Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to encourage the pursuit and education of health and wellness development for every Chicago Park District park user throughout the city of Chicago. This policy recognizes that promotion, education and motivation to participate in health and wellness activities results in an improved healthy lifestyle and overall wellness therefore creating a more vibrant and strong Chicago. The District is committed to the optimal development of every man, woman and child. The District believes that for park users to have the opportunity to achieve personal, academic, developmental and social success, we need to create positive and health-promoting learning environments at every level, in every activity setting, throughout the entire year in a system-wide focus.

Research shows that two components, good nutrition and physical activity are strongly correlated with positive outcomes. This policy outlines the District’s approach to ensuring environments and opportunities for all park users to practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors throughout class periods. Specifically, this policy establishes goals and procedures to ensure that:

- Participating children have access to healthy foods throughout the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) used in summer day camps, and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), for participants of the Park Kids programs and other out of school time programs. All other events where food is served to children throughout the District shall be in accordance with Federal and State nutrition standards;

- Park users receive quality nutrition education that helps them develop lifelong healthy eating behaviors through programs and events; For example, Messaging with the CACFP program, Fun with Food, Harvest Garden, and Day camp Meal messaging.

- Park users have opportunities to be physically active during classes and events, with aim of a minimum of 30-60 minutes Moderate to Vigorous activity most days of the week;

- Local parks engage in nutrition and physical activity promotion and other activities that promote park user wellness and healthy lifestyles;
• Park staff are encouraged and supported to practice healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in and out of their work location;

• The community is engaged in supporting the work of the District in creating continuity between their park and other settings for park users and staff to practice lifelong healthy habits;

• The District establishes and maintains an infrastructure for management, oversight, implementation, communication about and monitoring of the policy and its established goals and objectives;

• The District will coordinate the wellness policy with the Community Recreation’s Wellness Department, including the District’s Master Plan, when appropriate;

• The District will collaborate with the City of Chicago and follow the Department of Public Health’s Healthy Chicago 2.0 Plan; and

• This policy applies to all staffed parks in the District, thereby affecting all park users. Specific measureable goals and outcomes are identified within each section below

The District will convene a representative district wellness committee (the “DWC”) within the District’s existing wellness department that will meet quarterly to establish goals for and oversee park health and wellness policies and programs. The DWC will be responsible for development, implementation and periodic review and update of this District wide Wellness Policy (the “Wellness Policy”). To the extent possible, the DWC will include representatives from each region, including Area Managers, Park Supervisors and other appropriate staff, to reflect the diversity of all communities in addition to input from CDPH Healthy Chicago Committee and Park Advisory Council conference.

Leadership

The Wellness Department manager will convene the DWC and facilitate development of and updates to the wellness policy, and will ensure each park’s compliance with the policy. Critical components of this policy’s maintenance shall include:

• Wellness educational trainings at park supervisor and instructor conferences, and others as needed;
• Training for seasonal hires;
• Online wellness certification; and
• Park District employees having free or discounted access to wellness classes and Fitness Centers, where applicable.

II. Nutrition

Our District is committed to serving healthy meals to children, with plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat milk, that are moderate in sodium, low in saturated fat, and have zero grams trans-fat per serving (nutrition label or manufacturer’s specification), and to meet the nutritional needs of children within their calorie requirements. The SFSP and CACFP programs aim to improve the diet and health of children, help mitigate childhood obesity, model healthy eating to
support the development of lifelong healthy eating patterns and support healthy choices while accommodating cultural food preferences and special dietary needs. Menu item messaging will be used to incorporate education on nutrients.

Opportunities to increase nutrition awareness will include:

- Management of nutritional offerings at special event parties and celebrations; and
- Nutrition Education presentations for Afterschool and Out of School Time Programs

III. Healthy Procurement

To ensure that only the most nutritional and healthy foods are being provided to park users, the DWC will work to implement the following:

- Healthy Vending contract for both beverages and snacks
- Healthy Food Purchases
- Meet SFSP and CACFP federal food program guidelines
- Compliance with City of Chicago’s adoption of the Good Food Purchasing Policy: http://chicagofoodpolicy.com/portfolio/good-food-purchasing-policy/


Competitive Foods and Beverages

A positive sense of well-being is a key component of a healthy, productive citizen. In support of total District wide health, city, state and federal agencies offer a range of services from education, prevention and screenings, to assistance programs from safety and health to nutrition and healthy food programs. In addition to providing several unique advantages for health promotion, wellness programs may also lower healthcare costs, increase productivity, improve physical and cognitive health as well as offer the opportunity to live a better, more balanced life.

The District is committed to ensuring that all foods and beverages available to park users through-out the District support healthy eating. The foods and beverages sold and served outside of the Out of School time programs including SFSP and CACFP will meet the USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, at a minimum. Smart Snacks aim to improve student health and well-being, increase consumption of healthful foods during the school day and create an environment that reinforces the development of healthy eating habits. A summary of the standards and information, as well as a Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools are available at: http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation provides a set of tools to assist with implementation of Smart Snacks available at www.foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org.

Policy
It is the policy of the Chicago Park District that continued effort and support of health and wellness programs and activities for park users is encouraged and supported by the Board of Commissioners and management to foster an ongoing improvement of the health and welfare for all of our park users. The Chicago Park District Wellness unit aims to promote, educate, and motivate Chicagoans of all ages and abilities to adopt a healthier lifestyle through being physically active and choosing smart food choices.