



## How Skillastics® Aligns with the Physical Activity Standards for Out-of-School Time Programs

In April, 2011 the National Afterschool Association adopted these standards for Physical Activity in Out-of-School Time Programs. As adopted NAA's standards for physical activity support the USDHHS 2008 guidelines for activity patterns shown to promote lifelong health and prevent chronic disease. Accordingly, new language addresses content and quality, staff training, social support (including staff role modeling, parent engagement and children's social development), program support, and environmental support.

Skillastics® is a series of evidence-based oversize board games that combine active, STEM, and cooperative learning with the development of fitness and sport skills. An innovative twist on traditional circuit training, Skillastics® is the affordable solution that provides maximum participation while engaging up to 100 children at one time, creating a perfect balance of learning.

Skillastics® developmentally appropriate kinesthetic learning activities are aligned with the HEPA Guidelines. Each Skillastics® Activity Kit improves learning outcomes and assists children into developing into physically literate, responsible, and productive adults.

### **Content and Quality:**

**Standard:** The program's physical activity offerings support the USDHHS 2008 guidelines recommending that all children and youth obtain at least 60 minutes of physical activity per day that includes a mixture of moderate and vigorous intensity activity as well as bone and muscle strengthening activities.

### **Best Practices:**

- 1) Dedicate at least 20% or at least 30 minutes of morning or afterschool program time to physical activity (60 minutes for a full day program).

*Most afterschool programs are limited in space for activity with the number of children they are serving, making it difficult to achieve the minutes required. Solution: Skillastics® Activity Kits allow up to 100 children, of different ages and physical abilities to participate efficiently and effectively at one time in limited space.*

**2) Provides physical activities in which students are moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of the physical activity time.**

*A recent study concluded that the overall average heart rate during 20 minutes of Skillastics® play was 142 bpm, putting students comfortably in the energy efficient zone. This zone provides cardiovascular benefits for students and allows them to be active for a extensive period of time. Skillastics® has been shown to provide Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA), 80% of the time.*

**3) Play takes place outdoors whenever possible.**

*Skillastics® Activity Kit durability allows for both play indoors and out. The Fitness Fun Zone® and Fitness Fun Zone Trail®, are one-of-a-kind evidence-based pavement design systems include a wide range of circuit activities and can be modified to suit any age, fitness and health of each participant. These physical activity stencil designs include multiple game and activity applications that incorporate fitness and nutrition.*

**4) Ensures that daily physical activity time includes aerobic and age-appropriate muscle and bone strengthening and cardio-respiratory fitness activities.**

*Every Skillastics® Activity Kit has been approved by leading childhood fitness and sport experts. Absolute priority for each Skillastics® Activity Kit was to provide age-appropriate activities that follow the fitness components; muscle strength, muscle endurance, flexibility, cardio-respiratory endurance and body composition (\*BMI testing can be done to measure the ratio of lean body mass to fat after a measured amount of time playing Skillastics®)*

**5) Includes a variety of physical activity time options aimed at engaging students in fun, recreational, and life-long learning opportunities.**

*The colorful, 5' x 7' Skillastics® activity mats are an instant attraction, instantly raising the level of curiosity in children. The opportunity for children to engage in physical activities in a non-threatening environment, where they are not humiliated in front of their peers is empowering. The academic enhanced Skillastics® Activity Kits combine movement with STEM and Math content and questioning to create a balance of learning in an atmosphere of fun. Currently, there are thirteen (13) Skillastics® Activity Kits to choose from that target ages 3 to 18.*

**6) Offers unstructured free play or structured activities that involve all program attendees.**

*The Skillastics® Technique includes structured activity; however, numerous options allow an instructor to present Skillastics® in a way that permits children to engage in free play.*

*The Fitness Fun Zone® and Fitness Fun Zone Trail®, also allows for both structured and unstructured free play.*

**7) Offers non-competitive activities.**

*Skillastics® allows for children to engage in fitness and sport-specific activities in a non-competitive, non-threatening atmosphere. There are numerous options to make Skillastics® competitive if desired.*

**8) Offers competitive physical activities in an intra mural program.**

*Skillastics® can be set up in an intra mural program as a round robin tournament. Information available upon request.*

**9) Offers activities that are adaptable, accessible and inclusive of children with all abilities, including physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities.**

*Children with all levels of abilities, including children with disabilities, can play Skillastics®. Adapted Physical Educators can easily modify the activities to fit the needs of the children they are working with. Halfpint Skillastics® created for ages 3-5, can easily be adopted as an activity for children with special needs. For an example of a special needs population participating in Halfpint Skillastics visit; <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRGIC1iaBro>*

**10) Conducts physical activities that are integrated with enrichment, academic, or recreation content; goal driven, planned, sequentially designed and delivered, safe, inclusive, developmentally appropriate and success-oriented.**

*Skillastics® Activity Kits are designed in a manner that promotes success for all children. This is accomplished because the activities are developmentally appropriate and allow children to work at their individual skill level. When children have the chance to work at their own skill level, they feel safe while participating in the activities. Another key component in ensuring that the activities are “success-oriented” is the fact that teamwork and cooperation are natural outcomes of Skillastics® activities. Additionally, mounting evidence has revealed an increase in physical activity reduces stress, improves concentration, and enhances academic performance. Skillastics combines movement and creativity with STEM, Math and Nutritional content and questioning to create a balance of learning in an atmosphere of fun.*

**11) Provide short physical activity breaks between and/or within learning activities to invigorate children and eliminate long periods of sitting; incorporates physical activity into transition time.**

*The Skillastics® miniature mats can be used for fitness breaks in a classroom setting, invigorating children between homework and other academic, stationary behaviors. Once the children are familiar with the Skillastics® activities, instructors can present them at any time including periods when children may be in transition. Skillastics® activities allow instructors a plethora of cooperative learning instant activities that can be introduced easily whenever physical activity is needed or deemed appropriate.*

- 12) Does not permit access to television or movies, and limits digital device time to less than one hour per day to allow for other activities. Digital device use is limited to homework or devices/programs that actively engage children in moderate to intense physical activity.**

*Implementing Skillastics® does not include digital devices or screen time. Many of the Skillastics® Activity Kits include an instructional DVD. The DVD's can be used for individual use by the instructor, or as an option for children to view and then practice the activity. The choice is determined by the instructor.*

## **Staff Training**

**Standard: Staff participate in learning about physical activity using effective training models and using content that is evidence based.**

### ***Best Practices***

**All staff leading physical activities at the afterschool program:**

- 1) Receive annually a minimum of eight contact hours of professional development on effective practices and strategies for including physical activity that supports the USDHHS guidelines as an element of their program.**

*Skillastics® workshops are designed to address the needs of the afterschool programmer by providing attendees with practical knowledge of the unique and innovative Skillastics® technique and instructional strategies. Participants leave the workshop energized with the knowledge and skills to teach Skillastics® effectively to children in a variety of different ways under a variety of different circumstances.*

- 2) Are First Aid/CPR certified and provide 16 hours of annual in-service training, including: new staff orientation, service training, (including new staff orientation, training in health/activity, training in behavior management).**

*N/A*

- 3) Are trained in adapting physical activity opportunities to include children and youth at all levels of athletic availability and those with physical, sensory or intellectual disabilities.**

*We have Skillastics® trainers who are experts in teaching physical activities to children with disabilities.*

All staff

- 1) are trained not to withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g. not being permitted to play with the rest of the class or being kept from play-time), except when a child's behavior is dangerous to himself or others. Staff members are trained to use**

**appropriate alternate strategies as consequences for negative or undesirable behaviors.**

*Participants learn organizational, management, and instructional techniques.*

- 2) are trained and familiar with curricular resources on integrating physical activity throughout the program.**

*Many circumstances present itself in afterschool programs. We provide participants with handouts and resources that will encourage on-going training.*

## **Social Support**

**Standard:** The program creates a social environment, including positive relationships, that encourage children to enjoy and participate in physical activity. Research shows that children's physical activity choices are influenced not only by preference and familiarity, but also by social factors including peers, role models, group dynamics, and having multiple options.

### **Best Practices**

- 1) Staff lead and participate in active play (e.g., games and activities).**

*Children mirror an instructor's enthusiasm. If staff is enthusiastic and genuinely enjoying participating in physical activities, children are more apt to follow along. Skillastics® is easy for staff to teach AND to play. Afterschool programmers who play Skillastics® at workshops or staff trainings have a positive experience, and are therefore more likely to think about their own physical activity behaviors.*

- 2) Staff do not withhold or use physical activity as a punishment or reward.**

*N/A*

- 3) Students participate in activity selection, organization and leadership.**

*Every student has the opportunity to be a leader while engaging in Skillastics®. By the process of taking turns, each child, no matter what their age or ability provides their team with the activity that needs to be completed to continue advancing around the Skillastics® mat.*

- 4) Parents are engaged with the program's emphasis on healthy physical activity.**

*Skillastics® activities can be copied and sent home with the children. Parents can participate in the activities with their children. Let's Move in School Skillastics® includes a monthly fitness calendar that parents and children can actively engage in every day of the month. We provide step by step instructions on how to start a Family Fitness Night or Family Fitness Festival.*

## **Program Support**

**Standard: Infrastructure supports physical activity through management and budgeting practices.**

N/A

## **Environmental Support**

**Standard: The program's physical environment supports the physical activity standards**

### ***Best Practices***

**1) Equipment for games, sports and activities is age and developmentally appropriate.**

Skillastics® Activity Kits have been approved by leading fitness and sport experts on the age appropriate activities included with each kit.

**2) Equipment is sufficient to engage all participants and meets all required safety standards**

Skillastics® was designed to allow up to 100 children to safely engage in at one time. Skillastics® meets all CPSC safety regulations.

**3) Equipment supports USDHHS physical activity goals by facilitating cardio respiratory and musculoskeletal fitness.**

Skillastics® average heart rate on average is 142 bpm, with over 80% of the time children are engaging in Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA)

**4) The program has adequate indoor facilities for physical activity.**

Skillastics® can be implemented, even in inadequate indoor space.

**5) The program has adequate outdoor facilities for physical activity, including fields and playground that meet safety standards for surfacing, equipment, and workmanship.**

N/A

**6) The program has adequate access to indoor and outdoor facilities through formal or informal shared use agreements with host facilities.**

N/A

**7) The program environment provides positive messages about safe and developmentally appropriate physical activity through posters, pictures and books.**

Let's Move in School Skillastics® includes a fitness calendar. Instructors are encouraged to copy and distribute the activities with all the Skillastics Activity Kit manuals for children's continued use at home.