



## Healthy Habits User's Guide

A step-by-step guide  
for implementing Healthy Habits  
in Boys & Girls Clubs

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Boys & Girls Clubs of America

1275 Peachtree St. NE

Atlanta, GA 30309-3447

(404) 487-5700

[www.bgca.org](http://www.bgca.org)

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# Introduction

Unhealthy lifestyles put youth at risk for obesity and other health problems. Although many youth participate to some degree in sports and fitness activities, they are not always physically fit – and often lack the basic knowledge needed to make positive food choices.

Triple Play: A Game Plan for the Mind, Body and Soul demonstrates how eating right, keeping fit and forming positive relationships create a healthy lifestyle for Club members. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has taken a strong interest in this program because it is in line with its *Steps to a Healthier US* initiative.

Through the comprehensive Triple Play program strategy, Club professionals help boys and girls better understand nutrition, from counting calories to determining reasonable portions of food (the “Mind” component of Triple Play is called Healthy Habits). Members receive coaching in sports leagues and fun activities that develop their coordination, physical fitness and teamwork and leadership skills (the “Body” component of Triple Play). Organized social recreation activities strengthen character, increase confidence and enhance the ability to relate well to others (the “Soul” component of Triple Play).

The Healthy Habits User’s Guide is designed to be a resource for Boys & Girls Club executives, managers and staff as they implement health and wellness programming. As with any Club program intervention, the interests and needs of Club members primarily drive program decisions.

The extent to which different Clubs will implement Healthy Habits in their programming is affected by factors such as time, funding, staffing, etc. This user’s guide is designed to help local Club professionals decide what level of implementation is best suited for their particular circumstances. The guide is based upon sound principles and the lessons learned from Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s past experiences.

The support of the Coca-Cola Company and Kraft Foods, Inc. makes Healthy Habits and the whole Triple Play programming approach possible.

## What is Healthy Habits?

Known as the “Mind” component of Triple Play, Healthy Habits helps Club members develop a knowledge base to acquire healthy habits regarding nutrition, such as making smart food choices, understanding appropriate portion sizes, and creating fun and healthy meals.

Healthy Habits contains the background information, step-by-step lesson plans and handouts needed to conduct sessions and activities for 10 topics. The lessons are designed for the following age groups: 6 to 8, 9 to 12 and 13 to 18.

Generally, each lesson and activity takes about 30 minutes for the 6 to 8 age group and about 45 minutes for the older age groups. Time frames can be shortened or lengthened according to the needs and interests of your group. It is important to conduct Lesson 1, MyPyramid is Your Pyramid, first and make sure participants develop a complete understanding of its contents.

The lessons are correlated to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) MyPyramid, shown here.

It is important to note that Healthy Habits uses a positive, upbeat approach and fun group games and activities to teach young people about healthy eating and physical activity. Activities include a



MyPyramid Relay Race, staging popular quiz show games for participants to test their knowledge, and even allowing Club members to prepare and taste-test their own healthy recipes.

## Using Peer Leaders

Once older teen members have participated in all the Healthy Habits sessions, or if the Club has teens who are Triple Play Sports Club members or have otherwise demonstrated that they are positive leaders, the Club may choose to have them lead small-group Healthy Habits sessions with younger members. This peer leader strategy gives younger members youth role models to emulate and allows teens to work with staff in leadership roles at the Club. Club staff should work closely with peer leaders and involve them in staff planning meetings as necessary.

## Pre-Assessments and Post-Assessments

Three age-appropriate pre- and post-assessments and answer keys are available for downloading in MSWord format from [www.bgca.net](http://www.bgca.net) (from the main menu, hover on Programs, then click on Health & Life Skills). Please remember to administer the assessments *before* and *after* members participate in the program. This assessment method can help evaluate the level to which members increase their knowledge as a result of participating in Healthy Habits and provide important local data that can be used for pursuing potential funding opportunities.

## Collaboration

Through the use of Healthy Habits, Clubs can build mutually beneficial collaborations in their communities and leverage support from foundations that are looking to support community-based organizations. Companies are interested in supporting organizations that demonstrate a willingness to work together and pool resources for the common good of the community. Club staff can build collaborations with many different organizations in the community. Clubs have formed partnerships with:

- schools, colleges and universities
- wellness clinics and hospitals
- grocery stores and restaurants

- gyms and fitness centers
- nutritionists, physicians, health educators and personal trainers
- city or county Parks & Recreation and Health Departments
- food pantries

## **The Healthy Habits Outcome Model**

To further understand the Healthy Habits approach, it is useful to review the Healthy Habits Outcome Model (also commonly referred to as a logic model) located at the end of this guide.

A logic model is like a road map for a program, setting out the program's goals and describing how members can reach them. Club professionals can use the Healthy Habits Outcome Model as a guide to ensure successful program implementation. It helps Club staff see the "big picture." The model moves from incubation through development and implementation, clarifying the positive impact the program should have. When a Club uses this planning model, staff can see all components of effective implementation, including:

- inputs or resources required;
- program activities to be completed;
- quantifiable outputs or products of the program; and
- short-term, intermediate and long-term outcomes for Club members completing the program.

Club staff members can customize the model by identifying and noting the specifics that apply to their Club. Staff should include available resources, such as personnel, supplies, materials and budget, as well as the number of youth who will participate in the program. The model can guide staff in planning for and organizing Club resources, while at the same time keeping in mind the desired outcomes of helping members eat smart, get fit and develop positive relationships.

# Integrating Healthy Habits in Club Programming

Ideally, the Healthy Habits program is most effective if implemented across all Club core program areas and incorporated in all Club programs and activities. The most effective program staff members at Clubs are those who creatively “mix and match” activities throughout the Club to enliven and enrich the whole youth development experience. To that end, when Club professionals consider how to implement Healthy Habits, they should think about how they can capitalize on members’ time and interests. Remember, if the Club provides activities that meet members’ interests (e.g., basketball), but it also manages to instill something they need (e.g., healthy habits), the Club has created a winning combination that will yield an increase in knowledge and changes in attitudes and behaviors related to good health. The chart below has been organized using the five core program areas to demonstrate how Healthy Habits can be integrated throughout the Club.

Core Program Area	Suggested Activities for Reinforcing Healthy Habits Messages
<b>Character and Leadership Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan a public awards ceremony for graduates of Healthy Habits</li> <li>• Encourage members to become peer leaders of Healthy Habits or the Daily Challenges</li> <li>• Organize a neighborhood or playground clean-up with Triple Play T-shirts for volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>Education and Career Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct essay contests that focus on good, healthy teen habits and how they help ensure a productive future for teens</li> <li>• Invite guest speakers from backgrounds similar to those of Club members who have been successful in nontraditional or challenging jobs</li> <li>• Have members research health professions such as health educator, statistician and epidemiologist. Invite health professionals to the Club during National Nutrition Month (March)</li> </ul>

Core Program Area	Suggested Activities for Reinforcing Healthy Habits Messages
<b>Health and Life Skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold a community health fair</li> <li>• Sell healthy foods in the Club’s snack bar</li> <li>• Invite guest speakers to talk about healthy lifestyles</li> </ul>
<b>The Arts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invite youth improvisational theater to perform</li> <li>• Videotape members making commercials, raps and skits with Healthy Habits messages</li> <li>• Conduct a poster contest promoting good health messages, then display the winning artwork</li> </ul>
<b>Sports, Fitness and Recreation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Healthy Habits cheer</li> <li>• Create a youth step team</li> <li>• Establish a Triple Play Sports Club to assist with Healthy Habits, Triple Play Daily Challenges and other sports and fitness activities</li> </ul>

## Club Environment

The Club environment should support a healthy lifestyle. Members benefit from a climate that models and encourages healthy behaviors. As Healthy Habits is implemented throughout the Club, it is important to reinforce the key nutritional teaching points of choice and variety that are emphasized throughout the program.

### Club Beverage Recommendations

As part of efforts to teach all young people served by Clubs the benefits of a balanced lifestyle, Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) encourages Clubs to serve and/or sell beverages that meet the *School Beverage Guidelines* published by the American Beverage Association and the Alliance for a Healthier Generation ([www.ameribev.org](http://www.ameribev.org)). The guidelines for high schools are most appropriate for Clubs because of the broad age range of youth served by Clubs (more than one third of all Club members are older than 13). The guidelines recommend the following types of beverages be made available:

- Bottled water
- No- or low-calorie beverages with up to 10 calories per eight ounces
- Up to 12-ounce servings of milk, low-fat and non-fat regular and flavored milk with up to 150 calories per eight 8 ounces
- 100 percent juice with no added sweeteners and up to 120 calories per eight ounces
- Light juices and sports drinks with no more than 66 calories per eight ounces; may be sold in up to 12-ounce containers with no more than 100 calories per container
- At least 50 percent of beverages should be water and no- or low-calorie options

Limiting high-calorie foods and drinks in Boys & Girls Clubs is a sensible approach that highlights the belief that wellness efforts must focus on teaching youth to have a balanced, healthy diet and be physically active.

## Key Messages about Good Health

Part of creating a healthier Club environment for members, families, staff and volunteers is ensuring that there is consistent, ongoing communication of the following key messages:

- **Eating Well:** Think about what you choose to eat. Select a nutritionally balanced diet that includes food and beverages from the major food groups. Make a special effort to eat at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Foods high in sugar and fat can be eaten in small amounts by most people. Your health needs and dietary goals are important factors in making food choices.
- **Being Sensible about Portions:** Think about how much you choose to eat. Choose portions based on age, body size, dietary goals and activity level. Where available, compare labeled serving sizes guide calorie intake. Whether eating at home or away from home, be reasonable about the portions to be eaten.
- **Being Physically Active:** One's level of activity determines how much should be eaten. Physical activity helps to manage body

weight and energy balance, along with providing other health benefits. A minimum of 60 minutes of physical activity over the course of each day is important and is best for a healthy lifestyle. Everyday activities such as walking, gardening and even house cleaning contribute to daily activity and burn calories.

- **Building Success:** Healthy eating and physical activity habits are built over time. Start slowly. Think about positive changes that fit into your everyday life. Each change can help you build sustained long-term success.

## Implementation Checklist

For Clubs just beginning to implement Healthy Habits, the process should start with a thorough assessment of various factors. To most effectively implement Healthy Habits, the following steps should be completed. Please note the steps do not necessarily have to be completed in the order presented, and many entail ongoing efforts.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Document the need for the program
  - Determine the interests and needs of Club members
  - Review the Healthy Habits program materials as well as those from the Body and Soul components of Triple Play
  - Visit the Triple Play Web site at [www.bgca.net/tripleplay/](http://www.bgca.net/tripleplay/) to access program manuals and other resources and take part on online discussions
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Develop a preliminary action plan
  - Determine program scope/choose level of implementation
  - Develop timelines
  - Identify resources
  - Develop budget
  - Review the Triple Play sample proposal on [www.bgca.net](http://www.bgca.net) (from the top of the main Programs page, click on Sample Proposals to download a sample proposal you can customize and submit to local potential funding sources as needed)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Organize a Healthy Habits team
- Identify/recruit staff, older teens, community representatives and parents
  - Schedule training through BGCA's Training & Professional Development Department (access more information and request training through the Quest system on [www.bgca.net](http://www.bgca.net) [from the blue main menu, hover on Departments, then click on Training & Professional Development]; develop in-house training
  - Begin regular planning meetings
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Coordinate with board of directors
- Provide initial orientation
  - Provide status report(s)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Build community partnerships
- Join community coalitions
  - Do individual outreach and orientation
  - Build a directory of community resources that support the Triple Play goals of good nutrition, good physical fitness and social recreation
  - Seek support from a nutritionist or health educator from a community school or hospital
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Establish a Healthy Habits environment
- Review the types of snacks offered in the Club and switch to healthier options if needed
  - Review the Club's practices regarding the use of food-based incentives with youth and replace these with healthier or non-food incentives if needed
  - Consider adopting a board policy consistent with the Triple Play goals
  - Develop standards of conduct for Healthy Habits team and members
  - Share team's training knowledge with staff (in staff meetings or other forums)

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Recruit youth and parents
- Enroll youth
  - For Healthy Habits activities involving snacks, have parents sign permission slips to avoid possible problems with food allergies (see page 251 of the Healthy Habits program guide)
  - Invite parents to participate in the Healthy Habits Take Home Challenges
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Publicize the program
- Modify the Healthy Habits sample press release with your Club's information and submit the release to community and local news media (see page 252 of the Healthy Habits program guide)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Conduct the program
- Display the following posters to help promote your Club's Healthy Habits offerings and emphasize the program's key messages (To request posters, visit the Triple Play Web site, [www.bgca.net/tripleplay/](http://www.bgca.net/tripleplay/), click on the Mind "Contact Us" link and send an e-mail message including your name, Club name, Club street address, phone number.):
    - Healthy Habits promotional poster
    - MyPyramid
    - Kids MyPyramid
    - Take Home Challenges
    - Fight Bac
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Monitor implementation progress and make adjustments as necessary
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Evaluate your program after it ends.

## Additional Helpful Hints

1. Regardless of the target age group, the first Healthy Habits lesson, MyPyramid is Your Pyramid, must be used first.
2. Visit [www.bgca.net/tripleplay/](http://www.bgca.net/tripleplay/) to access program materials and other resources, read success stories from other Clubs and take part in online discussions.
3. Clubs that need assistance in implementing Healthy Habits may contact Gregory L. Doss, Director, Health and Life Skills, at (404) 487-5966 or [gdoss@bgca.org](mailto:gdoss@bgca.org).

# Healthy Habits Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff</li> <li>▪ Volunteers</li> <li>▪ Peer leaders</li> <li>▪ Facility resources (e.g., kitchen, gym, gamesroom, learning center, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Program posters</li> <li>▪ <a href="http://www.MyPyramid.gov">www.MyPyramid.gov</a></li> <li>▪ Healthy Habits background reading material</li> <li>▪ Equipment (e.g., basketballs,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff training</li> <li>▪ 10-lesson modules for each of three age groups (6 to 8, 9 to 12, 13 to 18)</li> <li>▪ Take Home Challenges for families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Number of members served</li> <li>▪ Number of program sessions conducted</li> <li>▪ Number of sessions facilitated by teen peer leaders</li> <li>▪ Amount of resources developed for program</li> <li>▪ Number of program volunteers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Club members improve their knowledge of smart food choices and healthy lifestyle choices</li> <li>▪ Club members increase their physical activity</li> <li>▪ Younger members become attracted to the program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Club members improve their nutrition and eating habits</li> <li>▪ Club members become active for one hour on most days</li> <li>▪ Members become advocates for healthier lifestyles</li> <li>▪ Older members assist with implementing program with peers or younger members</li> </ul>	<p>Club members achieve:</p> <p><b>Better Physical Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain normal weight</li> <li>▪ Have fewer risk factors for cardiovascular disease</li> <li>▪ Avoid smoking</li> </ul> <p><b>Better Mental Health:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have a healthy, positive mental state</li> <li>▪ Have a healthy body image</li> <li>▪ Are more confident and independent</li> </ul> <p><b>Increased Learning:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Grades improve</li> <li>▪ Have fewer absences because of illness</li> </ul>

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Intermediate Outcomes	Long-Term Outcomes
jump ropes, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Funding</li> <li>▪ In-kind donations</li> <li>▪ Program assessment</li> <li>▪ Technical assistance from BGCA</li> </ul>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More youth have healthy relationships with peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Are more engaged in school</li> </ul> <p>Better Social Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance pro-social behavior</li> <li>▪ Able to resolve conflicts in positive manner</li> </ul> <p>Improved Leadership Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen character and civic engagement</li> <li>▪ Enhance presentation and interpersonal skills</li> </ul>



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