy of *Healthy Living: Canada's Guide to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity*, visit www.eatwellbeactive.gc.ca. This web site also includes more information about healthy eating and physical activity.



RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

H A N D O U T # 2

The Truth About Eating Healthy and Staying Active

DID YOU KNOW?

Vegetables and Fruits

Experts at the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada give Canadian children an “F” for eating the recommended daily servings of fruits and vegetables. (Only 20 percent of Canadian children ages 6 to 12 do so.)

Physical Activity

According to Statistics Canada, 51 percent of Canadians are physically inactive. Only 22 percent or about 1 in 5 Canadians get enough physical activity.

Obesity

One out of every three young people in Canada (children and teenagers) is obese.

Healthy Habits

Researchers say it takes about six weeks for new healthy habits to be established. Be patient as you take positive steps toward living healthier.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- List the fruits and vegetables each family member eats each day. Count how many servings everyone eats. Aim for 5 to 10 a day.
- Try to eat 2 to 3 servings at every meal.
- Choose fruits and cut up vegetables for healthy snacks.

- Do some physical activity every day.
- Work up to 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

- Use Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a guide to a healthy diet.
- Manage portion sizes.
- Eat food and snacks from a variety of food groups.
- Monitor your weight. Weigh yourself once a week.
- Be active daily to burn calories.

- Be patient when trying to change your health habits.
- Expect slipups along the way.
- Focus on what is working.
- Create family support and work together toward a common goal of improving everyone's health.
- Celebrate your progress.



RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

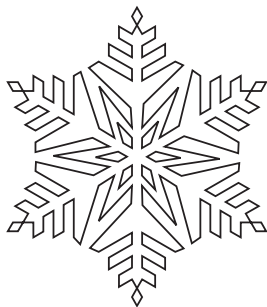
H A N D O U T # 3

Stay Active Together

Children are more physically active when their parents are physically active, say researchers. Consider these ideas to stay active together as a family.

DURING THE WINTER

- Go sledding.
- Make a snow fort.
- Trudge through deep snow.
- Make snow people.
- Go ice-skating.
- Play broomball or ice hockey.
- Make snow angels.
- Go skiing.
- Go snowboarding.



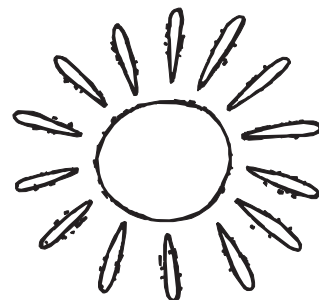
DURING THE SPRING

- Go outside and move whenever the weather turns warm.
- Fly a kite together.
- Count blooming flowers during a family walk.
- Ride bikes as soon as the snow and ice melt.
- Splash in puddles during a family walk.
- Jump rope outside.
- Visit as many playgrounds as you can and enjoy!
- Plant flowers or spring bulbs together.



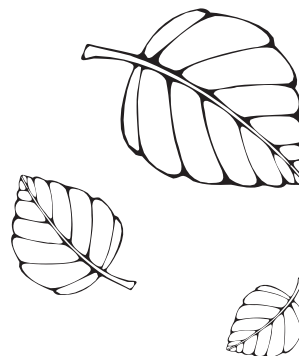
DURING THE SUMMER

- Run through the sprinkler. Go swimming.
- Go rollerblading or roller-skating.
- Play hopscotch.
- Take a family walk after dark and look at the stars.
- Have a water balloon battle.
- Kick around a soccer ball.
- Go to a waterpark.



DURING THE AUTUMN

- Rake up leaves. Jump into piles of leaves. Build a fort out of leaves.
- Play Frisbee®.
- Go for a brisk walk during brisk mornings.
- Shoot some hoops.
- Visit your YMCA and be active indoors.
- Take a walk to watch the Harvest Moon rise (during the autumnal equinox)



RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

H A N D O U T # 4

Eat Healthy Together

Canadian families spend less time eating together at the table. In 1981, Canadian families spent almost 80 minutes a day eating meals at home. Now families spent only 50 minutes a day. Researchers say families that eat together not only help kids to have better eating habits, eating together also helps kids grow up well socially and emotionally.

FOLLOW CANADA'S GUIDE TO HEALTHY EATING

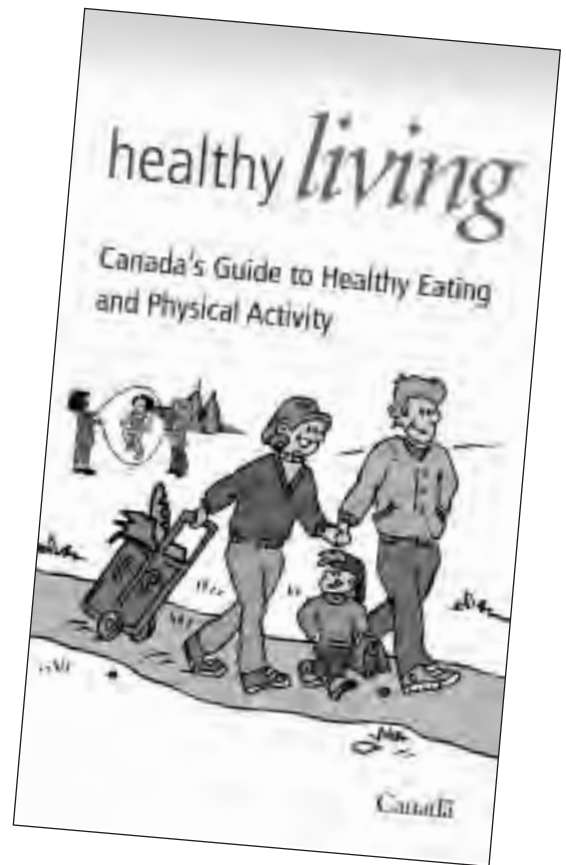
- Eat 5 to 12 servings of grains every day.
- Eat 5 to 10 servings of vegetables and fruits every day.
- Eat 2 to 4 servings of milk products every day.
- Eat 2 to 3 servings of meat every day.

CUT DOWN ON THESE FOODS

- Foods with a lot of fats and oils (such as butter).
- Foods that contain trans fats.
- Foods with a lot of sugar (such as pop, processed baked goods, and candy).
- High-fat snack foods (such as candy and chips).
- High-salt foods (such as pretzels and chips).
- Condiments (such as ketchup, mustard, and pickles).

CONSIDER THESE HEALTHY EATING TIPS

- Eat three healthy meals a day.
- Eat breakfast every day to start the day off right.
- Serve smaller portions.
- Read the Nutrition Facts labels on prepared food.
- Drink water whenever you are thirsty.
- Eat together as a family as often as you can.



RAISING HEALTHY KIDS

H A N D O U T # 5



A Worthwhile Activity

Worthwhile activities help us to meet new people and learn new skills. Use this handout together with a parent to evaluate a YMCA activity that you're currently participating in.

Activity Name (for example, YMCA swim lesson):

Days the Activity Meets

(for example, Saturday mornings):

Times the Activity Meets (for example 4-5:30 p.m.):

Place the Activity Meets (for example at the YMCA):

Duration (for example six weeks or three months):

Checkmark what this activity offers.

(Check as many that apply.)

SUPPORT ASSETS

- ☐ Caring adults lead the activity.
- ☐ Leaders speak to me in positive ways.
- ☐ I feel supported by the leaders.

EMPOWERMENT ASSETS

- ☐ I feel valued and appreciated during this activity.
- ☐ I get the opportunity to serve others.
- ☐ I feel safe at this activity.

BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS ASSETS

- ☐ The activity has clear and consistent rules.
- ☐ The leaders are positive role models.
- ☐ Other children in this activity model positive, responsible behavior.
- ☐ I know what is expected of me during this activity.

CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME ASSETS

- ☐ The activity includes music, art, drama, or creative writing.
- ☐ We do a number of interesting activities during the times we meet.
- ☐ The leaders talk and play with us during the program.

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING ASSETS

- ☐ Activity leaders motivate me to learn more or to improve my skills.
- ☐ I really enjoy doing this activity.
- ☐ The activity leaders sometimes give me suggestions of things I can do at home to improve my skills.
- ☐ I care about the activity leaders.

POSITIVE VALUES ASSETS

- ☐ Activity leaders say it is important to help other people (or to build teamwork).
- ☐ Activity leaders emphasize positive values, such as honesty and responsibility.
- ☐ Activity leaders talk about doing the right thing instead of the wrong thing.

SOCIAL COMPETENCIES ASSETS

- ☐ The activity gives me chances to make decisions and plan.
- ☐ The activity helps me to make friends.
- ☐ Activity leaders teach me how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

POSITIVE IDENTITY ASSETS

- ☐ The activity helps me feel proud of who I am.
- ☐ The activity is fun.
- ☐ I look forward to coming to this activity.

Scoring: The more checkmarks an activity has, the better.

High-quality activities often will have at least one checkmark in most of the eight asset categories. Sometimes, however, it's okay to choose an activity that does not have a lot of checkmarks. In these instances, you may want to build specific skills (such as learning how to ice skate so that you can join the hockey team). Or you may want to build certain assets (such as doing a community service activity.)

Note: If you would like to evaluate other activities, ask your YMCA program leader for more copies of this activity sheet.

40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood

Search Institute has identified the following building blocks of healthy development that help children grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

EXTERNAL ASSETS

Support

1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.
2. Positive family communication—Parent(s) and child communicate positively. Child feels comfortable seeking advice and counsel from parent(s).
3. Other adult relationships—Child receives support from adults other than her or his parent(s).
4. Caring neighbourhood—Child experiences caring neighbours.
5. Caring school climate—Relationships with teachers and peers provide a caring, encouraging school environment.
6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping the child succeed in school.

Empowerment

7. Community values children—Child feels valued and appreciated by adults in the community.
8. Children as resources—Child is included in decisions at home and in the community.
9. Service to others—Child has opportunities to help others in the community.
10. Safety—Child feels safe at home, at school, and in her or his neighbourhood.

Boundaries and Expectations

11. Family boundaries—Family has clear and consistent rules and consequences and monitors the child's whereabouts.
12. School boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.
13. Neighbourhood boundaries—Neighbours take responsibility for monitoring the child's behaviour.
14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults in the child's family, as well as nonfamily adults, model positive, responsible behaviour.
15. Positive peer influence—Child's closest friends model positive, responsible behaviour.
16. High expectations—Parent(s) and teachers expect the child to do her or his best at school and in other activities.

Constructive Use of Time

17. Creative activities—Child participates in music, art, drama, or creative writing two or more times per week.
18. Child programs—Child participates two or more times per week in extra curricular school activities or structured community programs for children.
19. Religious community—Child attends religious programs or services one or more times per week.
20. Time at home—Child spends some time most days both in high-quality interaction with parents and doing things at home other than watching TV or playing video games.

INTERNAL ASSETS

Commitment to Learning

21. Achievement motivation—Child is motivated and strives to do well in school.
22. Learning engagement—Child is responsive, attentive, and actively engaged in learning at school and enjoys participating in learning activities outside of school.
23. Homework—Child usually hands in homework on time.
24. Bonding to adults at school—Child cares about teachers and other adults at school.
25. Reading for pleasure—Child enjoys and engages in reading for fun most days of the week.

Positive Values

26. Caring—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to help other people.
27. Equality and social justice—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to speak up for equal rights for all people.
28. Integrity—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to stand up for one's beliefs.
29. Honesty—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to tell the truth.
30. Responsibility—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to accept personal responsibility for behaviour.
31. Healthy lifestyle—Parent(s) tell the child it is important to have good health habits and an understanding of healthy sexuality.

Social Competencies

32. Planning and decision making—Child thinks about decisions and is usually happy with results of her or his decisions.
33. Interpersonal competence—Child cares about and is affected by other people's feelings, enjoys making friends, and, when frustrated or angry, tries to calm her- or himself.
34. Cultural competence—Child knows and is comfortable with people of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds and with her or his own cultural identity.
35. Resistance skills—Child can stay away from people who are likely to get her or him in trouble and is able to say no to doing wrong or dangerous things.
36. Peaceful conflict resolution—Child attempts to resolve conflict nonviolently.

Positive Identity

37. Personal power—Child feels he or she has some influence over things that happen in her or his life.
38. Self-esteem—Child likes and is proud to be the person he or she is.
39. Sense of purpose—Child sometimes thinks about what life means and whether there is a purpose for her or his life.
40. Positive view of personal future—Child is optimistic about her or his personal future.

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www.search-institute.org. If you have children of other ages or you would like asset lists in French or Spanish, download the free list of the

40 Developmental Assets for the age of your child. Visit www.abundantassets.org/dev_assets.cfm.

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OUR MISSION

The YMCA is a charity offering opportunities for personal growth, community involvement and leadership.

OUR VISION

The YMCA of Greater Toronto will focus on making connections: connecting people, connecting with youth, and connecting with the community.

OUR VALUES

Caring, Health, Honesty, Inclusiveness, Respect, Responsibility



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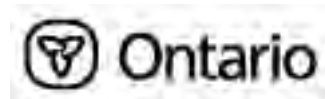
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