

# Introduction

## What is the *California Children's 5 a Day—Power Play Campaign*?

The *California Children's 5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* encourages California's 9- to 11-year-old children to eat 3 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables and be physically active for at least 60 minutes every day. The *Campaign* works with schools, youth organizations, retailers, and the media to surround children with empowering messages and to create environments in which eating fruits and vegetables and being physically active is both easy and socially supported.

The *Campaign* is a part of the larger *California 5 a Day Campaign* and the *California Nutrition Network for Healthy, Active Families*. These programs are led by the California Department of Health Services to reduce the risk of chronic diseases, especially cancer, heart disease, and obesity.

The *5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* partners with the California Department of Education, California Department of Food and Agriculture, American Cancer Society, and a variety of other agencies interested in children's health. The *Campaign* is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Stamp Program to increase fruit and vegetable consumption, physical activity levels, and participation in federal nutrition assistance programs by children from low-income, food stamp-eligible families.

## Overview of the *Community Youth Organization Idea & Resource Kit*

One product of the *5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* is the **NEW** *Community Youth Organization Idea & Resource Kit (Kit)*. The *Kit* contains 20 activities for community youth organizations to use with 5- to 11-year-old children. The activities focus on the importance of eating 2½ to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables every day, which is the recommended amount for 5- to 11-year-old children (for specific recommendations, see Worksheet 2B on pages 16-17). A new feature of the *Kit* is the inclusion of physically active games and activities. Other materials available to community youth organizations include the *5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* parent brochure and the *Kids...Get Cookin'!* cookbook. You do not need to be a nutrition expert to use the *Kit*. Simply review the background information and, if necessary, take advantage of the additional resources referred to in the Appendix.

The **NEW** *Kit* is research-based and educator-friendly. Many community youth organizations and over 3,000 children from around the state provided valuable input as pilot-test participants.

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## Disclaimer

The name of the *Children's 5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* was created at a time when the dietary recommendation for 9- to 11-year-old children was to eat 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day. In January 2005, the revised Dietary Guidelines for Americans was released, which indicated that children in this age group eat 3 to 5 cups of fruits and vegetables every day. While the name of the *Children's 5 a Day—Power Play! Campaign* was not changed at the time of this publication, the content in this document reflects the new fruit and vegetable recommendations of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. In addition, the physical activity recommendation in this document is in compliance with the revised guidelines.

# Using the Kit

The NEW *Community Youth Organization Idea & Resource Kit* activities are in a consistent, easy-to-follow format. The *Kit* is divided into the following sections:

- **Getting Started...Introducing Children to Fruits, Vegetables, and Physical Activity**  
*This section contains a total of five activities, three of which are physically active.*
- **Fruit and Vegetable Power...More about Fruits and Vegetables**  
*This section contains a total of five activities, three of which are physically active.*
- **Preparation Power...Learning to Prepare and Grow Fruits and Vegetables**  
*This section contains three activities.*
- **Community Power... Influences and Influencing Others**  
*This section contains a total of four activities, one of which is physically active.*
- **Challenge Power...Doing Our Best**  
*This section contains a total of three activities, two of which are physically active.*

Each activity in the *Kit* contains the following sections:

- **Prep Time.** *The average amount of time needed to prepare for the activity*
- **Activity Time.** *The average amount of time needed to complete the activity with the children*
- **Materials.** *A list of the materials required to complete the activity*
- **READY.** *A brief overview of the activity*
- **SET.** *What you need to do before conducting the activity with the children*
- **GO.** *Easy-to-follow directions for conducting the activity*
- **GO FARTHER.** *Possibilities for expanding the activity*
- **BRING IT HOME.** *Possibilities for expanding the activity into the home and community*

**NOTE:**

All activities were designed for use with children of mixed ages, from 5-11 years old, with older children helping younger children when necessary. Some activities include modified directions for those who work with younger children, ages 5-8 years old. See **Modifications for Younger Children** in the GO section of select activities.

# Master List of Materials

To complete all 20 activities in this *Kit*, you will need the following materials (excludes optional items):

- Copy machine and paper to copy handouts (Activities 1, 2, 7, 13, and 14)
- Writing instruments for children: pencils or pens (Activities 1, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, and 18)
- Plain paper, index cards, or other materials to write on (Activities 6, 11, 14, 16, 18, and 20)
- Chalkboard and chalk, flip chart and markers, or butcher paper and markers (Activities 6 and 14)
- Art supplies: colored markers, crayons, colored chalk, colored pencils, colored paper, scissors, glue, and sticks (tongue depressors, Popsicle sticks, emery boards, or straws) (Activities 6, 9, 12, 16, and 18)
- Food: variety of fruits and vegetables for demonstrations and tastings (may be fresh, frozen, canned, or dried), lowfat/nonfat dips (salad dressing and vanilla yogurt) (Activities 2 and 13)
- Demonstration supplies: measuring cups (1-cup,  $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup), plates, one 8-ounce or larger glass, one baseball, and one 6-ounce juice box (Activities 2 and 13)
- Pictures of fruits and vegetables (for younger children only) (Activities 6 and 11)
- A hat or small box (Activity 11)
- Gardening supplies: Milk cartons, 2-liter plastic soda bottles, or Styrofoam cups for planting; vegetable starters or seeds; potting soil; and water (Activity 12)
- Taste testing supplies: serving containers (cups, bowls, plates), forks or spoons, napkins, and measuring cups (Activity 13)
- Sample advertisements from television, radio, and magazines or newspapers (Activity 14)
- Physical activity supplies/equipment: Flags, such as kerchiefs, scarves, rags, pieces of cloth, flag football flags, or colored tissue streamers (Activity 8), safe tagging and tossing items, such as foam balls or bean bags (Activities 4 and 5), and hula hoops (Activity 19)

# Background

## The Basics of Nutrition and Physical Activity

The food and physical activity choices you make every day affect your health—how you feel today, tomorrow, and in the future. The science-based advice of the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans highlights how to make smart choices from every food group, get the most nutrition out of your calories, and find your balance between food and physical activity.

The best way to give your body the balanced nutrition it needs is by eating a variety of nutrient-packed foods every day and staying within your daily calorie needs.

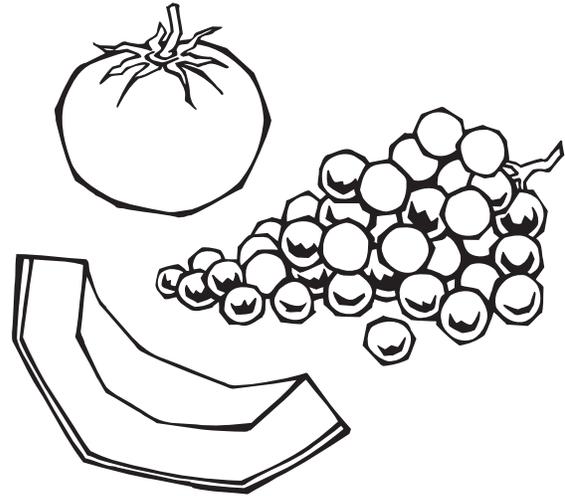
A healthy eating plan is one that:

- Emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat free or lowfat milk and milk products.
- Includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, eggs, and nuts.
- Is low in saturated fats, *trans* fats, cholesterol, salt (sodium), and added sugars.

Physical activity is also part of the healthy living equation. Regular physical activity is important for your overall health and fitness, and helps you control your body weight. Here are a few physical activity recommendations that pave the way to a healthier you:

- Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week.
- Increasing the intensity or the amount of time that you are physically active can have even greater health benefits and may be needed to control body weight. About 60 minutes a day may be needed to prevent weight gain.
- Children and teenagers should be physically active for 60 minutes every day.

A healthy, balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables and regular physical activity are major investments in your life. In fact, healthy eating and physical activity may reduce your risk of many chronic diseases such as heart disease, certain cancers, type 2 diabetes, and osteoporosis, and increase your chances for a longer life. To learn more about the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and find ways to make healthy food and physical activity choices, go to [www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines](http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines) and [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov).



## The Importance of Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables give you many of the nutrients that you need: vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, water, and healthy phytonutrients. Some are sources of vitamin A, while others are rich in vitamin C, folate, or potassium. Almost all fruits and vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and none have cholesterol.

For children, fruits and vegetables are sources of nutrients that are essential for growth and development, such as vitamin A, vitamin C, folate, and dietary fiber. By establishing the habit of eating fruits and vegetables early in life, children can get a head start in reducing their future risk of certain common cancers, heart disease, hypertension, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and overweight.

## The Importance of Physical Activity

Physical activity helps relieve stress and makes you feel good. It will help you be more productive and sleep better. Physical activity is also good for your health. It helps you achieve and maintain fitness and lowers your chronic disease risk. Children and adolescents benefit from activity, too. It is recommended that they get at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.

Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence improves strength and endurance, helps build healthy bones and muscles, helps control weight, reduces anxiety and stress, increases self-esteem, and may improve blood pressure and cholesterol levels. Positive experiences with physical activity at a young age help lay the foundation for being regularly active throughout life.

## Consider these Facts

### Children are not eating enough fruits and vegetables or engaging in enough physical activity.

- In California, 9- to 11-year-old children eat an average of 3.2 servings (about 1.6 cups) of fruits and vegetables on a typical day.<sup>1</sup>
- In California, nearly 40 percent of children assessed through the state's Fitnessgram were considered unfit. There were a higher percentage of unfit children among the Latino and African American populations.<sup>2</sup>

### Poor nutrition and low levels of physical activity greatly affect children.

- Inadequate nutrition and poor diet is a major cause of impaired cognitive development, is associated with poor educational performance among low-income children and also contributes to obesity, anemia, and susceptibility to lead poisoning.<sup>3</sup>

- Children engaged in daily physical education show superior motor fitness, academic performance, and [a more positive] attitude toward school as compared to their counterparts who do not participate in daily physical education.<sup>4</sup>
- Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades.<sup>5</sup>
- Obesity increases the risk of high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, asthma, and type 2 diabetes while still in childhood.<sup>6</sup>

### Establishing healthy eating and activity habits among children can help head off problems in adulthood.

- About half of overweight children or teens will be obese in adulthood.<sup>7,8</sup>

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1. California Department of Health Services. (2003). [2003 California Children's Healthy Eating and Exercise Practices Survey]. Unpublished data.
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  3. Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy. (1998). *Statement on the link between nutrition and cognitive development in children 1998* (4th edition). Medford, Mass: Tufts University, School of Nutrition.
  4. Pollatschek J.L. & O'Hagen F.J. (1989, September). An investigation of the psycho-physical influences of a quality daily physical education programme. *Health Education Research*, 4, 341-350.
  5. Ogden C., Flegal K., Carrol M., & Johnson C. (2002). Prevalence and trends in overweight among U.S. children and adolescents, 1999-2000. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 288, 1728-1732.
  6. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001). *The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent and Decrease Overweight and Obesity*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Office of the Surgeon General.
  7. Whitaker, R.C., Wright, J.A., Pepe, M.S., Seidel, K.D., & Dietz, W.H. (1997). Predicting obesity in young adulthood from childhood and parental obesity. *The New England Journal of Medicine*, 337, 869-873.
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# Suggestions for Maintaining a Healthy Youth Organization

Healthy eating and physical activity can improve children's overall health, as well as their energy levels, self-esteem, and behavior. In addition to using this *Kit* to teach children about the importance of eating fruits and vegetables and being physically active, you can create a youth organization that supports these behaviors and helps children put their newfound knowledge into practice.

## Here's how to maintain a healthy youth organization

- **Motivate children with your words and actions.** Let children see your staff enjoying fruits and vegetables. Encourage staff to bring healthy fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks. Also, let the children see your staff participate in physical activities at the youth organization and encourage them to talk about physical activities they participate in outside of the youth organization. Encourage children to do something physically active during their outdoor time.
- **Create a healthy snack and celebration policy.** Create a healthy snack and celebration policy with the children. Be sure to provide a copy of the policy to your participants to take home to their parents.
- **Use rewards and discipline that support health.** Avoid using any kind of food as a reward, especially foods with low nutritional value. As an alternative, you may wish to provide incentives or rewards that promote physical activity. Don't withhold physical activity as a form of discipline.
- **Create a youth organization that moves.** Provide opportunities for physical activity throughout the day. Movement facilitates improved attention and focused learning, so that children are better behaved during other activities. Take activity breaks during sedentary activities and have children lead the break with stretches, or play a popular dance song and let the children dance. Encourage staff to join in and participate with them. Offer many opportunities for active play during the day.
- **Do a scan of your environment to be sure it supports healthy eating and physical activity.** Remove any posters, bulletin boards, or objects that promote unhealthy eating or sedentary behaviors (e.g., TV watching, video games). Put up posters, bulletin boards, and other images promoting fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity. Avoid any objects in your environment that could be considered an advertisement, especially those that promote unhealthy products.
- **Reconsider the food that is available at your site.** If you have food and/or beverage vending machines, be sure that *at least* half of the products are healthy (e.g., water, 100% juices, dried fruit, lowfat snacks, etc.) and be sure that the items are offered in reasonable serving sizes. Make sure that healthy food and beverages are as affordable as less healthy ones and consider making the machines available only at certain times of day. For more ideas about healthy vending machines, see the Appendix. If you serve meals and snacks, add fruits and vegetables to your menu and limit less healthy offerings. Consider participating in the USDA meal and snack programs to help you afford healthy offerings (visit <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns/> for more information). For healthy meal and snack ideas, visit <http://www.nal.usda.gov/childcare/recipes>.