

athletes for hope

PASS THE PASSION



AFH Fit Introduction

Since the beginning of Athletes for Hope, we have asked elite athletes what they are most passionate about when it comes to the community involvement and they almost always state that helping children become more physically active is at the top of the list. This interest from our athlete base spurred us to create the AFH Fit Program, which seeks to connect athletes to various non-profit partners to motivate and inspire children to become more physically active. Today, Athletes for Hope is proud to partner with Marathon Kids and Active Schools to help us positively impact thousands of children across the country through in-person visits from professional and Olympic athletes.



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Children's Health in America

The following module aims to explore the impact of our organization and explain why our work is important.

Growing Issue

Childhood Obesity Is Growing in the United States

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the percentage of children and adolescents affected by obesity has more than tripled since the 1970's¹.
- Data from 2015-2016 show that nearly 1 in 5 school age children and young people (6 to 19 years) in the United States are obesity.² That is approximately 12 million children who are obese.
- Obesity in childhood is known to be an independent risk factor for adult obesity and interventions focused on changing behaviors are needed to reduce the prevalence of obesity in children.³
- The U.S. is just second behind Mexico for being the most obese country in the world, and the obesity rate is expected to be 50 percent by 2030 in the United States according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

Why Our Work Is Important

AFH Fit Program Works Diligently to Change At-Risk Behaviors Among Youth

- There are many interventions that are aimed at increasing physical activity in children, but it is unclear how successful efforts have been to increase the activity levels of elementary students and very few involve a professional athlete facilitator. This makes the program unique, as many youths admire and are inspired by professional athletes.
- Professional Athletes serve as a major source of motivation for students to improve their physical fitness frequency and competency.
- Schools are recognized as a setting where physical activity of children can be influenced and is an effective way to improve the health outcomes of elementary school students.⁴
- Ultimately, the AFH Fit Program will help to change at-risk behaviors and decrease childhood obesity rates around the United States.

¹ Fryar CD, Carroll MD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and adolescents: United States, 1963-1965 through 2011- 2012. *Health E-Stats*. 2014. https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hestat/obesity_child_11_12/obesity_child_11_12.htm. Accessed December 21, 2017.

² Hales CM, Carroll MD, Fryar CD, Ogden CL. Prevalence of obesity among adults and youth: United States, 2015-2016. *NCHS Data Brief*. 2017;288:1-8.

³ Ortega, F. B., Ruiz, J. R., Castillo, M. J., & Sjörström, M. (2008). Physical fitness in childhood and adolescence: a powerful marker of health. *International journal of obesity*, 32(1), 1-11.

⁴ Weaver, R. G., Beets, M. W., Webster, C., Beighle, A., & Huberty, J. (2012). A conceptual model for training after-school program staffers to promote physical activity and nutrition. *Journal of School Health*, 82(4), 186-195.

Before Your Visit

The following module aims to prepare you for your first AFH Fit visit. Please review the document a couple of days before your visit and let us know if you have any questions.

Step 1

Know your audience

- Get an idea of the demographics of students you are talking to. This will help you determine what story to tell. Students from economically-disadvantaged backgrounds want to be motivated and want to hear how you have knocked down immense barriers to get where you are today.
- Knowing your audience will also help you plan activities that are relevant and accessible to students while they are at home and in their communities.

Step 2

Thinking About Your Story in Sports

- During most AFH Fit visits, you will have opportunity to address the kids. Develop your story in a way that is motivating and inspires students to want to remain physically active.
- Tell a story that identifies barriers that you have faced and how you overcame those barriers.
- Tell students how you find solace in physical activity.

Step 3

Best practices for facilitating your AFH Fit visit

- As a facilitator, you should be aware of the Tell-Show-Do model and how to accommodate each style of learning. (Tell for auditory learners, show for visual learners and do for kinesthetic learners). You should practice this model during every explanation.
- You should employ the following tactics;
 - Keep all students in sight within 180-degree view.
 - Allow for eye contact to personalize your message and connect with each individual.
 - Be aware of distractions (sun, environment, other people)
 - Give simple, specific clear, instructions
 - Set session expectations at the beginning at session.
 - "When I talk, you are listening"
 - "When you hear the beep, stop what you are doing and listen to further instructions"
 - Attention getters are being implemented. (ex: Clap twice if you can hear my voice. Facilitator says, "All eyes on me" and kids say, "All eyes on Coach _____".
 - The Facilitator has start and stop commands that the students respond to and understand.
 - 80/20 ratio: 80% of audience gets it, 20% doesn't, get going and be the plumber: fix the leaks after you started.
 - As soon as you give kids equipment (for example balls), they want to begin to play with it. This becomes a distraction when we give instructions. Be ready to handle this situation. Simple instructional cue: "Ball between the feet"
- Align your visit with expectations of Marathon Kids and Athletes for Hope and review visit agenda to ensure your activity is accordance with timeline.

AFH Fit Visit Goals

Sweaty, Smiling Faces

- Goals set by all organizations (School, AFH, Marathon Kids) are accomplished.
- Students become knowledgeable of new physical activities.
- Students are inspired to continue increasing their physical fitness.
- Make sure activity is fun! At the end of the session, the kids should be looking up to you with sweaty, smiling faces. This is a key indicator of a successful visit!

A Meaningful Physical Fitness Experience for Kids

The following module aims to give you a better understanding of what it takes to create a meaningful physical fitness experience for kids via Marathon Kids, Active School, or other non-profit organizations.

EVERYONE has a great time during your visit!

- **All kids feel included in the physical fitness activities**
 - All kids should participate and everyone should get as many reps as possible. No one should be standing by the wall or waiting in line for their turn. Your activities will get everyone moving as much as possible.
- **All kids are successful**
 - Be ready to make adjustments to the rules, equipment or space of the activity session to help the students be successful. (e.g. if the students aren't understanding the activity, make an adjustment on the individual and group levels.)
 - Through age appropriate activities, simple rules, and clear communication, the facilitator will successfully engage all of the kids in a fun physical fitness session.
- **The physical safety of the kids**
 - Take note of the facilities, equipment and activities and make sure everyone will stay safe. Take a minute and speak with the PE teacher or coach and ask if there is anything that you should know about the space in regard to safety.

Visit Management

- **You set the tone!** It is important for you to set a positive tone throughout the visit. This helps build rapport with students and it gives the kids permission to fully embrace the session. If you are having fun and smiling, the kids will do the same.
- **Time Management:** For many of the visits, you will have a limited amount of time. Speak with the PE teacher or coach and ask them to help you keep on schedule.
- **Visit Objectives:** You should be familiar with the organization's objectives, but you should also have your own objectives. What message do you want the kids to remember? What are the key takeaways from your visit?

After the Visit

The following module aims to help guide your reflection on the previous visit and identify ways to sustain relationships with AFH Fit Program stakeholders.

Coordinate an (Informal) Debrief with AFH and School Coordinator.

- Debrief with school coordinator and Marathon Kids Coach
 - This debrief is informal and allows you to reflect on your visit from a variety of perspectives.
 - This is also a time to discuss permission on posting pictures and videos to social media platforms.
 - Do you have their permission to post pictures and videos of participants? Do they have your permission to post pictures and videos that include you?
- Be sure to share your contact information (phone, email, social media, etc.) with school coordinator and Marathon Kids Coach to coordinate a return visit.

Reflect on why social media postings are important.

- When you post pictures and videos of you with students, students become inspired to know that you care about them.
- Other athletes become inspired to participate in community service efforts and work with students as well.
- The stakeholder organizations are able to show the impact of their efforts and inspire other organization to address similar issues and work with students.
- Remember that every like or share on Facebook and retweet on Twitter regarding the visit helps everyone disseminate the spirit of community service.

Reflect on why revisiting a school site is impactful.

- We want athletes to begin building deeper relationships with schools. This step is referred to as *Engage* in our Causeway curriculum. This step is often about a greater commitment of time and effort and a more meaningful relationship with the organization and its beneficiaries.
- We want athletes to become *Partners*. In this element of the Causeway curriculum, athletes become knowledgeable about the issues and challenges that face the school they work with and have the opportunity to have a greater voice in the cause.

Complete Post-Survey

- Be honest and open about your experience. Your feedback is important and will used to improve the experience for students in the program.
- The school will complete a similar survey and we will share their thoughts with you as well.

Inclusivity

The following module aims to help you explore how you can integrate inclusivity into your visits with students to provide a meaningful experience for all students.

The benefits of physical activity are vast and help students develop communication skills, improve at-risk behaviors for obesity and increase mental wellbeing. All students should be able to enjoy the benefits of physical activity!

You Want Every Student to Have A Great Time During the Visit

Lead an Activity That All Students Can Benefit From

- There are a variety of activities that you can lead that will not exclude students. Perhaps leading activities that are non-competitive allows will motivate students to participate.
- Lead activities that require small groups.
 - Small groups make some students more comfortable.

Students with Disabilities

- Make sure you are aware of students with disabilities and that these students have the appropriate accommodations when participating.
- Help to ensure that their experience with the activity and interactions with other students are positive.

Students with Negative Attitudes Toward Physical Activity

- Be aware of the students who have a negative attitude toward physical activity. These students can be identified by the way they talk about exercise and/or their body language during physical activities.
 - School staff will be a good source to help you identify these students.
 - Developing a relationship with these students will improve their attitude toward exercising.
 - Using them as helpers during your session will help you build those relationships.

Diversity in Leadership

- It is important to allow students of color and female students lead activities or are chosen to help you demonstrate certain activities.
 - These students are normally not exposed to leadership experiences and would be motivating for all students to see a diverse representation of leadership during activities

Tips for Facilitation

The following module aims to help AFH Members cultivate skills in facilitation to ensure goals of visit are accomplished and everyone involved has a positive experience.

Set Expectations for Students Early in the Visit

- You set the tone! It is important for you to outline your expectations to students at the beginning of the visit.
 - When students understand that there are clear goals to accomplish and a purpose, they are more likely to cooperate.

Develop Group Management Techniques

- Management techniques are important to prevent constant interruption and misbehavior.
- Introducing the management techniques early help provide structure throughout the rest of the visit.
- Familiarize students with your group management and transition cues.
 - Ex. "5, 4, 3, 2, 1! Alright, lets transition to the next activity.
 - Ex. "If you hear my voice, clap once. If you hear my voice, clap twice. No one should be talking, everyone should be listening.
- Model activities before you ask students to engage in them.

Set a Positive Tone

- It is important for you to set a positive tone throughout the visit. The helps build rapport with students and it gives the kids permission to fully embrace the session. If you are having fun and smiling, the kids will do the same.
- Maintain positive and high energy throughout the visit.
 - If you are positive and exhibit high energy, so will the students.
- Have fun with the students and show them that you enjoy spending time with them.

Be Adaptable, Be Ready for Any and Everything

- Be ready to resolve conflict.
 - If school coordinator is around, let them handle the students.
 - If school coordinator is not around, do your best to deescalate the situation.
- Monitor energy levels of students and be ready to adapt activities to help get energy levels high again.
- Be ready to improvise.
 - If things are not going as planned, be ready to change the activities to meet the need of the situation.

AFH Fit Playbook

Athletes and teams often choose to engage in charitable opportunities that involve young people and physical fitness. This document serves as a resource guide to help athletes formulate an agenda and exercises for physical activity sessions with children.

Giving Hope

- H** – Healthy Experiences; The leader focuses on both the physical and emotional health of the kids.
- O** – Opportunity; Everyone has the opportunity to participate and have fun.
- P** – Personal Connection; The leader sets a positive tone by personally connecting to the kids.
- E** – Engage; Through age appropriate activities, simple rules, and clear communication, the leader will engage all of the kids in fun physical fitness sessions.

Goals

1. Improve students' perception of physical fitness and its benefits.
2. Improve students' level of fitness through personal and group fitness goals.

Athletes' Role

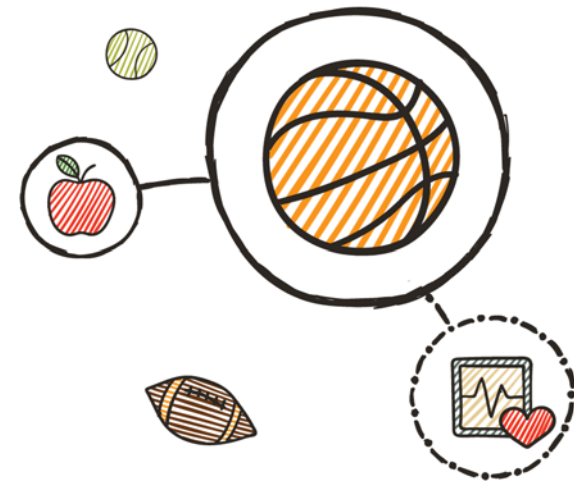
- Share personal accounts of why physical fitness has played a critical role in their lives.
- Acknowledge students' progress in their physical fitness goals by recognition and incentives for participation.
- Lead physical fitness activities with the kids and serve as healthy role models to underserved children.

Schools' Role

- Engage in monthly sessions and share group facilitation.
- Help track data when necessary.
- Serve as program ambassador on campus.

AFH Role

- Overall program design and data tracking.
- Provide training and content on physical fitness activities to athletes.
- Facilitate physical fitness sessions.
- Liaison with athletes and school partners.
- Coordinate monthly calls prior to visits
- Analyze data and report outcomes.
- Publicize program highlights.

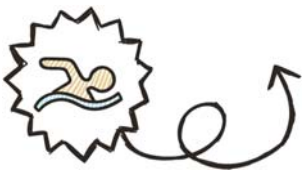


Session Overview

Kids need to hear, see and practice new skills. Tell them the instructions as a group, show them how to do the activity, then allow them to Do it as a practice.

A Positive Physical Activity Session Includes

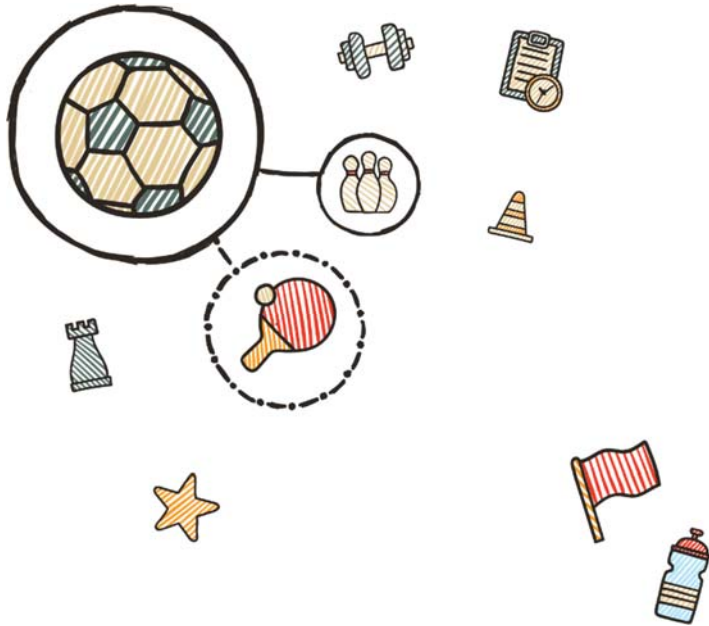
- **Dynamic Stretching;** Stretching while moving prepares kids for more vigorous activity and develops motor skills.
- **Warm Up Activity;** Simple tag games prepare kids for physical activity.
- **Active Games:** Games are fun, develop motor skills, and provide health related fitness.
- **Static Stretching;** Static stretching after playing sports or participating in physical activity improves flexibility and body awareness.
- **Debrief:** Review what kids experienced. Empower them by asking kids to recount what they learned.



Sample Power Up! Agenda

- **SKILLS** this session are Sit-Ups and Jumping Jacks.
 - **10 Minutes:** Welcome and Introductions
 - School Ambassador welcomes the athletes and guests to the program.
 - Review agenda with kids and review visual calendar of sessions. Review goal setting and discuss personal outside goals as well as class goals (Sit ups and Jumping Jacks). Reinforce progress as a group and incentivize those working outside of class time to meet goals.
 - Ask for questions from group, then have kids line up in equal lines at one end of the gym for warm up.
 - **10 Minutes:** Dynamic stretching: Bear Crawls, Sit ups, Bottom Kicks, High Knees
 - **5 Minutes:** Grouping Games-
 - Have fun with a variety of Grouping Games with ultimate goal to get kids into groups of 8-10 for the next event. Have 1-2 athletes per group to help monitor skills and give feedback.
 - **20 Minutes:** Skill Zone and testing for 2 skills (Sit ups and Jumping Jacks).
 - **Skill 1: Plank Challenge.** Tell students about how to do a plank, then show them and students practice. Them what muscles it is working and why it's important to get a stronger core. Set a timer and see who can hold the plank for the longest. Record individual scores.
- REST/Water Break
- **Skill 2: The Sprint Challenge.** Describe to the students proper running form. Tell the students that they will have 30 seconds to run from one cone to another. Record you can run the farthest distance in a set period of time. Record individual scores.
 - **20 Minutes:** Group game-Steal the Cones
 - **10 minutes:** Cool Down/Debrief





Grouping Games

- **Name Size:** Students must count the number of letters in their first name and then find a partner who has the same number of letters. Once students have found their partner, the student whose name begins with a letter closest to A stands and the other sits, which creates teams similar to Partner Sit/Stand.
- **Same Shoe Size:** All students find a partner who has the same shoe size as them. You can also use eye color, hair color, hand size, etc. Once students have found a partner, refer to Partner Sit/Stand.
- **Rock Band:** Use “Mingle, Mingle!” to get the students into groups of four. Have the group decide on a rock band name and have each student select one of the four roles in the band: lead singer, drummer, guitarist, or keyboardist. Instruct each Rock Band role to form its own group: all drummers together, all lead singers, together, etc.

Tag Games

Amoeba Tag

- **Set Up:** large open area. Set boundaries using existing markers such as lines on a basketball court or cones.
- **Rules and Directions**
 - One person is “IT” while others scatter
 - If touched, students join hands or link elbows and continue to chase each other, thus becoming an “amoeba.”
 - Only the “amoeba” reaches four people. It splits into two.
 - Each piece of the amoeba continues to split when it reaches four people until everyone is caught.

Blob Tag

- **Set Up:** large open area. Set boundaries using existing markers such as lines on a basketball court or cones.
- **Rules and Directions**
 - One person is “IT” while others scatter
 - If touched, students join hands or link elbows to become a blob and continue to chase each other.
 - The blob continues to grow until all are caught.

Paparazzi Tag

- **Set Up:** Large open area for the groups
- **Rules and Directions**
 - Have the students get in groups of four
 - In each group, there should be 1 celebrity, 2 body guards, and 1 paparazzi
 - The bodyguards and celebrity lock arms at the elbow and are not allowed to break that connection.
 - The paparazzi tries to tag the celebrity and the bodyguards shuffle their feet to keep the paparazzi away from the celebrity.
 - This competition continues for 30 seconds and then someone else is designated the tagger and the game continues until the target is caught.

Games

Over, Under, Around, and Through

- Rules and Directions
 - Formation: students line up around the perimeter of the room.
 - Facilitator decides on a pattern where students go over, under, around and through imaginary or real objects.
 - Lead the line of students around the room, following this pattern for at least 30 seconds each.
 - Example 1 – Over a sea of sticky peanut butter, under a cherry tree, around an ice cream cone and through a sea of Jell-O
 - Example 2 – Over a turtle, under a big dog, around the elephant and through a giraffe's legs.

Sports Galore

- Rules and Directions
 - Leader calls out the following sport skills to mimic for at least 10-15 seconds.
 - Shooting a jump shot
 - Running through tires
 - Batting a baseball
 - Serving a tennis ball
 - Downhill skiing
 - Spiking a volleyball
 - Variations
 - Leader can also integrate skills into word problems and have students repeat the number he or she calls out
 - Ex. If Juan made 5 jump shots and 2 went in the basket, how many did he miss?

