

Sample Letters

Communicating nutrition, physical activity and screen time policies to families

Date

Dear Families,

We are writing to let you know about a change in our policies for snack time. Beginning on [START DATE], only foods and drinks given by the snack program will be served at [PROGRAM NAME]. This means that children may no longer bring their own snacks and drinks (except for children with limits to what they can eat or allergies to certain foods). We are also no longer letting any other programs, volunteers, or visitors to bring food and drinks to the program.

We are starting this new policy because your child’s health and safety are important. Keeping food and drinks from coming into the program helps us keep your children healthy and safe in many ways. This policy helps children who have allergies. Children often share or trade their snacks or drinks, and this policy will help stop kids with food allergies from eating another child’s snack that might make them sick. Also, because everyone will have the same food and drinks, it keeps kids focused and stops jealousy or even fights between kids if one child wants another’s snack. Last, but not least, it helps make sure that all kids at [PROGRAM NAME] get a healthy snack every day that will keep them healthy, full of energy and focused. We want kids to eat well for their whole lives.

To help us with this policy, please do not send your child to [PROGRAM NAME] with *any* foods or drinks. If children do have any foods or drinks with them, staff members will ask that they keep them in their bag until it is time for pick-up. If your child has an allergy or food limit that stops him or her from eating the snack given by the program, or if you have any other questions, please speak with [NAME] at [PHONE or EMAIL].

Regards,

[name/title]

Date

Dear Families,

We are writing to let you know about a change in our policies for snack time at [PROGRAM NAME]. Beginning on [START DATE], we will be serving water as a drink choice every day during snack. This will mean that water is always offered at snack, either alone or with other drinks (low fat milk or 100% juice). The staff members at [PROGRAM NAME] will be make sure that cups are given to children at snack time every day and make sure children can drink water whenever they are thirsty.

We are making this policy because we want to help your child stay healthy and eat well. Drinking lots of water is important because it keeps kids from getting too thirsty without adding extra sugar to what they eat. Serving water at snack time every day helps kids learn that water is always a good choice when they want something to drink, whether it is with a meal, a snack, or just by itself.

To help us with this policy, you can talk to your child about healthy drinks and how drinking water keeps us hydrated. You can also serve and drink water at home.

Thank you for your help. If you have any questions please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [PHONE or EMAIL].

Regards,

[name/title]

Date

Dear Families,

The staff here at [PROGRAM NAME] hopes to provide your child with a safe, healthy, and fun after-school program. We have been looking at our program policies to see how we can make sure that [PROGRAM NAME] does its best to keep your child healthy. We are writing to let you know about a change in our policies for computers, video games, and television time during afterschool. Beginning on [START DATE]:

*[CHOOSE OPTIONS RIGHT FOR YOUR SITE – you can pick none, some, or write your own – these are only suggested additions – choose ones that would work for your specific program]*

* Regular broadcast television or movies will no longer be shown at the program. Only educational television programming (such as PBS’ *Zoom*) will be allowed, and this television time will be limited to 30 minutes or less per day.

OR

* We will no longer be showing *any* television or movies at the program.
* Computer use will be limited to one hour per day. Our staff will make sure no child has too much time on the computer.

OR

* During the program, children will only be allowed to use computers for homework. Each child is only allowed to use a computer for 1 hour per day.

YOU CAN ALSO ADD:

* Computer time is used only for educational games and homework. Internet use is not allowed during program hours.

We are starting this policy to help your child stay healthy and focused during the after school program. [ Experts agree that children 2 years and older should not watch more than 1-2 hours of TV each day. Children should only watch educational TV made for kids their age. When kids are watching TV, they are not being active, playing with other kids, or being creative. TV and the internet also show a lot of ads to kids. A lot of the advertising is for unhealthy foods and drinks.

To help us with this policy, you can help your child to enjoy other activities, both during the after school program and at home. If your child is unhappy about having less TV or computer time, talk to them about other activities that they enjoy. These activities might be playing outside, talking with their friends, drawing, or playing a board game. Thank you for your help. If you have any questions please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [PHONE or EMAIL].

Regards,

[name/title]

Date

Dear Families,

The staff at [PROGRAM NAME] is excited to help your child learn, have fun, and grow up healthy. Children need to play and be active every day to stay healthy. Physical activity can stop children from getting illnesses like diabetes and heart disease when they are older. Activity can also help kids sleep at night, stay focused at school and have more energy. All of these things are important to help your child do well in school.

Experts say that children should get at least one hour of physical activity a day. Boston Public Schools aim to give kids at least 30 minutes during the school day. This could be in gym class, recess or classroom activity breaks. Most kids still need at least 30 more minutes of activity after the school day ends. We think our program can help kids get those 30 more minutes —which helps them stay healthy and be good students.

*[CHOOSE OPTIONS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR SITE – you can pick none, some, or write your own – these are only suggested additions – choose ones that would work for your specific program:]*

This year we are working to offer more activities like [LIST OF ACTIVITIES THE SITE CURRENTLY OFFERS] everyday. If you have a special skill (like basketball, dancing, or karate) and would like to volunteer to teach a class, please let [CONTACT PERSON’S NAME AND PHONE/EMAIL] know.

AND/OR

We are changing our schedule to make sure that every child has the chance to get at least 30 minutes of physical activity each day.

AND/OR

As part of this goal, we’re starting [INSERT IDEAS FROM LEARNING COMMUNITIES HERE – could include things like clubs, dance programs, walking group, etc.]

AND/OR

This year we will also include fitness breaks to help kids focus during homework time. The breaks also give kids more chances to get moving during the program. Even short 10-minute breaks of activity can make a difference!

YOU COULD ALSO ADD…

When possible, we like to take the children outside to play. Please make sure to send them dressed for having fun in the sun or the cold!

You can help by talking to your child about the physical activities we offer and encouraging him or her to join in. On the weekends, try visiting places where your child can be active such as public parks or playgrounds. Or just get active at home! Take a walk around the block or dance around the house to get everyone up and moving.

If you have any questions please contact [CONTACT NAME] at [PHONE or EMAIL].

Regards,

[name/title]