



# POWER UP

RESOURCE GUIDE FOR  
CHILD CARE PROVIDERS



Each year, kids across the Dallas area look forward to summer break, but for the tens of thousands of kids who rely on school for playtime and meals, summertime can mean grumbling tummies and sedentary bodies. Despite an abundance of summer lunch program sites in the area, a vast majority of eligible kids are not participating.

Power Up! is a toolkit for summer food service program sponsors and sites to help engage more kids in summer meal programs and physical activity. United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, with support from Food for Good, has developed Power Up! to promote health and wellness in kids. The program expands access to, and awareness of, healthy, nutritious foods, food service sites and encourages kids to stay active. The Power Up! toolkit includes a best-practices resource guide for food site operators to help promote efficiency and awareness of the program, an activity book with fun games and activities that can be implemented with little to no equipment needed, and a calendar template to help rotate the activities and keep them fresh. The resources and activities are all free and available for download at [ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp](http://ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp).

**REIMBURSEMENT FOR SUMMER MEALS**

A best practice for ensuring that the meals your program provides are nutritious and healthy is to participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) allocates funds for summer meals to provide nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks to children and youth. The program was established to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals that meet federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children ages 18 and younger at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. Sponsors cover the cost of providing the meals and are then reimbursed by Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA).

**HOW THE PROGRAM WORKS**

The Food and Nutrition Service, an agency of the USDA, implements the summer meals program at the federal level. In Texas, the program is administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA). Locally, SFSP is run by approved sponsors, or contracting entities, which include school districts, local government agencies, camps, or private nonprofit organizations. Sponsors coordinate with sites and food vendors to provide free meals to groups of children at meal sites, such as a school or a community center. Sponsors receive payments from USDA, through their state agencies, and disburse the funds to vendors and/or sites for each meal served. Each year, USDA determines a per-meal reimbursement rate which is used to determine reimbursements to sponsors.

**TYPES OF SITES**

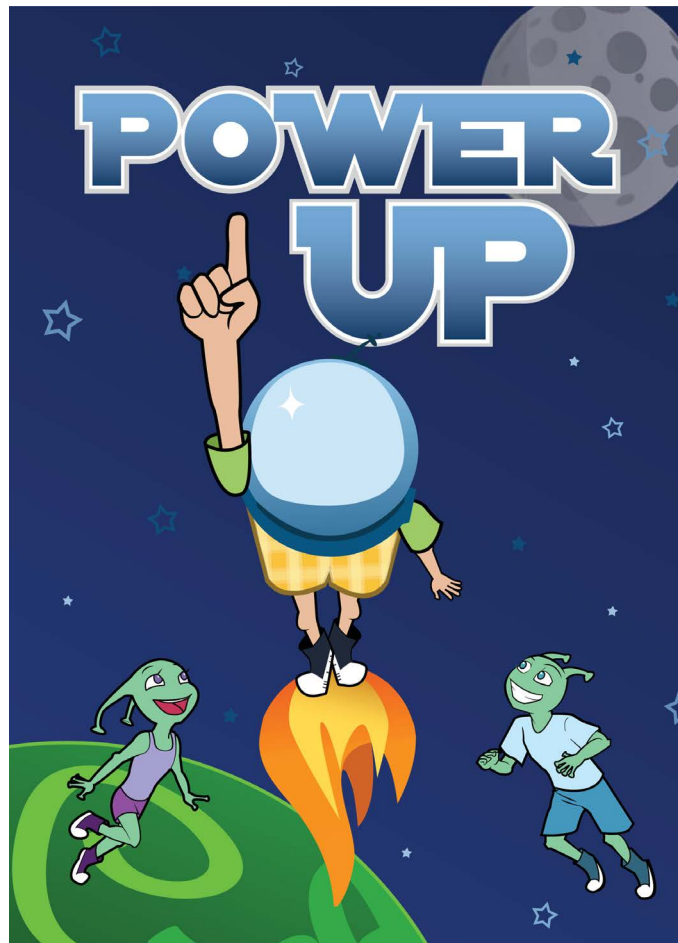
States approve summer meal sites as open, enrolled or camp sites. Open sites operate in low-income areas where at least half of the children come from families with incomes at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level, making them eligible for free and reduced-price school meals. Meals are served free to any child at the open site. Enrolled sites provide free meals to children enrolled in an activity or program at the site where at least half of them are eligible for free and reduced-price meals. Camps may also participate in the program and receive payments only for the meals served to children who are eligible for free and reduced-price meals.

**ELIGIBILITY**

Ages 18 and younger may receive free meals and snacks through the summer meals program. Meals and snacks are also available to persons with disabilities, over age 18, who participate in school programs for people who are mentally or physically disabled. At most sites, children receive either one or two reimbursable meals each day. Camps and sites that primarily serve migrant children may be approved to serve up to three meals to each child, each day.

**LEARN MORE**

To receive more information about how to participate in the program in Texas, visit [summerfood.org](http://summerfood.org), those who live outside of Texas should visit [summerfood.usda.gov](http://summerfood.usda.gov) to learn about their respective state.





## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why good nutrition is important
- Basic guidelines for offering healthy meals
- How to receive reimbursement for your summer meals

**WHY GOOD NUTRITION IS IMPORTANT**

Americans are raising the first generation of children with a shorter life expectancy than their parents, largely due to obesity and related illnesses (CDC 2010). The obesity rate has quadrupled in children ages 6-11 years and tripled in children ages 12-19 over the past 40 years, putting more children at risk for negative health consequences. The social and economic consequences of this issue cannot be ignored. In addition to rising healthcare costs related to the treatment of individuals with obesity-related illness, our country also stands to pay the price in educational attainment and even national security. According to the Texas Youth Fitness Study, higher levels of physical fitness in youth are associated with higher academic achievement, higher attendance rates and lower rates of negative school incidents. A 2010 report signed by 125 retired generals and admirals indicates that over 27% of American youth are too heavy to serve in the military (Too Fat to Fight 2010). Children are taking in more fat and calories as well. In U.S. children ages 6-19 years, 67% exceed dietary guidelines recommendations for fat intake, 72% exceed recommendations for saturated fat intake. Recent research has demonstrated that children have a large influence on the food choices of their entire family (Spalding 2012). The teaching of healthy choices and instilling healthy habits to students can influence an entire family.

These alarming trends are exacerbated by food insecurity. Nearly 1 in 5 households in Texas is food insecure, due to high poverty rates and food access limitations. For these kids, time out of school can mean less food to eat. Families that utilize school meal programs may struggle with increased food costs in the summer. Summer programs can help address both of these needs by approaching child health and nutrition holistically, addressing food insecurity by providing access to nutritious meals that are good for health, and by promoting lifelong healthy behaviors through nutrition education and games.



Many summer programs offer lunch as part of their programming. To make the most of your program's opportunity to impact children's nutrition, consider the following best practices as well.

- OFFER BREAKFAST

Breakfast is often called the most important meal of the day and with good reason. Studies have shown eating breakfast can increase attention span and concentration, decrease irritability and improve physical and mental performance. Breakfast can be a simple grab and go meal like milk, fruit and a low-fat granola bar; or a sit-down meal with toast, eggs, fruit and oatmeal. Taking time in the morning to fuel up on carbohydrates (breads, grains, fruits), and protein (milk, eggs, nuts, yogurt, meat) is the key to help ensure a sustained release of energy throughout the morning.

- SERVE FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Based on the USDA MyPlate Guidelines for a 2000 calorie diet, youth (4-18 years) should consume at least 1 ½ -2 cups of fruit a day and up to 3 cups of vegetables each day. Try serving fresh seasonal fruits and vegetables when possible, with frozen being the next best choice. Canned vegetables are much higher in sodium, and canned fruits can have added sugars. When serving fruit juices, use only 100% fruit juice, with no sugar added. Serve canned fruits in their natural juices, no sugar added.

- HEALTHY BEVERAGES

Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk; 100% fruit juices; or water. Avoid beverages with added sugars, caffeine and artificial sweeteners. Our bodies are over 80% water and, during the summer, children run a high risk of dehydration. Making water available through-out your program day is a great way to ensure that children get enough water every day.

- CHOOSE GRAIN PRODUCTS MADE WITH WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains such as whole wheat, whole cornmeal, oatmeal and rye are higher in fiber than products made with refined grains (white bread; enriched flour). Look for the word "whole" with the primary grain listed as the first ingredient in the ingredient list.

- CHOOSE FOODS LOWER IN FAT

Limit high-fat meats (hamburger meat; bacon; hotdogs), fried foods (French fries; deep fried foods), cakes, cookies, donuts and cheese. Keep portion sizes of cheese to 1-2 oz. and choose lower fat varieties. Keep intake of trans fat and cholesterol as low as possible.

- SERVE HEALTHY SNACKS

A healthy snack can provide important energy and nutrients for a growing child. There are many healthy, nutritious and affordable choices. Keep the following criteria in mind:

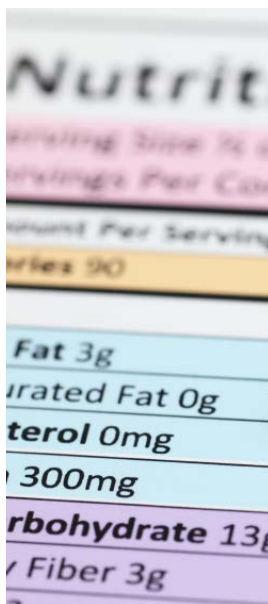
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- READ NUTRITION LABELS

Compare Percentage of Daily Value (%DV) for fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and sugars. 5% DV or less is a healthier choice; foods with 20% DV or more should be avoided. Look at mineral and vitamin content. Foods with 20% DV or more contribute a large amount of a nutrient, while foods with 5% or less contribute a small amount of a nutrient.

- READ INGREDIENT LISTS

Is sugar one of the first two ingredients? Are there other forms of sugar (corn syrup, fructose)? Look for whole-wheat or whole-grain flour rather than refined flour or white flour.



## RECEIVING REIMBURSEMENT FOR YOUR SUMMER MEALS

A best practice for ensuring that the meals your program provides are nutritious and healthy is to participate in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). USDA allocates funds for summer meals to provide nutritious, well-balanced meals and snacks to children and youth. By aligning with USDA guidelines, you can be reimbursed. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children who often rely on free and reduced-price meal programs during the school year continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals that meet Federal nutrition guidelines are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with significant concentrations of low-income children. See our SFSP Tip Sheet and Information Sheet here:

## TIPS FOR CHOOSING A MEAL PROVIDER

In some cases, an outside party (SFSP sponsor, a caterer, food vendor) may be involved in planning and preparing your program meals. Although you may not have complete control over each ingredient used in the preparation of meals, you can ask questions and make requests to ensure the meals are healthier and have the most variety.

Some sample questions to ask:

- Do you offer fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk instead of whole or 2% milk?
- Do you offer vegetarian selections?
- Do you use low-fat cooking methods: baking, broiling, steaming, sautéing, stir-frying, etc.
- Do you offer foods prepared with unsaturated fats instead of saturated fats (butter, palm, coconut oil, or lard)?
- Do you prepare chicken without skin?
- Do you use whole-grain breads, pasta, crackers? Brown rice instead of white rice?
- Do you use 100% fruit juice?
- Do you serve fruit in natural juices (no sugar added)?
- Do you serve only fresh or frozen vegetables?
- Do you offer at least a 10-day meal cycle?



### IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL LEARN:

- Why being physically active is important
- Recommended types of physical activity
- Tips for incorporating physical activity into your program

In 2009, only 18% of high school students reported participating in at least 60 minutes per day, the recommended amount of physical activity, but get an average of 7.5 hours of “screen time” (media use) daily. Research suggests that children experience higher fitness levels during the school year, likely associated with school time routines such as physical education class, recess, and sports. Increased free time in the summer could lead to increased leisure activities, such as watching television and playing video games. Summer programs have an opportunity to engage children in physical activities and games and help them to be fit.

Summer programs can:

- Teach skills that will help children make healthier physical activity choices
- Model and promote daily physical activity
- Provide daily opportunities for children to get the recommended amounts of physical activity

### WHAT KINDS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SHOULD MY PROGRAM INCLUDE?

There are three types of recommended physical activities: stretching (for warm up and cool down); cardiovascular; and strength training.

- **WARM UP AND COOL DOWN ACTIVITIES**

Stretching decreases the risk of injury and improves your overall flexibility. Increased flexibility will help loosen the muscles and reduces the chance of injury as youth grow older. A light warm-up activity (walking or jogging in place for 5 minutes) should precede stretching. At least 10 minutes of stretching per day is recommended, especially before cardio or strength training activity. Warm ups and stretching also help get youth focused and into a calmer state. Taking the time to cool down allows the heart rate to go back to a normal resting rate. See the Stretching, Warm

Up and Cool Down section in the Power Up! Activity Booklet for suggested activities.

- **CARDIOVASCULAR ACTIVITIES**

Cardiovascular activity is any activity which requires oxygen to be used over a certain amount of time. It is essential to perform this type of activity consistently because it increases your aerobic capacity or the body's ability to use oxygen. When oxygen is delivered efficiently in your body, your heart, lungs and blood all function better. See the Get Moving Games section in the Power Up! Activity Booklet for suggested activities to get the heart pumping.

- **STRENGTH TRAINING**

Strength training is an essential part of the exercise equation due to its many benefits, including burning calories while the body is at rest. Other benefits include strengthening muscles, ligaments and tendons, increasing flexibility, and lowering blood pressure and cholesterol levels. See our Strength and Conditioning section in the Power Up! Activity Booklet for suggested activities.

### **TIPS FOR INCORPORATING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INTO YOUR SUMMER PROGRAM**

1. Incorporate physical activity into all programming. For every 50 minutes of programming, provide the opportunity for 10 minutes of physical activity.

**MORE INFORMATION:** ABC For Fitness: Activity Bursts in the Classroom. The ABC Manual Guide shows how to add daily physical activity into small increments of time.(davidkatzmd.com)

2. Teach youth how to warm up and cool down properly before and after physical activity.

**MORE INFORMATION:** See Power Up Activity Booklet, Stretching, Warm Up and Cool Down section (ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp)

3. Start the day of your program with an active ice breaker.

**MORE INFORMATION:** Google "active ice breakers" and you'll find pages of fun.

4. Show students new games or invent your own games with simple equipment.

**MORE INFORMATION:** See Power Up Activity Booklet, Get Moving Games section. ([ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp](http://ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp))

5. Do not use physical activity as punishment.

6. Bring in outside instructors or volunteers to give physical activity demonstrations such as Zumba, yoga, karate, etc.

7. Start a walking or running club within your program.

**MORE INFORMATION:** Walk Across Texas. Visit ([walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu](http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu)) to join and download ready made lesson plans to incorporate into your programming. ([walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu](http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu))

8. Challenge youth to complete the Presidential Active Lifestyle Challenge to receive an award.

**MORE INFORMATION:** Presidential Active Lifestyle Award. ([presidentschallenge.org](http://presidentschallenge.org))

9. Play games where everyone is involved at all times.

**MORE INFORMATION:** See Power Up Activity Booklet, Get Moving Games section. ([ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp](http://ReadySetBlast.org/PowerUp)).

10. Choose activities which appeal to youth, such as relay races versus running laps around a track.





## IN THIS SECTION YOU WILL LEARN:

- Best practices for adult and child interaction
- Basic guidelines for sun and heat safety
- Tips for how to keep food safe

## KEEP KIDS SAFE



When it comes to supervising children and youth in summer programs, safety should be paramount. Parents, guardians and caregivers have entrusted their children's safety with your program. Below are best practices regarding adult and child interactions:

- Staff and program volunteers should not socialize or have contact with children enrolled in your organization's programs outside of the program, including social media.
- Staff and volunteers should and are required to immediately report any suspected abuse of children.
- Your program should have a comprehensive pre-employment screening for staff and volunteers, including reference checks and criminal history checks.
- Paid staff training should include safety information including First Aid and CPR certifications.
- Staff and volunteers should do frequent headcounts and maintain visual contact with children at all times.
- Staff and volunteers should never leave children unsupervised.
- Staff and volunteers should always remain aware of visitors and/or strangers on the property or in the building potentially hazardous situations or areas and unsafe practices.
- Staff and volunteers should ensure that children should always remain within visual and hearing range of staff and/or volunteers
- Staff and volunteers should enforce the "buddy system" (children should always have a buddy and not go anywhere alone) between children.

## **SUN & HEAT SAFETY**

In many summer programs, children spend a great deal of time playing sports, outdoor games and competitions. To protect children from the summer sun's potentially dangerous rays and heat, the following guidelines are suggested by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- The first, and best, line of defense against harmful ultraviolet radiation (UVR) exposure is covering up. Wear a hat with a three-inch brim or a bill facing forward, sunglasses (look for sunglasses that provide 97 percent to 100 percent protection against both UVA and UVB rays), and cotton clothing with a tight weave.
- Stay in the shade whenever possible, and limit sun exposure during the peak intensity hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- On both sunny and cloudy days, use a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or greater that protects against UVA and UVB rays.
- Be sure to apply enough sunscreen — about one ounce per sitting for a young adult.
- Reapply sunscreen every two hours, or after swimming or sweating.
- Use extra caution near water and sand as they reflect UV rays and may result in sunburn more quickly.
- The intensity of activities that last 15 minutes or more should be reduced whenever high heat and humidity reach critical levels.
- At the beginning of a strenuous exercise program or after traveling to a warmer climate, the intensity and duration of exercise should be limited initially and then gradually increased during a period of seven to 14 days to acclimatize to the heat, particularly if it is very humid.
- Before prolonged physical activity, children should be well-hydrated and should not feel thirsty. For the first hour of exercise, water alone can be used. Kids should have water or a sports drink always available and drink every 20 minutes while exercising in the heat.
- Clothing should be light-colored and lightweight and limited to one layer of absorbent material to facilitate evaporation of sweat. Sweat-saturated shirts should be replaced by dry clothing.
- Practices and games played in the heat should be shortened and more frequent.
- Water/hydration breaks should be instituted.
- Children should seek cooler environments if they feel dizzy, lightheaded or nauseous.



## FOOD STORAGE

Successful summer programs usually involve serving some type of food. Intense heat, outdoor site locations and lack of refrigeration can all contribute to potentially dangerous food situations. The following rules should be kept in mind when handling food:

- Food should be kept below 40 degrees or above 140 degrees. Some local health departments may have even stricter temperature requirements so be sure that you are aware of local requirements as well.
- Avoid holding food in the temperature range between 40 degrees and 140 degrees for more than two hours. Food should be discarded if held in this danger zone for more than two hours.
- You cannot determine food safety by sight, taste, odor or smell. If there is any doubt, throw food away.
- It is recommended that all staff and volunteers who handle food regularly have their food handlers' certification. This certification is fairly inexpensive and can be usually obtained through your local health department.
- Never touch ready-to-eat food with bare hands. Food servers should wear plastic gloves.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and first-aid kit near food preparation areas and instruct personnel in their use.
- Food handlers should wash hands frequently and properly (at least 20 seconds with soap and hot water) before handling food.
- All trash should be disposed of properly. Empty trash cans daily. Use plastic liners for trash receptacles.



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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Program Implementation

Texas Department of Agriculture [www.squaremeals.org](http://www.squaremeals.org)

USDA [www.fns.usd.gov/sfsp](http://www.fns.usd.gov/sfsp)

CANFIT [www.canfit.org](http://www.canfit.org)

### Nutrition

My Plate [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

Ready, Set, Blast! [www.readysetblast.org](http://www.readysetblast.org)

Nourish Interactive [www.nourishinteractive.com](http://www.nourishinteractive.com)

### Games & Activities

Power Up [www.readysetblast.org/PowerUp](http://www.readysetblast.org/PowerUp)

Let's Move [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov)