VERB™

ACTIVITY ZONE APPEAL

Having A Successful Physical Activity Event:

Your guide to making physical activity appealing to 9 to 13 year olds

JUMP
RUN
KICK
SWIM
DANCE
SKATE
PLAY
TWIST
PLAY
LEAP
LEAP
RUN
DANCE
SWING
KICK
CLIMB
TWIST

VERB™

ACTIVITY ZONE APPEAL

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INTRODUCTION

During the past 20 years, the combination of decreased physical activity and unhealthful eating has resulted in a doubling of the percentage of overweight children and adolescents. Recent reports indicate that five of every eight children aged 9 to 13 do not participate in any organized physical activity during their non-school hours, and almost one fourth do not engage in any free-time physical activity.

The VERB™ campaign directly and effectively reaches the national tween audience (9 to 13 year olds) to create a demand for physical activity, while campaign partners provide the local opportunities and local motivations for tweens to be active. This guide was created to help make your youth-focused physical activity efforts more appealing to tweens. If your goal is to encourage physical activity among 9 to 13 year olds in a way that has proven effective, you will find this guide beneficial whether or not you connect your efforts to the VERB brand.

VERB CAMPAIGN BACKGROUND

VERB is a national, multicultural campaign that encourages tweens to be physically active every day. The VERB campaign uses a combination of paid advertising, school and community promotions, and the Internet to promote physical activity as cool, fun, and a way to have a good time with friends. The successful, five year campaign began in 2001 and comes to a close in 2006.

The VERB brand was launched to get kids in America active and 'off the couch' by embracing positive physical activity. We have surrounded kids with VERB messaging and communications making this a genuine movement that has resulted in positive health behavior among our young people.

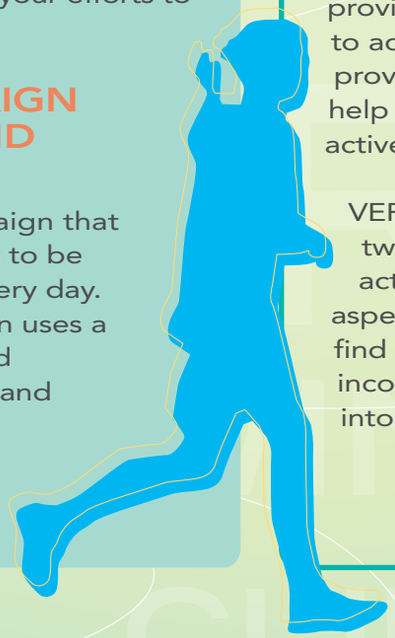
VERB is found in:

- Advertising: TV, print, & radio
- Schools
- Community-based organizations
- Web
- Local communities

A verb usually connotes action, and that's exactly what VERB is about – getting tweens physically active. VERB motivates every tween, not just the athletic ones, to find their verb. It is about getting up and moving.

The campaign inspires tweens to increase physical activity. It provides opportunities for them to add activity into their lives and provides ideas and resources to help tweens find ways to get active.

VERB seeks to change how tweens think about physical activity by emphasizing its fun aspects. It encourages them to find new activities and to incorporate fun physical activity into their everyday lifestyles.



LOCAL EVENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Community-based organizations are integral to motivating kids to be active. By having local physical activity events, communities can take advantage of the interest that kids have in VERB. A local event could take many shapes and forms, but for it to appeal to tweens, the emphasis must be on fun. Your event might be a stand-alone event in which only your organization participates, or several locations may have simultaneous events throughout town, or your event might even be part of a larger fair or festival. You might even be the planner of your own community-wide physical activity event.

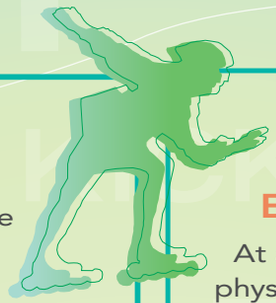
Whatever the scope of your event, keep the following guidelines in mind.

The event should:

- reach tween audiences
- offer a choice of fun physical activities and games. (See Appendix A for Game And Activity Ideas.)
- offer one-on-one interactions
- provide access for kids of low, moderate, and high activity levels; as well as youth that are physically challenged.
- focus on the fun and social aspects of play and not on obesity, exercise, or nutrition
- have enough space to allow for trial of a variety of physical activities – ideally an open space of approximately 30' x 30' to 50' x 50'

The goals at VERB-inspired events are to:

- get tweens to try multiple physical activities and find something they like
- see tweens leave wanting to do more physical activity - but for fun, not for exercise
- get tweens thinking of physical activity as something they can do wherever they are



CHOOSING A LOCATION

Location is important to the success of a VERB-inspired event. The event should be held in a place that kids frequent and think is fun.

Examples of typical and appropriate locations include:

- sporting events, including existing "Kids' Days"
- community events, including those with youth-focused areas
- community holiday celebrations
- after-school programs
- elementary & middle school programs (grades 4-8)
- county fairs
- city/street festivals

Some typical venues might include:

- major league stadiums
- minor league stadiums
- amusement & water parks
- gymnasiums
- parks & recreation facilities

Event types where this avenue of reaching youth is not as effective and should not be used include:

- health fairs
- health screening sites
- events that promote unhealthy behaviors

SUCCESSFUL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY EVENTS

At a successful VERB-inspired physical activity event, there are numerous interactions with tweens who are having fun getting active. These interactions should result in every tween:

Doing the following:

- playing three or more activities (or 10 minutes of activity)
- finding a verb they like
- getting a reward for finding their verb

Hearing the following:

- Be imaginative about play
- Play by your rules, your way
- You don't need certain skills – have fun
- You can do it anywhere
- You can do it with any number of people
- You can do it EVERY DAY

Realizing, feeling, or believing the following:

- I like to _____, and I can do it anywhere I want whenever I want
- I want to do _____ every day

Keep in mind that at VERB-inspired physical activity events the focus is on play, not exercise and on letting kids do things their way, not dictating what they do. Focus on the fun of kids playing with friends and just being kids.

HELPFUL HINTS

Below are some lessons that we have learned that are worth considering as you plan local events.

- The best events are ones with a balance between efficiency and effectiveness – such as ones that maximize fewer kids at a time, more time with each kid, and more opportunities for kids to try a variety of activities.
- More one-on-one interactions require additional staff with the training and experience necessary to deepen that interaction.
- Adjust the event format and activities so that it is more relevant to tweens' interests and encourages trial of more activities.
- Be prepared to set up a number of activity stations based on the size of your area.
- Make sure equipment is durable and safely secured.
- Use everyday items to make games and activities more unusual and to demonstrate that no special equipment is necessary to play. (See Appendix B for Equipment Recommendations)
- Generally we have seen that these activities have been favorites of tweens.
  - Basketball or a version of it
  - Jump rope, including double-dutch
- Music moves and motivates tweens – so turn on the radio or CD player. Make sure the music is age appropriate and well liked by tweens.
- If possible, use a PA system (or microphone) to get the kids in the area moving or to attract tweens walking by the event site.

STAFFING FOR TWEEN APPEAL

As mentioned in the "Helpful Hints" section, interaction with the staff/volunteers is important in encouraging physical activity. Selection of quality staff therefore is a top priority.

A successful event staffer for a VERB-inspired event should have the following traits:

- fit and active, regardless of size or shape
- able to talk to adults and kids
- able to draw people into the event space
- able to motivate kids to try new activities
- able to talk to the influencers about benefits of physical activity
- high energy
- neat and with proper personal hygiene
- positive in attitude
- patient

Consider staffing your event with young adults, ages 18-25 years old. Peer-to-peer interaction with these young adults helps keep the messaging relevant and appealing to the tween audience.

Depending upon the size and type of event, we suggest that you train your event staff prior to the event. Provide opportunities to role play. Include among the training topics:

- how to interact with tweens
- the messages that should be delivered
- how messages should be delivered

You will also need to establish policies regarding conduct, appearance, etc. The following are suggested rules and guidelines which you might include among your policies. Some may seem common sense, but are worth covering in training to avoid any unnecessary situations.

Behavior, Expectations, and Responsibilities of Staff

The day of the event, have staff arrive early for setup and for last minute reviews or updates.

Whether being paid or acting as a volunteer, staff members will be in the public eye and therefore must exhibit exemplary demeanor and behavior at all times.

While on breaks, staff should remove themselves from the work area so as not to detract from the productivity of the program. Personal use of cellular phones and pagers, smoking, gum chewing and/or eating food while working are some examples of non-permissible behavior.

Smoking, consuming alcoholic beverages, using inappropriate language, or doing anything that is illegal is prohibited at any time while on duty, in uniform, or in the activity area. Additionally, all discussions taking place in the activity area should center on physical activity.

You may also want to establish additional rules regarding food and beverage consumption in the area.

Staff members must be courteous to all event visitors and fellow staff members to successfully execute the event. Staff members may be faced with varied activities and situations that might tax their patience. Good judgment and appropriate behavior is crucial no matter the situation. If in doubt about how to handle a situation, they should ask the event manager.

Attire/Appearance

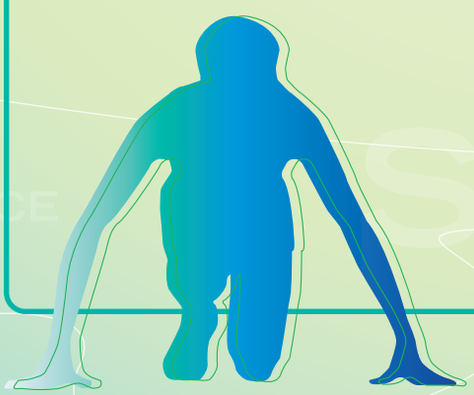
Staff should wear appropriate attire at all activities. Consider matching T-shirts or some other standard "uniform" to make the staff easily identifiable. All should wear active shoes since they may be participating in and/or leading the games and activities.

Staff should conform to standards of personal grooming and cleanliness which are neither offensive nor detract from the working environment. Individuals are expected to come to work looking neat and clean.

TALKING POINTS

When talking to tweens at physical activity events, it is important to focus on what is fun and cool. Some types of things that staff might say to kids to help motivate them to be active are:

- Hey! You don't have to be on a sports team to have fun playing. You can play every day. Get moving riding your bike or playing B-ball. Do whatever your favorite activities are.
- Dude! Dog! (or whatever kids currently like to call each other) It's not about the skill. It's about the fun. Just go out and do it. You've seen the commercials. Do it your way – everyday.
- Next time you're on-line, check out some of the web sites that have the latest on who is doing what in sports and stuff. It might give you some ideas on what else you can try. Try VERBnow.com and see what cool stuff is there.
- Show me what you got. Playing hard and having the most fun is the only way to win anything in **my** zone.



Adults require a different approach. They want to know the facts about how they can help their children grow strong, be healthy, and lead productive lives. For them, the points must be straight forward.

- This program was developed based on VERB. VERB is about getting kids to want to be active. It encourages kids to pick their verb(s). The successful five year campaign began in 2001 and comes to a close in 2006.
- VERB offers ideas and recommendations on getting physically active in the community, such as at local YMCAs, National Recreation & Park Association affiliates and more! These programs provide great opportunities for kids to make friends, be active, play sports, and acquire skills.
- What we are doing today is trying to encourage, but not push, the kids to be active and to do it every day. We are hoping that we can get the parents' support in that as well.
- We have literature available that provides ideas on how parents can encourage physical activity at home. For example, you can choose physical activity oriented gifts for your child and/or his or her friends. Or choose a physical activity outing as a reward for great accomplishment or exceptional behavior instead of going out to eat.

MORE INTERACTIONS WITH TWEENS

Getting Tweens to Check Out the Event

Call out what activities are being executed at the event site and encourage those outside to participate.

- "Come on over and learn new ways to turn up the fun at home!"
- "We will be having a _____ contest in 10 minutes where you can win cool prizes and learn new ways to play! Come on over."
- "We have cool prizes to give away, make sure to stop by our Activity Zone."
- "Come over and check out the fun activities at the VERB Activity Zone."

Once Tweens Arrive

Keep kids active and interested, make sure everyone is involved and doing some sort of activity. Even if kids are waiting in line – get them moving!

- "What is your verb?"
- "Show me your verb."
- "Who wants to have a touch down dance contest?"
- "Who can jump rope the longest?"

Upon Tweens Exiting

As kids are leaving, be sure to reinforce the fun they had getting active and that they can keep doing this at home on their own.

- "Remember you can do this at home on your own or with friends."
- "Wasn't this fun? So, are you going to continue to do _____ at home?"
- "Remember you can do this at home—just get a ball of socks or make a duct tape ball and throw it in a trash can."
- "Remember you can play any time, anywhere, with anything! Use your imagination!"

PRIZE DISTRIBUTION

If you are providing prizes and giveaways at your event, we suggest the following to keep them appealing and of special significance to your tween audience.

Items should:

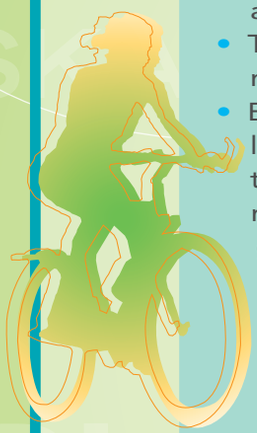
- be used as a draw to the site
- be used as a reward for activity
- NOT be given to adults
- NOT be given out in handfuls
- NOT be given to passersby who do not come into the activity site

Staff should keep count of the number of items that they give away. Tracking the number of prizes distributed at each event can help you track the number of participants for evaluation purpose. (See Appendix C for Prize Ideas).

"KEEP IT FUN" TIPS

Do:

- Keep a high level of energy to keep children motivated and continue to keep up the energy level when the children are trying out new activities.
- Practice "energetic outreach" to draw children from all over the event area and encourage them to come over, check out a new activity, get them into the action.
- Keep music, messages, and activities age-appropriate.
- Tone should be peer-to-peer, not adult to kid.
- Embrace all aspects of kids' lives – never tell a child that they should not do things (i.e.: never say "don't watch video games, don't eat junk food").
- Pay attention to resources kids may need such as rest rooms where available, first aid areas/procedures, fire/emergency exits, water, etc. Contact your local health department for guidance on emergency safety protocols and tips on prevention and treatment for conditions such as heat exhaustion and heat stroke.
- Keep parent/adult and tween messaging separate.
- Reward individual/group participation in activity either through prizes, or positive reinforcement.
- Instill individual or friendly competition. It's about activity, not winning.



Don't:

- Give prizes to adults. They are specifically for kids.
- Talk about political/religious issues, current events.
- Focus on "winning." Everybody's a winner.
- Talk about health or exercise. It's about fun and play.
- Talk to parents in front of kids about health, exercise, obesity, or nutrition.

Thank you for recognizing the need to promote increased and sustained physical activity among youth. We hope that you have found this guide helpful. See Appendix D for on-line resources that you may find useful in planning and executing your physical activity events.

You are on your way to a successful event with kids leaving happy, thrilled, and ready to continue their play, each saying: "I can't wait to do that again!"

APPENDIX A

GAME AND ACTIVITY IDEAS

Adults have to be imaginative to keep kids' interest in just about anything. Below is a list of activities and games developed for the VERB campaign. This list provides ideas on ways to get and keep kids interested in physical play any time, any where. Kids can play the suggested games as is, make up their own rules for them, or even make up their own games.

Basketball-Related Activities

BASKETBALL + BASEBALL = BASEKETBALL

Place four "bases" around the basketball court. The batter is the same as a passer in Baseketball. Pass or throw the basketball as far as you can, all the way to the outfield, run the bases before the opposing team member catches the ball and makes a basket. First team to score gets the point.
Equipment Needs: 4 bases (or hot spots), 1 basketball, half-court set up

BASKETBALL + FOOTBALL = END ZONE HOOPS

Defend your basket as though it's the end zone. Play football on the basketball court, which means running and passing with a football instead of dribbling. Once the offense gets near enough to a basket to shoot, any attempt is allowed. Defensive players jump up to block. If the opponent scores, head back the other way.
Equipment Needs: 1 football, half- or full-court

BASKETBALL + RUNNING = BASKET DASH

What would basketball be without all that dribbling? Basket Dash! Run as fast as you can, but don't be a ball hog. Keep your teammates on the go with you — each side must pass at least six times before shooting. Keep your arms and legs on the move.
Equipment Needs: 1 basketball, half- or full-court

BASKETBALL + FLYING DISK = BASKET DISK

Grab a disk and head to the court. Designate certain spots two-, three-, and four-point zones. Let the disk soar and hit the basket from any of these zones to earn the same number of points. Defensive blocks and stealing allowed.
Equipment Needs: 1 flying disk, half- or full-court

BASKETBALL + GOLF = TIGER HOOPS

Set up a miniature golf course around the basketball court. Make sure your last hole is in the free-throw zone. Once you get there, your club is no longer required. Take a shot for the basket with your lightweight miniature golf ball. Hole-in-one, anyone?
Equipment Needs: 4 golf clubs, 1 lightweight miniature golf ball, 4 cones, half-court

BASKETBALL + HOPSCOTCH = HOOPSCOTCH

The court looks a little different when you tape hopscotch squares down on the paint. Pick a square, dribble down to it, and take a shot from where you stop. If you make it, you score that number of points. Then hop your way through the remaining squares to complete the play.
Equipment Needs: 1 roll of painters tape or some sidewalk chalk, half- or full-court, 1 basketball

BASKETBALL + MARTIAL ARTS = KUNG FU BALL

The aim of this game is to get silly! A basketball game with martial arts skills looks like this: every player who does not have the ball must bust a move. A kung fu kick, a punch, a karate chop — keep the defense on the defensive with your moves. Watch out, though. These moves are for fun, not contact.
Equipment Needs: 1 basketball, half- or full-court

BASKET/HOOPS

Try shooting hoops at a laundry basket or milk crate using a regular basketball, crumpled wad of paper or rolled up pair of socks. Or, play V-E-R-B, our version of H-O-R-S-E.
Equipment Needs: 2 large milk crates, 1 garbage can or waste basket, 1 laundry basket, 1 basketball, 4 mini basketballs, loose leaf paper, rolls of tape

Volleyball-Related Games

VOLLEYHACKEY

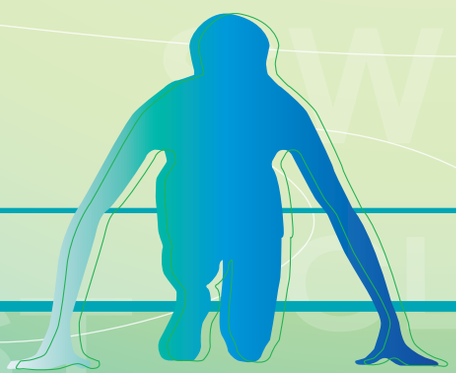
Lower the net or use a limbo stick and kick a foot bag or beanbag over it. Score the game just like volleyball.
Equipment Needs: 1 mini-net, 1 foot bag

HOTVOLLEY

Pass a ball back and forth over the net while music plays. When it stops, the player who has the ball gets a point. The object is to get the fewest points.
Equipment Needs: 1 volleyball ball, 1 mini-net, music

VOLLEYBALL BALL

Practice your volleyball skills: BUMP, SET, and SPIKE are double fun with two volleyballs instead of one. Get ready for constant motion.
Equipment Needs: 2 volleyball balls, 1 mini-net



Hockey-Related Games

MARCOHOCKEY

Designate a secret location in the room as the "goal." Players push around a puck and listen for whether they are "hot" (near the goal) or "cold" (far from it).
Equipment Needs: 4-8 hockey sticks, 1 puck (or bouncy ball)

EXTRA NET HOCKEY

In field hockey, or ice hockey, the intensity's increased when each team has two goals to SHOOT for and more opportunities to SCORE.
Equipment Needs: 4-8 hockey sticks, 1 puck, 4 nets (or use other items designated as goals such as garbage cans)

BROOMSTICK HOCKEY

Try scoring a goal using a crushed can. Knock the can into the goal with a broomstick.
Equipment Needs: 2 goals or laundry baskets. 4 Brooms or hockey sticks, crushed cans

Soccer-Related Games

MINI-SOCCKEY

Add hockey sticks and a mini-soccer ball to the equation to double the fun. If you don't have a mini-soccer ball, any small and bouncy ball will do.
Equipment Needs: 1 Mini soccer ball, hockey sticks

EXTRA NET SOCCER

A net on all 4-sides of the field increases your opportunities to score a goal. Dribble the ball down the field, pass it to your teammate, and kick one in.
Equipment Needs: 1 soccer ball, 4 nets (or use other items designated as goals such as garbage cans)

Football-Related Games

PIG BALL

Overview: Make as many baskets as possible by only passing and catching the football. Start the game with a throw-in from the end line. The team with the ball tries to pass and catch it, advancing toward their basket. After catching the ball, a player cannot take any steps. The passer has three seconds to throw the ball to a teammate. Defenders must be three feet away from the passer. The closest defender must count "1 Pig Ball, 2 Pig Ball, 3 Pig Ball" out loud. If the passer doesn't throw the ball before "3 Pig Ball" the team on defense takes over the ball.
Equipment Needs: 1 football, basket

Dance-Related Games

DANCETAG

Play a traditional game of "freeze" tag, but instead of remaining "frozen," tagged players must do hip hop dance moves until re-tagged.
Equipment Needs: music (not mandatory)

ANY GROOVE

Overview: This area will be used to showcase VERBrations, a STOMP-like activity that encourages tweens to make their own music by playing every day household items, such as buckets (drums), empty water jugs (bass), empty soda cans filled with rice (maracas) and pots & pans with lids (drums/symbols).
Equipment Needs: 3 round buckets (various sizes), 6 large wooden spoons, 6 drum sticks, 6 silver spoons, 1 empty water jug, 4 soda cans filled with rice, 2 sets of pots and pans with lids (various sizes)

Everyday Items/Games

Use every day items to make games and activities more unusual and to demonstrate that no special equipment is necessary to play.

SOCCLOON

Blow up balloons and keep them in the air for as long as you can with the head, knees, and feet, not the hands.
Equipment Needs: 4 balloons

DISC GOLF

Grab a flying disc, find some open space and you're ready to PLAY. Choose trees, bushes, or objects like plastic garbage cans to be the holes and GOLF away.
Equipment Needs: flying disc, whatever else is around

TRIPLE TIME FOOTBAG

TAP and TOSS a foot bag with friends while standing in a circle. Try 3 foot bags to up the challenge and keep the game action packed.
Equipment Needs: 3 foot bags

HIP HOP SCOTCH

Overview: Just like regular Hop Scotch, but with a funky twist of Hip Hop flavor. Draw the boxes but instead of numbers, you write in dance moves like spin, bounce, step, or shake. Toss the rock and whatever it lands on is what you do. If it lands on a question mark, you choose – do anything.
Equipment Needs: chalk, rock or something flat to toss.

JUMP ROPE/DOUBLE TIME DUTCH

Overview: Just like regular Jump Rope, but can you handle two? How about balancing a foot bag on your foot while jumping?
Equipment Needs: 2 jump ropes, 1 foot bag

Team Games

"NATIVE AMERICAN KICKBALL" – Originally played by the Hopi Indians, this game is all about teamwork. First you create an obstacle course using anything you have hanging around (jump ropes, cones, garbage cans…whatever you have). Make as many twists and turns as you want. Then, two teams run through the course, kicking their ball forward to the end or finish line. Each team member takes a turn kicking the ball through the course, but no one player can kick the ball twice in a row. Add your own twists and turns to this game, and start kicking…or maybe hopping…or wheel barrowing…or skipping…you get the idea!

"LOS HOYOS"("THE HOLES") – All this game needs is a tennis ball and some chalk. For each player, you create a hole (using chalk, a paper plate, or even digging a hole in dirt if you're playing outside) about 10 feet away from where the players will stand. The first player rolls the ball into another player's hole. If they miss the hole, the next player rolls the ball. If the ball lands in the hole, whoever the hole belongs to has to run to get the ball without being tagged by the other players. If the player makes it back to their standing place without being tagged, they get a point. Try out "Los Hoyos" or create your own game using just a tennis ball and chalk. See what you can come up with!

APPENDIX B

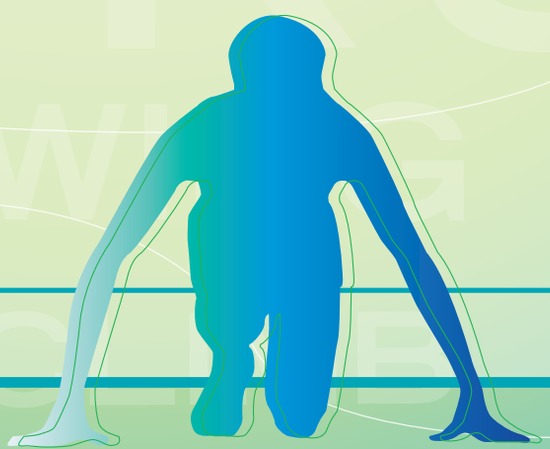
EQUIPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

- brooms
- garbage cans
- laundry baskets
- painter's tape
- sidewalk chalk
- foot bags
- cones
- soccer ball
- street hockey ball
- hockey sticks
- youth basketball
- spongy balls
- jump ropes
- tennis rackets
- tennis balls
- bases
- footballs
- hula hoops
- flying disks

APPENDIX C

PRIZE IDEAS

- flying disks
- thunder sticks
- rubber band bracelets
- foot bags
- T-shirts
- bouncy balls
- temporary tattoos
- mini basketballs
- mini footballs
- music/CD-ROMs
- inflatable vinyl balls



APPENDIX D

CDC INTERNET RESOURCES

Please feel free visit these CDC Web sites for more information and resources related to physical activity and healthy lifestyles for youth.

VERB Partners and Professionals Web site
www.cdc.gov/VERB

VERB Tween Web site
www.VERBnow.com

Prevention Research Centers: University of South Florida Center for Community-based Prevention Marketing
http://www.cdc.gov/prc/centers/southflorida.htm

BAM! Body And Mind Web site for kids
www.bam.gov

BAM! Body and Mind Web site for teachers
http://www.bam.gov/teachers/index.htm

Kids Walk to School Program
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/kidswalk/index.htm

Promoting Physical Activity through Outdoor Trails
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/trails.htm

Division of Adolescent and School Health
www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth

Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa

National Diabetes Education Program
http://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/ndep

CDC's Overweight and Obesity Web site
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity

Guide to Community Preventive Services
http://www.thecommunityguide.org/

***Healthy Kids. Healthy Families.* Physical activity brochures**
http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/brochures/index.htm

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