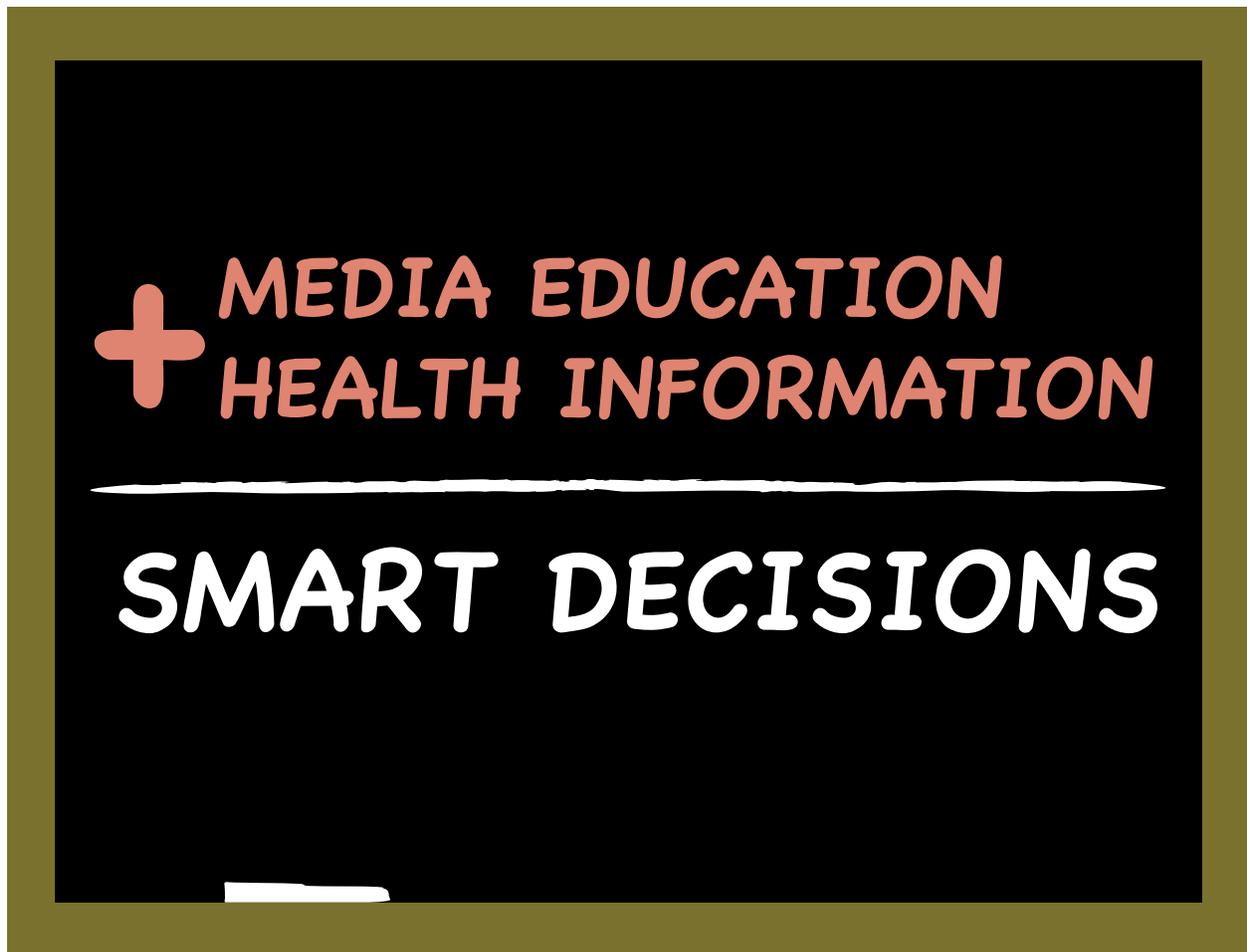


# Introduction and Overview

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**W**elcome to **Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!**<sup>®</sup>  
This engaging and exciting curriculum helps young people understand the complex media world around them. It will also help them make thoughtful decisions about issues important to their health, specifically nutrition and physical activity.



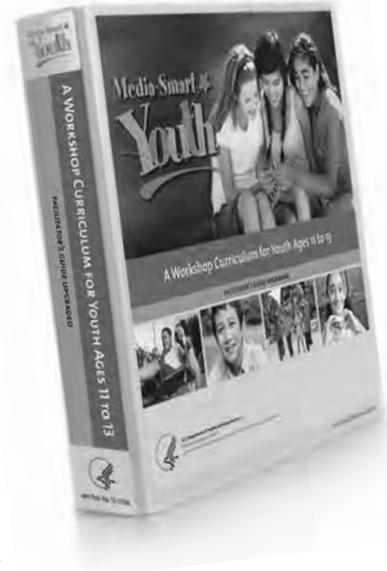
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# Your Media-Smart Youth Curriculum: It's All Here

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Everything you need to plan and carry out Media-Smart Youth is included in this facilitator's packet.

- The **Facilitator's Guide** contains detailed instructions for how to lead the 10 structured lessons. The table on the next page provides a summary of the lessons. In addition, the *Introduction and Overview* at the beginning of the Facilitator's Guide is packed with useful information about how to plan for and carry out the curriculum. The appendices at the end of the Guide include a variety of helpful resources, such as additional *Snack Break*, *Action Break*, and *Big Production* ideas; sample permission forms; and guidance on leading program activities.
- A companion **Media-Smart Youth DVD** includes optional modules for both youth and facilitators. The first two modules are designed for facilitators and include background information and how to deliver the curriculum. The other 11 modules are for youth and provide an added visual dimension to the learning that happens within the lessons.
- **Pre- and post-curriculum optional activities**—called *Tell Us What You Think* and *Tell Us What You Think Now*—give program staff and facilitators the opportunity to learn what the youth know and think about media, nutrition, and physical activity issues before and after participating in the curriculum.
- A colorful **6 Media Questions Poster** illustrates the program's media analysis tool.



# Media-Smart Youth (MSY) At-A-Glance

Lesson	Activities	Snack Break	Action Break	Mini-Production	Take-Home Idea for Youth	Tips for Media-Smart Parents	DVD Module
<b>1:</b> Welcome to Media-Smart Youth	Getting Started <b>A:</b> What is the MSY Workshop? <b>B:</b> Working Agreement <b>C:</b> Focus on Vegetables and Fruits	It's Veggie Time!	Red Light, Green Light	None	Tell family about MSY; create a working agreement; tell family about benefits of vegetables and fruits.	Eat vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and calcium-containing foods every day.	Segment 3: <i>What is MSY?</i> (Introduction to workshop)
<b>2:</b> Thinking About Media	<b>A:</b> What Are Media? <b>B:</b> Media & Health—What's the Connection? <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Mix It Up!	It All Depends on Where You Sit (Wall Sit)	Whose Point of View Is It? (ONLINE; blog entry)	Determine purpose next time you use media.	Brainstorm ways to keep your family active by replacing sitting activities, such as TV viewing, with get-you-moving activities.	Segment 4: <i>What Are Media?</i> (Clips of formalis; media purposes)
<b>3:</b> Asking Questions	<b>A:</b> More Than One Kind of Kid <b>B:</b> The 6 Media Questions <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Just Peachy!	The Director Says...	And...Action! Media Question 2 (VIDEO GAME; action hero)	Identify message next time you watch TV; discuss with family.	The next time you use media with your young person, ask him or her to answer the 6 Media Questions.	None
<b>4:</b> Nutrition Know-How... Eat It Up!	<b>A:</b> Hurray for Whole Grains! <b>B:</b> Cutting Back on Solid Fats and Added Sugars <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Fruit and Krunch Kebabs	A Cool Wind Blows	Creating a Nutrition Page for a Social Networking Site Media Question 3 (Online; social networking page)	Tell family and friends about whole grains and refined grains; share strategies for eating more whole grains and cutting back on solid fats and added sugars.	Read food labels to know what's in the food you're choosing. Think of ways to eat more whole grains or cut back on solid fats and added sugars.	Segment 5: <i>Eat It Up!</i> (Snacks)
<b>5:</b> Motion Commotion—What Is Being Active?	<b>A:</b> What Is Physical Activity? <b>B:</b> Activities Fit To Be Tried <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Terrific Tortillas	(Built into Lesson—Activity B)	Physical Activity Media Question 4 (MUSIC; jingle)	Measure pulse; tell family and friends about pulse.	Do regular physical activity with your family. Choose activities you and your family enjoy. Start with small steps, and have fun while being physically active together.	Segment 6: <i>Activities Fit To Be Tried: Music Sequence</i> (Music for Activity B)
<b>6:</b> Visiting a Grocery Store	Option 1: Going to the Grocery Store (field trip) Option 2: Bringing the Grocery Store to You <b>A:</b> What's on the Label? <b>B:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i> (Optional)	Eating Right... Quick as a Flash!	Playground Games	Write a Song or Do an Internet Scavenger Hunt (Optional)	Look for vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and snacks that are low in solid fats and added sugars; read Nutrition Facts labels; talk about food packaging.	Learn to use the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list. Practice label-reading and package-reading skills with your young person at the store to help make smart and healthy choices for your family.	None
<b>7:</b> The Power of Advertising	<b>A:</b> What is Advertising? <b>B:</b> Thinking About Body Image <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Food-Group Mania	Let's Do Yoga!	Omission Mission. Media Question 5 (THEATER; skit)	Look for product placement next time you use media.	Encourage your young person to choose more nutritious snacks, such as fruits and whole grains, instead of the foods mostly advertised on TV.	Segment 7: <i>Let's Do Yoga! Additional Yoga Poses (Action Break);</i> Segment 8: <i>The Power of Advertising</i> (Influence of advertisements)
<b>8:</b> Super Snacks and Better Bones	<b>A:</b> Foods in the Media and Thinking About Packaging <b>B:</b> Building Better Bones <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Better Bones Sundaes and More	Weight-Bearing Fun	Your Attention, Please! Media Question 6 (PRINT; billboard)	See which snacks are high in calcium; do the Scavenger Hunt: Calcium.	Provide your young person with food high in calcium, and do weight-bearing activities together.	Segment 9: <i>Smoothie Sensations</i> (Smoothies)
<b>9:</b> Making Smart Choices Fun and Easy	<b>A:</b> Being Active: What Makes It Easy? What Makes It Hard? <b>B:</b> Get in the Action! <b>C:</b> <i>Mini-Production</i>	Pop It!	The Human Knot	Get Out the Vote! Choose Your <i>Big Production</i> Media Format	Think about helpers and obstacles; talk to family and friends about making physical activity easy.	Create a list of things that make it fun and easy for you and your family to be active together. Use this list to help you identify specific actions you want to take to be more active.	Segment 10: <i>Big Production Montage</i> (Clips of <i>Big Productions</i> )
<b>10:</b> Getting Into the Production Mode	<b>A:</b> This Message Brought to You By... <b>B:</b> The 6 Media Questions from the Production Point of View <b>C:</b> 3 Ps of Production	Dip It!	Walkin' in Style	<i>Big Production</i> T-Shirts (Optional)	Next time you use media, figure out production phases; tell family and friends about the 3 Ps and about the <i>Big Production</i> .	Try creating a small-scale "Family <i>Big Production</i> ," such as a poster or short video, to help members of your family practice creating media and learn a healthy nutrition or physical activity message.	Segments 11 through 13: <i>On the Air! Roll the Presses!</i> (Behind-the-scenes look at production)

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# Introduction and Overview

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This *Introduction and Overview* gives you the all the information you need to plan and carry out Media-Smart Youth.

- **Introducing Media-Smart Youth** provides background on why and how the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) created this curriculum.
- **Overview for Program Managers** describes some of the key steps and decisions to consider before conducting the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. This information is most helpful for school administrators, program directors, or managers at youth-serving agencies, or those who work with youth in other managerial or administrative capacities. Facilitators who lead the Media-Smart Youth lessons also may find this section useful as a reference.
- **Overview for Facilitators** provides detailed information on planning for and delivering the lessons. Lesson facilitators will find this section particularly helpful.

To help you find the information you need, refer to the *Introduction and Overview* **Reader's Roadmap** below.

<b>Introduction and Overview Reader's Roadmap</b>		
<b>Section</b>	<b>Find the Answer In</b>	<b>Page</b>
What Is the Media-Smart Youth Program?	<b>Introducing Media-Smart Youth</b>	6
Why Do We Need Media-Smart Youth?		7
What Do We Mean by "Media"?		9
How Was Media-Smart Youth Developed and Evaluated?		10
How Has Media-Smart Youth Evolved?		11

## Introduction and Overview Reader's Roadmap

Section	Find the Answer In	Page	
Understanding the Components of the Curriculum	<b>Overview for Program Managers</b>	12	
Determining the Length of the Lessons		14	
Scheduling the Lessons		14	
Choosing the Right Location for the Lessons (different from the right school district for the program)		15	
Selecting the Participant Group		16	
Recruiting Youth Participants		16	
Keeping Youth Involved		17	
Engaging Parents and Guardians		17	
Deciding Whether To Use a Media Partner		18	
Finding a Media Partner		19	
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Getting Your Community Involved		21	
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# Introducing Media-Smart Youth

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## What Is the Media-Smart Youth Program?

*Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!*<sup>®</sup> is an interactive after-school education program that focuses on building skills in media analysis and media production to help young people ages 11 to 13 understand the complex media world around them and how it can influence their health—especially in regard to nutrition and physical activity.

The *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, created Media-Smart Youth to help empower young people to think critically about media and make thoughtful decisions about nutrition and physical activity. Media-Smart Youth combines media literacy and youth development principles and practices with up-to-date research findings and federal recommendations about nutrition and physical activity. It is also consistent with widely accepted, national learning standards (see *Appendix A* for more information on the relationship between Media-Smart Youth topics and these standards).

In the Media-Smart Youth program, young people will:

- Learn about the connections between media and health.
- Analyze and create media messages.
- Evaluate both obvious and subtle media messages to determine accuracy and consistency with their own values.
- Learn about key components of a nutritious diet, including vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and calcium, and explore the importance of reducing intake of solid fats and added sugars.
- Develop strategies for making healthy food choices in real-life settings.
- Learn about the importance of daily physical activity for promoting health.
- Develop strategies for becoming more active in their daily lives.
- Create health messages for other young people.

## Why Do We Need Media-Smart Youth?

Every day, young people actively engage with the media world around them. Today's media world has expanded beyond the traditional forms, such as television and radio, to include video games, social networking sites, movies, and online videos—all constantly accessible on mobile platforms, such as cell phones.

A large-scale national survey found that, in the United States, youth ages 11 to 14 spend an average of 8 hours and 40 minutes each day using media.<sup>1</sup> For many youth, cell phones, the Internet, television, computers, and other media are essential tools that are seamlessly woven into all aspects of their daily lives. Through this exposure, young people encounter a barrage of marketing and advertising messages. Depending on their age, children are exposed to between 14,000 and 30,000 ads on TV alone per year. The majority of the advertisements they view are for food, primarily candy, cereal, and fast food.<sup>2</sup>

Media also provide frequent exposure to sports celebrities, entertainers, and other pop culture icons, who offer powerful role models of lifestyle choices. Likewise, obvious and subtle messages about body image are everywhere.

Rising use of media, which is tied to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, and exposure to marketing messages for less nutritious food have combined to contribute to rising rates of childhood overweight and obesity.

According to a 2010 study, about one-third of American children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese and many more young people are at risk.<sup>3</sup> Being overweight or obese has many negative consequences, including increasing the risk of serious health problems, such as diabetes and heart disease. These chronic conditions, once diagnosed mostly in adults, are now being seen in overweight and obese children. Risk factors for these conditions, such as high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol, are on the rise among children and adolescents.<sup>4</sup>

Too often, children are consuming too many calories, while not getting enough of certain nutrients, including calcium, vitamin D, and fiber.<sup>5</sup> Less than 10 percent of young people in the United States eat recommended amounts of vegetables and fruits.<sup>6</sup> In addition, less

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<sup>1</sup> Foehr, U. G., Rideout, V. J., & Roberts, D. F. (2010). *Generation M<sup>2</sup>: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18-Year-Olds*. Menlo Park, CA: Kaiser Family Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. (2007). *Food for Thought: Television Food Advertising to Children in the United States*. Retrieved February 22, 2012, from <http://www.kff.org/entmedia/upload/7618ES.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ogden, C. L., Carroll, M. D., Curtin, L. R., & Lamb, M. M. (2010). Prevalence of high body mass index in US children and adolescents, 2007-2008. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(3), 242-249. Retrieved May 30, 2012, from <http://jama.ama-assn.org/content/303/3/242.full#T2>.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2010). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2010/DietaryGuidelines2010.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2000). *Life's First Great Crossroads: Tweens Make Choices That Affect Their Lives Forever*. Retrieved March 20, 2013, from <http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/research/PDF/LifesFirstCrossroads.pdf>.

than one in 10 girls and only one in four boys ages 9 to 13 get the recommended daily amount of calcium.<sup>7</sup>

Nationwide, less than one-third of all children ages 6 to 17 engage in vigorous physical activity, defined as participating in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made the child sweat and breathe hard.<sup>8</sup> An important contributor to the growing levels of inactivity is the amount of time young people spend with media every day, particularly screen time (time spent in front of a screen). When they are watching television, using a mobile device, or online, they are generally not being physically active.

In response to these trends, several federal agencies have developed programs to help young people make choices that reinforce healthy behaviors, including being physically active and eating nutritious foods. Media-Smart Youth is part of those efforts.

What makes Media-Smart Youth unique is its focus on media. Media can have an effect on young people’s attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking about many things, including physical activity, nutrition, and health. Navigating through this world of media requires knowledge and skill, and that’s why Media-Smart Youth was created. The program aims to improve media smarts—also known as media literacy. Youth who are media-smart have the know-how and critical thinking abilities to be thoughtful media participants. They question the “who,” the “what,” the “why,” and the “how” behind the words and images. As a result, they develop critical thinking skills that help them form their own opinions and make their own informed choices about the messages they see and hear.

## What Do We Mean by “Media”?

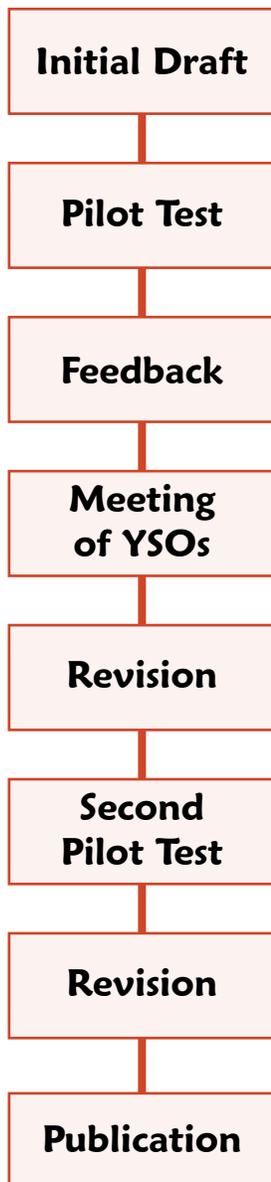
The term “media” refers to all the many ways people express ideas and convey information. Television, radio, computers, cell phones, newspapers, books, magazines, billboards, music, theater, posters, letters, and the Internet are all examples of media.

Some forms of media, such as TV or the Internet, are “mass market”—that is, they are designed to reach large numbers of people at one time. Other forms of media, such as telephone calls or letters, are generally used for one-on-one communication.

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<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Service, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Food Surveys Research Group, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. (2005). *What We Eat in America, NHANES 2001-2002*. Hyattsville, MD.

<sup>8</sup> Trust for America’s Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. (2009). *F as in Fat: How Obesity Policies Are Failing in America, 2009*. Princeton, NJ: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.



Today, our world is teeming with “new media,” many of which are created for the Internet and cell phones. More recent trends that have transformed the traditional media world include cell phone cameras and mobile texts, social networking and video sharing sites, and blogs and microblogs (blogs with very short posts, like Twitter accounts). These new media share two constants: they are always changing, and they are highly influential, especially in the lives of young people. Recognizing the ever-evolving nature of new media, Media-Smart Youth discusses media forms in general, allowing facilitators and youth to bring in specific types of media relevant to their experience.

## How Was Media-Smart Youth Developed and Evaluated?

Media-Smart Youth went through a thoughtful and deliberate development process, with extensive review and testing. The initial draft of the curriculum was pilot-tested, extensively revised, pilot-tested again, and refined further. This development process resulted in the first release of the curriculum in October 2005.

Since then, schools and youth-serving organizations (YSOs) have carried out Media-Smart Youth across the country. The NICHD conducted a rigorous outcome evaluation, involving 10 matched pairs of organizations, to make sure the curriculum was on target and effective. Results showed that youth who participated in Media-Smart Youth had a statistically significant greater increase in knowledge about curriculum topics than did nonparticipating youth. In addition, participating youth expressed more intentions to make positive nutrition and physical activity behavior changes than did nonparticipating youth.<sup>9</sup>

Since the program’s launch, nearly 23,000 Media-Smart Youth program packets have been distributed nationally to YSOs and after-school programs. Media-Smart Youth was also selected as one of four youth curricula included in **We Can! (W**ays to **E**nhance **C**hildren’s **A**ctivity and **N**utrition)<sup>®</sup>. We Can! is a nationwide program, a joint initiative of four Institutes of the NIH, designed to give parents, caregivers, and entire communities ways to help children ages 8 to 13 stay at a healthy weight. The program focuses on education about improved food choices, increased physical activity, and reduced screen time (time spent

<sup>9</sup> Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, NIH, DHHS. (2009). *Report on the Evaluation of the Media-Smart Youth Curriculum*. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from [https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/documents/msy\\_evaluation\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/documents/msy_evaluation_report_final.pdf). Media-Smart Youth Program Evaluation Fact Sheet. Retrieved October 12, 2012, from [https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/documents/20090219-MSY\\_FactSheet.pdf](https://www.nichd.nih.gov/publications/pubs/documents/20090219-MSY_FactSheet.pdf).

in front of a screen, such as watching TV and DVDs, playing video games, and using the computer for something other than school or work).

## How Has Media-Smart Youth Evolved?

In light of today's fast-changing media environment and updates to key nutrition and physical activity guidelines, the NICHD decided the time was right to update the Media-Smart Youth curriculum.

This updated second edition retains all the elements that made the first edition successful, and it also includes a few new features, such as:

- Added discussions about digital and new media
- Information that reflects the latest federal nutrition and physical activity guidelines
- A new focus on parents and guardians, with *Tips for Media-Smart Parents* sheets for each lesson, which complement the take-home sheets given to youth and offer parents and guardians an opportunity to learn alongside their children
- An expanded Media-Smart Youth website
- New resources and tip sheets in the appendices

Since Media-Smart Youth was first released in 2005, the NICHD has provided support to some organizations using the program and has broadened the program's reach. The NICHD reached out to YSOs to provide ongoing facilitator training and support as a way to further strengthen dissemination and community-building efforts. The Institute also conducted extensive interviews with facilitating organizations to learn about their experiences in conducting Media-Smart Youth. The curriculum was adapted to meet the specific needs of several national groups, including the National Council of Negro Women; The Links, Incorporated; and the Black Entertainment Television (BET) Foundation. More than 700 program providers in more than 20 different locations around the country have been trained in how to conduct Media-Smart Youth.

The NICHD is committed to ensuring that all children have the chance to achieve their full potential for healthy and productive lives. By helping youth learn how to navigate today's complex media environment **and** make healthy nutrition and physical activity choices, Media-Smart Youth plays a critical role in helping the NICHD achieve this important goal.

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# Overview for Program Managers

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If you're a program manager at a YSOs, a school administrator, or someone who works with youth in another managerial or administrative capacity, you may be interested in Media-Smart Youth, but you might not be the one facilitating the program. This section of the *Introduction and Overview* is designed to answer any questions you may have about the curriculum and how to do the planning that's necessary to bring Media-Smart Youth to your organization.

This curriculum is—first and foremost—flexible! It is easily adaptable for use with young people from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds and with those who have special needs or interests. It can be used in a wide variety of community settings—such as after-school programs and summer camps—and by many types of YSOs.

## Understanding the Components of the Curriculum

Media-Smart Youth brings together a mix of learning formats—including brainstorming, small and large group discussions, games, and creative productions to encourage discussion, problem solving, and critical thinking. The curriculum includes 10 structured lessons with activities that explore media, nutrition, and physical activity topics. The program then concludes with a *Big Production*—an opportunity for youth to put what they've learned into practice.

The Facilitator's Guide includes these components of the curriculum:

- 10 structured lessons, each with:
  - A *Snack Break*—a simple, nutritious treat that illustrates different nutrition concepts
  - An *Action Break*—an activity that gives the youth a chance to get active and energized

- *Take Home a New Idea!*—a handout that encourages the youth to share what they learned in that lesson with family and friends, and that provides the recipe from that lesson’s *Snack Break*
- *Tips for Media-Smart Parents*—a handout that summarizes what the youth learned in the lesson and provides tips for how to put this learning into action at home with the whole family
- Appendices with supplemental materials and resources:
  - Educational Content Standards Linked to Lesson Activities (*Appendix A*)
  - Additional *Action Break* Options (*Appendix B*)
  - Additional *Snack Break* Options (*Appendix C*)
  - Sample Permission Forms (*Appendix D*)
  - Promotion Kit (*Appendix E*)
  - Resources to Support Planning and Implementation (*Appendix F*)
  - Doing the *Big Production* (*Appendix G*)
  - The *Big Production* Toolbox (*Appendix H*)
  - Glossary (*Appendix I*)
  - Media, Nutrition, and Physical Activity Resources (*Appendix J*)
  - Media-Smart Youth Certificate of Completion (*Appendix K*)
  - The DVD At-A-Glance (*Appendix L*)
- An accompanying DVD with segments for facilitators and for youth:
  - The segments for facilitators offer an orientation to the program and tips on implementing the curriculum from facilitators who have used it.
  - The segments for youth aim to reinforce program concepts in an engaging media format.
  - Use of the DVD is entirely optional. *Choosing not to use the DVD will not affect your ability to carry out the program.*

Once through the curriculum, youth focus on their *Big Production*—a media product they create to motivate other young people to take action for better nutrition or increased physical activity. The *Big Production* allows youth to incorporate all they learned in the lessons—nutrition, physical activity, production, teamwork, and creativity—in something they can share with others.

Now that you are familiar with the components of the curriculum and the program, the following sections outline some key things to think about before you get started.

## Determining the Length of the Lessons

The suggested time for each lesson is 90 minutes: 70 minutes for activities, 10 minutes for the *Snack Break*, and 10 minutes for the *Action Break*.

If you decide to do the *Tell Us What You Think* pre-curriculum and *Tell Us What You Think Now* post-curriculum activities, you'll also need to allow 20 additional minutes for each activity before *Lesson 1* and after *Lesson 10*. *Lesson 10* also includes an extra optional activity of making t-shirts for the *Big Production*. If you choose to do this extra activity, you'll need an extra 30 minutes to complete it.

Suggested times also are provided for each activity within the lessons. The size, age, and gender mix of your group will affect how much time you will actually need for the lessons, so keep these features in mind when you establish the schedule and timing for your program. Sites that have conducted the curriculum have varied in the time needed to get through the lessons. You may want to build more time into the lessons when you set up the schedule to give you added flexibility.

## Scheduling the Lessons

The Media-Smart Youth program has no set schedule, meaning you decide how often to meet and how to conduct the lessons in a way that works best for you and your participants. Sites that have conducted the program have used a variety of formats and schedules.

Possible options include:

- One lesson at a time, once or twice a week, after school or on a weekend day
- One lesson at a time, on consecutive days
- One lesson at a time, once a month

- Multiple lessons in a day, over several days or weeks (this option might work best for a camp program when youth are together for a concentrated period of time)

In addition to the overall scheduling of the program, you should carefully consider when to conduct lessons. Ask yourself these questions:

- Do most youth in your group have regular school, social, or family commitments on a particular day or at a specific time?
- Are there cultural or religious considerations for selecting or avoiding particular days?
- When are facilities most readily available?

The answers can help you decide when to hold the program and how to schedule the activities.

When planning how you will schedule Media-Smart Youth, don't forget about the *Big Production*. Youth will work on the *Big Production* only after they complete all 10 lessons. Planning and carrying out the *Big Production* could take 1 day to a few weeks or months to complete—it all depends on the project the youth choose.

## Choosing the Right Location for the Lessons

Every aspect of Media-Smart Youth is designed to help young people learn by doing. For example, some of the activities require the youth to work in groups, to move around in a space, or to work on large pieces of paper with markers and other supplies. Your location will need to be large enough to accommodate these activities.

Also, consider the size of the room. Each lesson will get the youth up and moving. All of the physical activities can be done indoors and require little, if any, equipment. Be sure to review the lesson activities and *Action Breaks* and the additional *Action Break* ideas in *Appendix B* before you choose a location for the program so you know what kind of space is needed.

## Recruitment Ideas At-A-Glance

- Send a postcard or e-mail message to young people who regularly participate in your activities.
- Make simple posters or flyers to put on bulletin boards in schools, at libraries, and in local stores.
- Contact parents and guardians who have enrolled their children in other programs sponsored by your organization.
- Encourage young people to enroll for two—themselves and a friend.
- Put a notice in your organization's newsletter.
- Send an announcement to your community newspaper for inclusion in its event listings.
- Post about Media-Smart Youth on your organization's website, blog, or social networking site.
- Get a Media-Smart Youth advocate (a parent or program manager who has already done the program) to help out with recruitment and promotion efforts.
- Your ideas here!

Before you choose your location, you should also take a quick look at the *Snack Breaks* for all lessons and the additional snack ideas in *Appendix C* so you will know what to expect for these sessions. Most of the suggested snacks are simple and easy to prepare, but a few require refrigeration and most require some setting up. A nearby sink for hand washing and cleanup will help make *Snack Breaks* easier.

## Selecting the Participant Group

Media-Smart Youth is designed to stimulate discussion and critical thinking. These actions can happen only through the active participation of all the youth. To help you get everyone involved, we suggest that you limit the size of your group to 15 or fewer participants. This group size will allow you to maximize opportunities for each youth to become fully involved. For the purpose of group work and valuable discussion, we also suggest a minimum of eight youth.

## Recruiting Youth Participants

You should consider a variety of approaches for spreading the word about your program. Think about past recruitment efforts that have worked for your organization, or try something new that you think will be successful.

For example, consider hosting a pre-registration event that features media demonstrations, fun activities, and nutritious snacks. You might want to play the Media-Smart Youth DVD Segment #10: *Big Production Montage*, which shows *Big Productions* created by youth who participated in the pilot phase of the program. Or you could host an orientation before lessons begin to help youth and their parents become excited and better informed about the program. Ask others throughout your community to help with your enlistment efforts, too—the more people you have involved, the farther news about the program can spread.

## Keeping Youth Involved

With thoughtful recruitment efforts, you should have many eager young people ready to learn how to be media-smart. Keeping them engaged so they gain the full benefits of the program can sometimes be difficult, though. For some, the excitement of creating their own *Big Production* may be enough to keep them coming back. Others may need more or different reasons to stay involved.

Consider awarding a small item in each lesson, such as small toys that promote physical activity, such as a ball or Frisbee™, to those who volunteer answers or are particularly helpful. Or offer a small prize to the participants who follow through with each lesson's *Take Home a New Idea!* activity.

There are many ways to keep young people engaged. Consult with other activity leaders to get their suggestions. Ask the youth themselves for ideas that will keep them coming back.

## Engaging Parents and Guardians

Getting parents and guardians involved in Media-Smart Youth is great for everyone—for you, for the youth, and for the families. Sending a simple letter or e-mail before the first lesson of the program can start the process of getting parents and guardians involved. Tell them about the program, ask them to support their children's active participation, and encourage them to get involved in the take-home activities included with the lessons. This new edition of Media-Smart Youth includes handouts designed for parents that youth will bring home after each lesson. The content in the parent handouts complements the youths' own take-home activities. The ideas and tips in these handouts are for parents, guardians, and anyone engaged in parenting young people.

Engaging parents and guardians also means getting permission for their children to participate. If your organization's policy is to require parental permission for youth to participate in your other programs, you will want to do the same for the entire Media-Smart Youth curriculum and, separately, for the field trip in *Lesson 6*. Keep in mind that if you plan to put any youth's voice or image on any Media-Smart Youth products during the program, you should also get written parental consent to do so. You can find sample permission forms in *Appendix D*. In addition to covering

## If You Have Extra Time, Consider a Field Trip to a Media Outlet

Whether or not you work with a media partner, you may want to give the youth some real-world exposure by taking them on a field trip to a newspaper office, TV or radio station, or graphic design firm. Field trips are wonderful opportunities for the youth to see the concepts they are exploring in the program. If you choose to add this option, think about doing it early in the program. You also will need to do some advance planning; the planning suggestions and sample permission form for *Lesson 6* (the grocery store field trip) will help you organize a media outlet trip.

If you aren't able to visit a media outlet, take a virtual tour of a production studio as you begin planning your *Big Production*. The *Lesson 10* Media-Smart Youth DVD Segments #11, #12, and #13, *On the Air! Roll the Presses!* provide a behind-the-scenes look at the action at a TV studio, a radio studio, and a newspaper.

the usual permission-related information, these sample forms also ask parents and guardians to report any allergies or special needs their child may have. This knowledge will be particularly important for planning *Snack Breaks*.

You also might want to go beyond just getting permission from parents and guardians and really make them part of the program. Ask for volunteers to join you during the lessons and to come along for the *Lesson 6* field trip to a grocery store. Invite parents and guardians to come and watch the *Big Production*. These opportunities are great ways for the youth to show off their newly acquired knowledge and critical thinking skills to parents and guardians!

## Deciding Whether To Use a Media Partner

You can conduct the Media-Smart Youth lessons and carry out the *Big Production* using your own organization's current staff, expertise, and resources. Or you might want to get someone with a little more media expertise to help you, especially when it comes to planning and executing the *Big Production*. A media partner can be an individual or several representatives from one or more media-related organizations.

Think broadly when you consider your options for a media partner. Your partner could be "in the business," such as a TV producer, advertising executive, or Web designer. Or your partner could be someone who works more peripherally with media, such as the local high school photography teacher or your neighborhood librarian or someone who maintains a popular blog.

A media partner's involvement is limited only by your collective imaginations. Here are some options:

- Enroll a media partner to assist you in conducting the entire Media-Smart Youth curriculum.
- Invite a media partner to guide you through the *Big Production*.

- Conduct the curriculum and *Big Production* on your own, but ask a media partner to help promote and distribute your group’s *Big Production* media product when it’s completed.

A media partner can add special value to the group’s experience. Embarking on such a partnership also can present challenges. Consider the benefits and challenges, such as those listed below, and decide what might work best for you.

<b>Working with a Media Partner</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adds professional perspective</li> <li>■ Provides “real-life” reinforcement of content</li> <li>■ Adds expert insight, guidance, and support</li> <li>■ Can provide or contribute to facilities, supplies, or equipment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Adds extra layer of coordination and planning</li> <li>■ May have a different approach to interacting with youth</li> <li>■ Might not subscribe to all the program messages</li> </ul>

## **Finding a Media Partner**

If you are not sure about whether to seek out a media partner, or how to go about finding one, these ideas may inspire you:

- People at a media organization in your community—perhaps a theater, newspaper, TV station, production company, digital media company, or Web or graphic design studio
- Media facilities and faculty media experts at a local high school or college
- Students majoring in media at local colleges who are interested in internships
- Media professionals among the parents or guardians of program participants
- Local businesses that have production facilities
- Local cable access TV station

If you are having trouble finding a media partner or decide to do the *Big Production* on your own but still need media equipment, contact local high schools, colleges, or trade schools. Many schools have production facilities in their buildings. Ask whether these schools offer classes on using the production equipment or on other media-related skills, and determine if any of the students would like to help you with your *Big Production*.

## Involving Your Media Partner

Here are some other tips for deciding how to involve a media partner:

- Be specific about the role you want the media partner to play. Which lessons do you want the partner to attend or facilitate?
  - Throughout the lessons, we have included an icon in places where it might be useful to involve a media partner in a discussion or activity.
  - If you have enrolled your media partner to help with the entire curriculum, you may want him or her to lead:
    - Each lesson's *Mini-Production (Activity C)*
    - *Lesson 9*, in which the youth select their media format and the action they will promote
    - *Lesson 10*, in which the youth learn about the main phases of media production
    - *Big Production sessions*
  - If your media partner is going to assist only with creating the *Big Production*, invite him or her to take part in *Lesson 9* and *Lesson 10*, and to lead the *Big Production sessions*.
  - If your media partner is helping only to promote your finished *Big Production*, negotiate a specific plan for the partner's involvement, such as:
    - Linking to your *Big Production* on the partner's website and social networking sites
    - Specifying the number of times your *Big Production* will air on the partner's cable TV station
    - Negotiating the number of times your *Big Production* ad will appear in the partner's newspaper
- Talk with your media partner to ensure that you understand each other's facilitation styles, recognize different approaches to discipline

issues, and agree on a mutually acceptable approach. Facilitation may not be your media partner's area of expertise, so do what you can to help him or her feel comfortable around young people and to participate fully in the program.

- Determine whether your budget will allow you to pay a small fee to your media partner. If so, you may want to pay for the partner's time or for the use of the organization's facilities or equipment.

## Getting Your Community Involved

The value of the Media-Smart Youth program extends far beyond what goes on in the lessons. Involving members of your community can benefit your program now, while also nurturing relationships for the future. Try some of these ideas:

- Ask high schools to post flyers asking for participants or enlisting teenage volunteers to help with lessons or the *Big Production*.
- Ask community organizations to publicize Media-Smart Youth on their websites. Posting the *Big Production* will be great publicity for the program.
- Invite local personal trainers, nutritionists, TV news announcers, or other people with media experience to serve as guest facilitators.
- Contact your local library about hosting one or more lessons. Libraries often have rooms available for community members to use. They also provide access to research and media sources that may be useful.
- Ask a local print or copy center to donate poster-sized versions of print advertisements for the lessons.
- Approach a local grocer to donate food or ingredients for your *Snack Breaks*.
- Approach your local newspaper office or radio or TV station to see whether it wants to do a story on your Media-Smart Youth program.
- Approach local media outlets to air or promote your *Big Production* product.

You will be surprised to learn how many people want to get involved and to discover all the creative ways they can take part. Look for every opportunity to make your program a well-known community endeavor. *Appendix E* contains some tools that you can use to publicize and promote your Media-Smart Youth program.

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# Overview for Facilitators

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This section covers the details that facilitators will need to focus on in planning and conducting Media-Smart Youth. It will give you a good understanding of the concepts behind the program—and it will help you make the most of your time and your skills. Take some time to review this information now, and refer to it often as you prepare for each lesson. Also, take a look at *Appendix F: Resources to Support Planning and Implementation*, which includes a materials checklist and tips that were collected from a diverse group of Media-Smart Youth facilitators who were eager to share what they learned about guiding youth through the curriculum.

## Focusing on the Lessons

The Media-Smart Youth lessons follow a simple and consistent structure and format: an opening activity, a *Snack Break*, a second activity, an *Action Break*, a third activity called a *Mini-Production*, and a short *Finishing Up the Lesson* section. Each lesson also ends with *Take Home a New Idea!* and *Tips for Media-Smart Parents* sheets.

The only variation from this structure is in *Lesson 5*, which focuses on physical activity. *Lesson 5* provides youth with an opportunity to be active during the lesson activity itself, so it does not include a separate *Action Break*.

The structure and content of each lesson is designed to guide you through the session step by step. The **Opening Page** of each lesson includes an overall summary of what's to come, including:

- The length of the lesson
- An overview of the lesson content
- Learning objectives for the lesson (to help you stay on track and to evaluate success)

- A list of all the lesson’s activities and how much time is suggested for each
- A list of materials you will need for the activities, *Snack Break*, and *Action Break*
- A Facilitator’s Preparation List, which suggests steps to do ahead of time to help the lesson go smoothly

**Activity A and Activity B** are the core content segments. These activities are designed to be carried out quickly—usually in 20 to 30 minutes each—to keep youth energized and interested. You may find that some activities lend themselves to in-depth discussions that may take more than the recommended time. Stay alert to the participants’ needs and their reactions. You want to keep youth engaged and interested, but you also want to cover all the material in each lesson.

**Activity C** is the *Mini-Production*, in which youth use the skills they have learned in the lesson to create a simple media product, such as a blog, an online page for a social networking site, a jingle, a skit, or a billboard. Although several *Mini-Production* activities focus on digital media, the actual work involved uses paper and pencil and does not require a computer or technology expertise. All *Mini-Production* handouts and tools are included at the end of each lesson on sheets that can be photocopied in black and white.

Each lesson includes a corresponding **Media-Smart Youth DVD** segment (with the exception of *Lesson 3* and *Lesson 6*). Whether or not you use the DVD, and how you use it, is up to you. The DVD and lesson content complement each other, so if you choose to not use the DVD, its main points are covered in the existing lesson content. If you have extra time and want to present both the lesson content and the DVD segment, you may do that, too. Each lesson has a specific point at which the DVD may be viewed (usually during *Activity A* or *Activity B*). The icon (see left) in the text margin indicates when to show the DVD.



If you choose to use the DVD segments to complement the lesson content, you will need equipment to play and show the DVD. You might use a DVD player and a TV, a computer with DVD capabilities, a portable DVD player, or other equipment. Because of the multiple possibilities, this guide includes the following general language in the *Materials Needed* and the *Facilitator’s Preparation* sections of lessons and activities that use the DVD: “Equipment to play and show a DVD.” When you see that language, you can secure the equipment needed/available for showing the DVD.

The **Snack Break** is a simple, nutritious treat that comes after *Activity A*. The recommended time for this break is 10 minutes.

The **Action Break** gives the youth a chance to get active and energized after *Activity B*. The recommended time for this break is also 10 minutes.

And last, but not least, **Finishing Up the Lesson** gives you the chance to wrap up by asking youth to share one or more fun and interesting things they learned during the lesson. The curriculum lists several key points to listen for, but you should let youth describe what they have learned in their own words. Each *Finishing Up* section also includes *Take Home a New Idea!* and *Tips for Media-Smart Parents* sheets. These sheets give youth an opportunity to share at home what they have learned in the program. It is a great way to engage family members and reinforce program concepts. The youth's *Take Home a New Idea!* sheet also includes the recipe from the session's *Snack Break*, so they can try it at home with family and friends.

## Focusing on the Big Production

The *Big Production*, which takes place after the youth have completed all 10 lessons, is a media product created by participants for other young people in their age group. These *Big Productions* are likely to appeal to slightly younger ages as well. The purpose of a *Big Production* is to motivate others to take a specific action for better nutrition or increased physical activity. *Big Productions* may be relatively simple—such as a store window display or a school newspaper article—or more complex, such as a blog or website banner, a video, or a physical activity event to raise money for a local charity.

Planning and carrying out the *Big Production* can take anywhere from 1 day to a few weeks or months—it all depends on the project. You and your media partner (if you choose to use one) will have to work together to set realistic timelines for developing the product, sharing it among small groups, providing and soliciting feedback, revising the product, and producing it for distribution. *Appendix G* and *Appendix H* contain information, guidance, and tools to help you plan for and carry out a successful and fun *Big Production*.

# Facilitating the Lessons

Media-Smart Youth lessons are designed to make it as easy as possible for you to conduct the lessons. Here are just a few of the techniques we've used.

## Visual Aids

The pages of the Media-Smart Youth curriculum are filled with visual aids to help make facilitating easier.

Colorful icons make it easy to find exactly what you're looking for:



appears on the front page of the lesson next to the list of lesson activities



indicates the suggested length of time for an activity



indicates the content overview for a lesson or an activity



indicates the learning objectives of a lesson or activity



indicates any facilitator's preparation that may be needed



indicates any materials or supplies needed



indicates a time to be sensitive to issues related to cultural or ethnic identity or an opportunity to tailor an activity to reflect and celebrate the diverse identities within the group

## \* A Note About...

Highlighted boxes provide important background information and teaching suggestions at appropriate places in the lessons.



appears next to italicized text that you can read to the youth as written or paraphrase



indicates when to show a Media-Smart Youth DVD segment



appears next to the *Snack Break*



appears next to the *Action Break* and next to other times youth are being active or have the potential to be active



indicates when it's time to finish up the lesson

## 6 Media Questions Poster

The **6 Media Questions Poster** is included with the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. This poster is a tool to help young people analyze and create media. You will want to post it in a prominent place in the room when this topic is introduced in *Lesson 3* and for each of the remaining lessons of the curriculum.

## Words and Phrases with Special Meaning

Throughout the Media-Smart Youth curriculum, you will find recurring words and phrases that have a particular meaning.

For example, when Media-Smart Youth refers to **physical activity**, it means *anything* that gets a person moving, such as jumping rope, playing basketball, walking, and carrying groceries. Physical activity does not have to be strenuous and does not have to be part of a structured program of exercise.

You'll often see the phrase "**LISTEN to ideas from youth. If necessary, GUIDE them to the following responses**" as part of the facilitator's directions. This phrase indicates where and how you might help move the discussion in a certain direction. In some cases, the list under this phrase includes examples of potential answers. In other cases, the list includes

specific content that youth should learn. This convention is used to stimulate discussion so that you aren't always just lecturing to the youth, but rather are engaging them in a guided discussion. Use your imagination for good ways to guide the discussion with open-ended questions (such as "What about...", "Have you thought of...", and "Can you think of other ways, such as..."). For more information on asking open-ended questions, see *Lead with Open-Ended Questions*, later in this section (pages 33 and 34).

Throughout the lessons, the term **flipchart** paper refers to any kind of large sheets of paper, oversize newsprint, or large pads that are commonly used for group training. Youth will use these sheets in many activities, and the flipchart paper will be helpful to you when you want to write down key points from discussions. These sheets are available in most office supply or arts and crafts supply stores.

To energize critical thinking skills, the lessons often call for **brainstorming**. These "brain dumps" are a great way to encourage all the youth to participate in a nonjudgmental and freeform way. You will be surprised at the thoughtful and creative ideas that emerge during a brainstorm!

One final and all-important term: **snack**. Snacks are sometimes frowned upon because they are associated with high-calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks. Media-Smart Youth has a different take on this concept. Snacks can be part of a healthy diet, and the key to choosing snacks—as with any other food—is to make healthy choices with nutrition in mind. Each lesson includes a delicious and nutritious snack that echoes the concepts described in the lessons. Keep in mind that these breaks are snacks, not meals, so pay attention to how much food you provide. Controlling how much food you provide also will help you manage your budget.

The nutrition information in Media-Smart Youth focuses largely on snacks for several reasons:

- Many youth have more control over their snack choices than over their meal choices, which may be planned and prepared by other family members or school cafeteria staff.
- Youth often eat snacks after school, and this curriculum is well suited for after-school settings.

Media-Smart Youth teaches youth how to make smart snack choices.

## Getting Ready To Lead a Lesson

You will find that planning and preparing before each lesson will save valuable time and help increase your confidence about facilitating. Every lesson tells you exactly what you need to do to carry it out. Here is a general checklist to help you prepare.

### Review the Lesson

Become familiar with the content and timing of activities and breaks. The more you know ahead of time, the more comfortable you will feel when leading the lesson. Remember, the length of time listed is only a suggestion. Feel free to adjust the time to suit your group's needs—and don't forget setup and cleanup.

### Gather or Shop for Materials

Media-Smart Youth uses a limited number of materials—such as markers and paper—that are usually readily available. You can put aside some materials at the beginning of the program for use throughout the lessons (see *A Suggested Shopping/Gathering List* on page 29). Other supplies and equipment—such as a cell phone camera, DVD player, or tape recorder—are not required, but may add extra value to activities. Your media partner or others in the community may be able to provide, or contribute toward, some materials. Keep in mind that although several *Mini-Productions* focus on digital media, these activities involve paper and pencil and do not require a computer or technology expertise.

## Suggested Shopping/Gathering List

A few materials are used in every lesson or *Snack Break*. You may want to gather or buy enough of these items to last throughout the program.

### For Activities

- Flipchart paper
- Easel (if desired)
- Colored markers and pens
- Masking tape
- Pens and pencils
- Watch or timer

### For Snacks

- Drinks (water, seltzer, fat-free or low-fat milk, or 100% fruit juice)
- Paper plates
- Paper bowls
- Paper napkins
- Cups
- Plastic knives and spoons
- Sink or bathroom for hand washing, or alcohol-based (60%) hand sanitizer

## Create a Comfortable Environment

Evaluate your meeting space. Is it too hot or cold? Is it the right size and shape? Is the lighting appropriate for the activity? Is noise a problem? Ensure that the atmosphere is right. Set up the room to maximize youths' interaction and enjoyment of the lesson. Be creative! Classroom-style seating may be too "school-like" for youth to feel relaxed; desks may be a barrier, too. Consider a circle or semicircle of chairs, or let young people sit on the floor. Change seating arrangements from lesson to lesson and within lessons to keep young people engaged.

## Consider Your Participants

Some groups are more energetic than others. They might want lots of action and competition between teams. Others groups are quieter. They might prefer more pencil-and-paper activities, more cooperative group activities, and less competition. Some youth have no difficulties sharing their thoughts and being active in front of peers. Other youth may be less comfortable sharing. Consider the nature of your group and of individual youth, and adapt the activities to suit them. *Appendix B* includes suggestions for adapting activities for youth with disabilities.

## Make the Most of the Diversity of Your Participants



The lessons provide many opportunities for you to recognize and celebrate the richness and diversity of the cultures and ethnicities represented in your group. Adapt the discussions and activities as needed to reflect the identities of the group. The *Mini-Productions* may be a particularly good opportunity for youth to showcase their heritages through the media they create. At the same time, be alert to any instances when highlighting cultural or ethnic identity may be inappropriate or uncomfortable for the youth. Throughout the lessons, we've included an icon (see left) to note times where you might want to highlight or be sensitive to issues related to cultural or ethnic identity.

## Prepare for *Snack Breaks*

All snacks are intended to be simple and to illustrate a different nutrition concept, but they are just suggestions. Feel free to modify snacks for your group. Would you like to include special cultural or ethnic foods? Do you need to consider allergies or dietary needs? Do you need a cooler, refrigerator, or freezer? Do you have everything you need for cleanup? Do you have a sink or bathroom nearby for hand washing? Decide what you need and want, or look at more snack options—including ideas that don't require refrigeration—in *Appendix C*.

\* Many after-school programs qualify for federal reimbursement for snacks if they participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National School Lunch Program or Child and Adult Care Food Program. To see whether your Media-Smart Youth snack costs could qualify for reimbursement, visit the USDA website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/lunch/> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/Default.htm>.

## Deciding Whether To Work with Other Facilitators

You may wish to work with other adult facilitators as you carry out the Media-Smart Youth curriculum. Involving others in the lessons can be invaluable to your program and to the young people. When making this decision, consider some of the benefits and challenges. Determine the best equation for your group.

Multiple Facilitators	
<b>Benefits</b>	<b>Challenges</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Help youth stay focused</li><li>■ Help the sessions run smoothly</li><li>■ Bring diversity of ideas</li><li>■ Involve community</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Show different facilitation styles</li><li>■ Use different approaches with youth</li><li>■ Have different attitudes about discipline</li></ul>

You may decide that the advantages of working with another facilitator outweigh the disadvantages. If so, follow these guidelines to maximize success.

*All* facilitators should:

- Review and become familiar with the full curriculum.
- Discuss and determine respective roles and responsibilities.
- Agree on facilitation and discipline techniques.
- Meet or talk before each lesson to prepare and divide planning and facilitation duties.
- Get together after each lesson to discuss what worked and what might be improved next time.
- Respect each other's differences and individual strengths.
- Be supportive.
- Be flexible.

## Why Small Groups?

Small groups provide participants with more opportunities to practice skills, share thoughts, work cooperatively, and actively observe others. As a result, they can more easily:

- Establish common ground and provide the foundation for finding solutions together.
- Cultivate support, which can enhance self-esteem.
- Acquire new skills.
- Improve performance through immediate feedback.
- Learn and become motivated.

## Making the Most of Your Facilitation

The Media-Smart Youth curriculum uses several key strategies to facilitate critical thinking and encourage discussion. The activities encourage youth to explore questions, answers, and possible connections. The point is for them to work together to share information and solve problems. Here are a few skills that you can develop to help make that happen.

### Model Open and Nonjudgmental Behavior

In *Lesson 1*, participants develop a working agreement that governs their participation in the group. Throughout the program, encourage the young people to accept and follow that agreement. But don't forget *your* behavior with, and reactions to, the group. Your actions can go a long way toward setting the right example.

### Encourage Small-Group Work

To increase participation, youth work in small groups for many of the activities, and then come back together as a whole group to share their discussions and results. As part of your planning for each lesson, you may want to decide how you will divide the youth into groups for these activities.

### Handle Sensitive Issues Sensitively

The Media-Smart Youth curriculum is not about weight loss, dieting, or forcing anyone to do physical activity. However, this curriculum addresses nutrition and physical activity—two important “body issues”—and it is designed to promote and encourage critical thinking and discussion. As a result, personal, sensitive, or uncomfortable topics may occasionally arise.

You should try to anticipate and prepare for these situations. Before beginning the program, discuss with the leadership of your organization how you might address such potentially difficult situations. During the program, be sure to create an accepting environment where everyone feels comfortable participating and safe in expressing their thoughts.

## Ideas To Consider When Sensitive Issues Arise

- If you know the answer to a question, share it briefly. If not, acknowledge the importance of the issue, and explain that you will try to find the answer after the lesson.
- Don't insist that a young person participate in a discussion or physical activity if he or she seems uncomfortable. Don't allow other participants to tease or pressure the young person.
- Try to redirect the discussion back to the original topic if the talk leads in an uncomfortable direction.
- Consider asking participants to talk with you or another trusted adult after the lesson.
- Ask participants to find out more on their own and report back to the group at a later session.
- Model respect for *all* sensitive issues and special needs, including intellectual and physical disabilities, food allergies, or dietary needs. Make sure that participants respect each other.
- Honor—and support—cultural and economic differences, some of which can greatly influence nutrition and activity choices and body image attitudes.

## Lead with Open-Ended Questions

Many activities begin and end with a group discussion that prompts the young people to: reflect on their own experiences, opinions, and ideas; think about answers to their own questions; and share knowledge. You can start and keep the discussion going by using open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are ones that get people talking. They often start with “what,” “when,” “where,” and “how.” In contrast, closed-ended questions are questions that can be answered by “yes” or “no,” and that often do not require additional discussion.

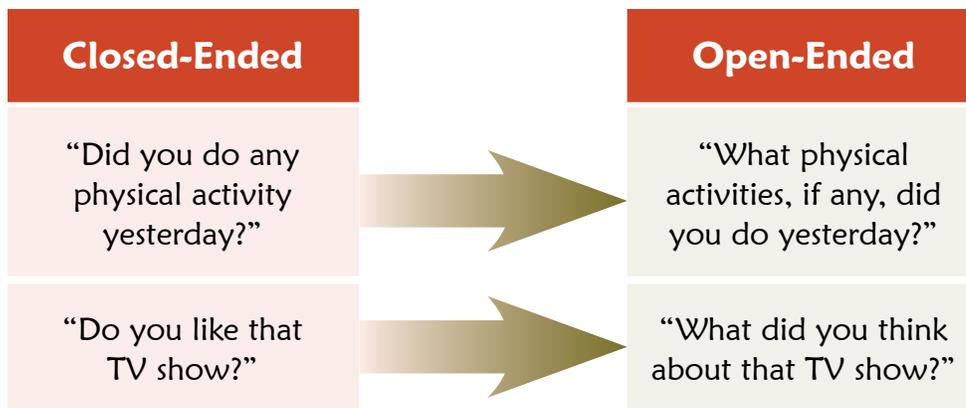
## Be sure to:

- Acknowledge positive behaviors frequently.
- Give encouragement and compliments.
- Demonstrate respect for participants and their beliefs.
- Be clear about how you expect group members to treat each other, and model this behavior yourself.
- Respect participants' feelings and boundaries.
- Model cooperative behavior.
- Demonstrate concepts and examples when possible.
- Participate in the games and competitions when possible.
- Use simple language.
- Encourage group members to share experiences.
- Build on strengths.
- Listen!
- Let group members react, think, and analyze.
- Be flexible and enthusiastic.

Here are some examples of open-ended questions:

- “What do you mean by...?”
- “What kind of fruits do you like?”
- “When is it easy for you to be physically active?”
- “How did you figure out that this food contains whole grains?”
- “Can you tell me more about...?”

Here are some ways to turn closed-ended questions into open-ended ones:



### Lead by Example

Young people will be more motivated to fully participate in the active parts of the curriculum if you are part of the fun. Dress in casual clothes and appropriate shoes, and join in the activities and *Action Breaks*. If you ask the group to run to the other end of the room as part of an activity, do it yourself first. Be energetic and animated! Remember, model the active behavior you are encouraging. You may be surprised at how positively the group responds.

### Make the Lessons Fun—and Relevant

Try to avoid using the word “class” during lessons. Mentioning the “classroom” or asking the “class” to pay attention may make the activity feel too much like school for the youth.

If you notice that the youth are restless or bored, take a minute or 2 to do a physical activity. Even a short activity will get their hearts pumping and their adrenaline going. Short spurts of activity will bring their focus back to the curriculum and offer them a nice break. Ask them to stand and do jumping jacks for 60 seconds without stopping. Or turn on some music, and suggest they dance in place.

Incorporate current events into your discussion. If you meet the weekend after a major news event, discuss how the event was covered in the media (Internet, TV, print, or radio). Or, if a new movie is about to come out, see what youth think about the various marketing activities associated with the movie's release and if they've taken part in any of them.

Young people enjoy seeing themselves. Photograph or videotape the youth in action during the Media-Smart Youth activities. Create and bring a photo collage to the next lesson or play the taped footage.

### Encourage Active Participation and Leadership

Media-Smart Youth provides many opportunities to help youth build confidence, encourage leadership, and give them the feeling that this program is *theirs*. Take full advantage of every chance to ask for volunteers and get participants involved in facilitating parts of lessons. A few of the participants will likely assume these roles naturally, some will be able to do so with coaching and guidance, and others will prefer to remain in the background.

Your efforts to make the environment as nurturing as possible will encourage the quieter youth to step into leadership roles.

### Make Transitions

A big part of your role is to help youth see the relationships among all the activities and lessons. A skilled facilitator is prepared to summarize each activity and transition to the next one. A summary gives the participants a quick recap of the main points of the activity, while the transition relates those points to upcoming activities.

## Ways To Involve Young People

Ask them to:

- Hand out materials.
- Take notes.
- Time activities.
- Lead activities.
- Encourage others in a group.
- Report to the group.
- Help prepare snacks.
- Help lead *Action Breaks*.
- Your ideas here!

### To Summarize an Activity:

- State the main point of the activity.
- Ask the group for its ideas.
- Acknowledge the group's hard work.
- Congratulate the group for its good ideas.

### To Transition to the Next Activity:

- Tell how this point or activity is related to the next.
- Use only one or two sentences.

Here's an example of a transition:

**You've learned all about Media-Smart Youth.**

**You're ready, and you're set.**

**Now, GO...**

**and make your Media-Smart Youth workshop terrific!**