

## **Adapting New Moves for Junior High School Students**

Older adolescents were initially targeted since this is a period of time when physical activity declines significantly and school requirements for physical education courses lessen. Additionally, unhealthy behaviors including poor eating habits and unhealthy weight control practices are commonly seen during this time. Although the original curriculum was designed for senior high students and implemented in a high school setting, adaptations can be made for younger age groups, such as girls in junior high settings. The overall philosophy of the New Moves program remains the same for both younger and older adolescent; **provide a setting in which girls feel so good about themselves so they will want to nurture their bodies through enjoyable physical activity and healthy eating for a lifetime.**

Whether an older or younger adolescent population is the intended audience, the program objectives remain the same: 1) bring about positive changes in physical activity and eating behaviors to improve weight status; 2) help girls function in a thin-oriented society and feel good about themselves; and 3) help girls avoid unhealthy weight control behaviors. Consideration and decisions about the curriculum should be based on what is in the best interest of the class, for example a game style of activity such as tag may be preferred by younger girls versus group physical activities. Knowing the girls' preferences and providing choice for the girls are key elements when tailoring the program for adolescents varying in age and grade level.

Suggested variations for the core components of the New Moves course are listed below:

## Junior High School

### PE Class

- Provide an environment in which all the girls in the class feel comfortable being physically active. Teach new activities and games that help girls be active in a new way.
- Offer choice and variety within the schedule to reduce resistance and turn the focus to enjoyment of the activity.
- Present traditional PE activities in a different way, focusing on having fun and placing less emphasis on competition and skills, e.g., more games (can we think of a different work than games – I think basketball games).
- Expose the girls to a wide variety of activities. Ask and listen to the girls as to what activity they are currently doing outside of class.
- Explore activities girls enjoy doing with their families and siblings. While older girls often choose to spend free time with friends, younger girls are still involved with activities done together as a family.
- Encourage activities outside of the class that can easily be done with friends or family such as bike riding, playing tennis and skiing or sledding.
- Model positive feedback, look for effort and a positive attitude and give sincere compliments whenever possible.
- The New Moves philosophy of wanting girls to feel good about themselves, and feel accepted and supported while engaging in healthy behaviors doesn't change when teaching a younger group of girls however getting creative such as playing volleyball with beach balls or soccer with several balls on the field can be fun.
- Play music in the gym while they are playing games, it's an easy way to keep the energy going in the class
- Have the girls rotate taking the lead and teach an activity of their choice, e.g., an exercise DVD, a different sport or game with the class.

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| <p><b>Strength Training</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce different types of strength training as part of the class, smaller weights may be needed for this age group or resistance bands.</li> <li>• Assess whether strength training is something that is of interest to them. If so, what would they like to do, e.g., work on their arms, legs or introduce a circuit style of strength training?</li> <li>• Girls participate in strength training activities aimed at helping them get strong at their own pace. Goal setting works for younger kids too. Maybe something about that.</li> <li>• An environment that is lively, fun and safe is important for the class. Think about or ask the girls what they like when active, e.g., playing music in the room or gym or give permission to listen to an iPod.</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Guest Instructors</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Getting and keeping the girl's moving is a big part of New Moves. Having the girls rotate taking the lead and teaching a dance move or another type of activity gives the class variety. If there is an opportunity to bring in a guest instructor and the girls are interested then go for it, if not, have them be the "guest instructor" for the day.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>Classroom time</b></p>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the session topics are age-appropriate for younger adolescents. An obvious difference in the younger age is that this is a time of change, e.g., new school, new friends, etc. so providing a safe, comfortable classroom setting is important.</li> <li>• The curriculum is designed to include plenty of sharing which may not be as comfortable for the younger girls. Providing more examples and/or letting them work individually may be helpful.</li> <li>• Take cues from the girls. Discuss issues that affect the younger girl, such as how to make a quick and healthy snack, asking their parents to buy foods at the store so that they are available at home and pressures they may feel around body satisfaction from the media or peers.</li> </ul>         |

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| <b>Individual Sessions</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief one-on-one discussion with the girls to help identify and set goals, e.g., let them select one of the New Moves goals with no advice giving unless asked. Keep the sessions short compared to the older girls.</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Lunch Bunch</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet weekly with the girls once the semester is over, eat lunch and talk about issues they want to discuss.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Other</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be mindful of how the girls treat one another, e.g., no tolerance for teasing. Taking time to discuss what the group needs to feel safe with one another and to create a class that helps them grow and learn is important. Establishing group guidelines early in the semester is encouraged for all age groups however more vigilance may be needed for the younger age groups.</li> </ul> |