Organization and Planning for Fun Days

WIN the Rockies is a community-based research, education and outreach, health improvement project. The mission of WIN the Rockies is to assist communities in educating people to:
* value health
* respect body-size differences
* enjoy the benefits of self-acceptance
* enjoy physically active living
* enjoy healthful and pleasurable eating

This “pick-and-use” curriculum is designed primarily for youth ages 8 to 12 and includes a variety of possible formats to maximize flexibility. Many of the activities can be adapted for older audiences. Activities can be mixed and matched for sessions 15 minutes to 8 hours. The activities are outlined for up to 25 participants in outdoor venues or indoor facilities with large open space.

As the local facilitator, you are encouraged to use these ideas and materials to customize a program to meet local needs. Activities and materials may be reproduced and adapted for educational purposes.

The full WIN Kids Fun Days curriculum is downloadable on the WIN the Rockies web site at [www.uwyo.edu wintherockies](http://www.uwyo.edu/wintherockies). Updates to this curriculum will be posted.

Selecting Activities:

There are five different sections in this curriculum:
* Get Acquainted
* Pleasurable and Healthful Eating
* Snacks to Make and Enjoy
* Body Image
* Physical Activity

Select a variety of activities from each section.

Plan more activities than will fit into the time allotted for the session. This will provide a few back-up activities to fill extra time. Likewise, be prepared to cut a few activities if time runs short.
As you lead activities, end them while the kids are still having fun – at the activity’s peak of fun. If you go too long with an activity, it seems boring. If some activities are not working, simply end them quickly and move on to another activity. Each group will be unique, so flexibility and adaptability are important.

Remember – people are the most important part of all games!

Overview of Sections:

Get Acquainted
The purpose of Get Acquainted activities are for the kids to meet and begin to build a respect for each other.

Pleasurable and Healthful Eating and Snacks to Make and Enjoy
The activities in these sections build from the WIN the Rockies principles of healthful and pleasurable eating. These principles are:
* take pleasure in eating
* take control – eat when hungry and stop when satisfied
* follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
* honor the gift of food

Body Image
The activities in this section (as well as some components from other sections) build from the WIN the Rockies principles.

Principles of body-size differences and size acceptance:
* accept and value every body, whatever size or shape
* help people feel good about their bodies and about who they are
* recognize that people of all sizes and shapes can reduce their risk of poor health by adopting a healthy lifestyle
* challenge your own size-prejudice beliefs

Principles of positive self-acceptance:
* value yourself regardless of your size and shape
* identify your strengths and abilities and build on your assets
* be critical of messages that focus on unrealistic body images as symbols of success and happiness
Facilitating activities around body-image issues requires some preparation and planning. Familiarize yourself with the basic principles listed above. In addition, some tips and pointers follow:

You are a role model! Model acceptance for a diversity of body shapes and sizes. Demonstrate acceptance of your own body type. Ask yourself the following questions:
- How do I feel about fat people?
- How do I feel about thin people?
- Am I swayed by the diet industry’s myths and false claims about weight loss?
- Do I criticize my own body in front of others?

Understand the power of accepting our own bodies whether thin, fat, short, tall or in-between. Be aware of and teach students about the harmful stereotypes and fears our culture directs at people who do not fit an arbitrary appearance “ideal.” Remember, adults can transfer negative beliefs and attitudes to students including poor body image, prejudices about body weight, and bias towards students.

Celebrate individual differences in body sizes and shapes. We are unique, and our body size and shape reflects our genetic heritage.

Encourage compliments based on what someone does, not on how they look. Do not tolerate any teasing or stereotyping about body size or shape.

Avoid labeling food or eating habits as good or bad as this can contribute to a fear of food.
- Avoid: “I was good today, I ate the fresh fruit.”
- Instead: “I really enjoyed the fresh strawberries I had at lunch, they were yummy!”

Physical Activity
The activities in this section build on the WIN the Rockies principles of physically active living.
- enjoy physical activity every day
- participate in activities for the joy of feeling your body move
- make physical activity fun

Activities selected for this curriculum are inclusive and non-competitive. While every one of us has different abilities, we all like to have fun! Participants are encouraged to have fun and to help each other complete tasks. Avoid references to winning or losing. The activities are also designed to reinforce the concept of lifestyle physical activity encouraging movement every day.

Be a role model for a positive attitude toward body image, food and eating, and physical activity.
Permission Slips:
Parental permission slips are strongly encouraged. It is recommended to include information related to food allergies or any other special needs of enrolling participants. For food allergies, include a list of all foods to be sampled during the event. Ask parents to note any allergies or foods that cause potential concerns for the participant. Either eliminate those items or arrange for the participant to be involved without sampling that food item.

Take-Home Bags:
Prepare a take-home packet for each participant ahead of time. A brown paper sack with each participant’s name and a WIN the Rockies sticker on the front is recommended. Templates for the stickers are provided. Into the bag place the following:

*Take-home slips* – Select 5 or 6 from all the activities you do. Don’t send home 20 slips. The kids won’t remember them all. Pick the ones you want to emphasize. There are no take-home slips or handouts for the get acquainted activities.

*Handouts* (recipes, home activities, etc.)

*Parent Letter* – Encourage kids to talk about what they learned and what it meant.

*Footbags* – If you have selected Footbag Mania, provide one footbag in each take-home bag for participants.

Thank you to the following educators for providing input: Betty Holmes, Marc Schure, Laura Sant, Julie Harker, and Suzy Pelican.

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