

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™

Guide

for Schools, Sponsors, and

Sites to Coordinate Appearances by Athletes



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Mountain Plains Regional Administrator Darlene Barnes gathers with kids at a Summer Feeding Site in Salt Lake City.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STATE AGENCIES



Connie Stefkovich, Administrator of Nutrition Services for the Nebraska Department of Education and the Power Panther smile after a successful event at a recreation center in Lincoln, Nebraska.

There are two options for how schools can begin the process of requesting a visit from an athlete. It will be up to each State agency (SA) to determine which option it prefers.

Notification options:

- Schools and SFSP sponsors and sites notify the SA first with their request for an athlete to visit;
- or
- The SA notifies the Regional Office (RO) contact directly with their request.

The SA needs to notify schools and SFSP sponsors and sites of these procedures.

All requests should be forwarded to the Regional Office. SFSP staff will research available options and provide contact information.



Katie Mordhorst, Director of Wyoming SFSP, does her part to end hunger in Casper, Wyoming, where student athletes competing in the National Collegiate Finals Rodeo visited with SFSP kids.



Dan McMillan, Director of the Colorado Department of Education Nutrition Unit, Darlene Sanchez, FNS Director of Special Nutrition Programs in the Mountain Plains Region, and Nick Nichols, Director of Rude Recreation Center in Denver, celebrate a Summer Food Service Program Week Kickoff with children at the center.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SCHOOLS, SPONSORS AND SITE STAFFS

1. First, let the SA or the RO know about your interest in having an athlete visit.

- The athlete or athletic organization will contact the school, sponsor or site about when a visit can take place with the following:
 - Date of visit
 - Athlete's name, athletic specialties, and equipment needs
 - USDA representatives attending, if any, along with their names and titles
 - School, SFSP sponsor or site representative contact information



FNS resident cowboy Maurice Wade signs autographs for children at a summer site in Helena, Montana.

- Depending on the type of visit, the school, SFSP sponsor, or site representative will coordinate with the athlete or organization to determine what venue the visit will take. The athlete may need space to demonstrate his/her skills; you may need to ask for help making space available. Your athlete may be a cowboy or rodeo queen. They have been very supportive of our partnership and remain very active in rodeo after their event/reign is over.
- At this point, the athletic organization will provide the school, SFSP sponsor, or site representative with the athlete's contact information, and as planning progresses, the organization will coordinate the visit.

2. Advertise the visits by contacting radio stations and newspapers, displaying posters and/or banners, and sending flyers home with the children. Get the word out about the visit as much as possible (refer to the Resource section for a sample media advisory and a news release).

3. If local media covers the visit, ensure that children are included in the photos with the athlete. Check on whether you need parental approval to photograph children. If school or SFSP staff members take photos, please submit copies to the



The Power Panther gets down in Aurora, Colorado, with Liberty Middle School's eagle mascot at a National School Lunch Week event.

SA and RO for follow-up coverage of the event. Please be sure to identify the people in the photo.

4. Assigning a child to be a special assistant to _____ athlete has been very successful. The child guides and assists in the presentation, demonstration, autograph signing, and also accompanies the athlete for the entire visit.
5. Make the athlete feel welcome; introduce him/her to the staff, give a tour of the school or site and aid with any setup needed.
6. Invite the athlete to participate in the meal service with the children if there is one.
7. If the contestant has a schedule to meet, ensure that he/she departs on time.



2004 Silver Olympic Medalist Sarah McMann with Power Panther in Iowa City, Iowa.



2004 Miss Rodeo America Darci Robertson and 2001 Miss Rodeo Nebraska Lindy Quaney visited students in North Platte, Nebraska.



Children in Sioux Falls, South Dakota proudly display autographed photos of 2004 Miss Rodeo South Dakota Jessica Melvin.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ATHLETES

A visit at a school or SFSP site will generally follow this outline (a school or site representative will be able to fill you in on the specifics for that particular visit).

- Determine with the representative whether you will speak to the children during an assembly or before, during or after a meal service.
- Determine who will introduce you to the children. This could be a Federal, state or local representative.
- Keep your presentation brief (10-15 minutes) because the attention span of the children will probably be very short. They will be eager to talk to you and get your autograph.
- Tell the children about the importance of eating right and being physically active (use the talking points provided).
- Tell the children a little bit about yourself, how and why you got started in your sport and the events in which you compete.
- If there are several athletes present, designate a spokesperson to promote the *Eat Smart. Play Hard.*TM message. Each member could briefly describe their sporting event.
- If appropriate, demonstrate to the children your sporting event(s). For example, if you compete in soccer, perhaps you could show children how to dribble the ball.
- You might show the children any stretches that you do before you compete. Depending on the size of your group, you might want to involve the children in copying your stretches.
- After the presentation, ask the children for questions. You may be very surprised at how creative the questions are.
- Join the children for the meal if the visit includes a meal service.
- Sign autographs and visit with the children.



Bull riding champion Blue Stone talks to children in Salt Lake City, Utah, about what it takes to be a champion – including good nutrition.



Sarah McMann plays parachute games with children in Iowa City, Iowa.



2006 Miss Rodeo America, Tressie Knowlton, signs autographs for children in Denver.

GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORS AND SITES WHEN CONTACTING THE MEDIA

Once you have a site, date and athlete confirmed, you will want to contact the media. Athlete visits provide the media with great human interest stories. Often site staff know people in the local media so we encourage you to contact them.

We have provided a sample Media Advisory (see Resource section) that you can adapt and use. You may replace the USDA logo with your logo if you like.

Generic Press Release:

- Fill in the blanks (blue text) to make appropriate for the visit. No further clearance is required.
- You may change the news release heading to reflect your organization if you like.

Other Press Releases:

- If you use a different press release with reference to the athlete, you need to clear it through their organization before releasing.

Things to keep in mind:

- Follow up your release with a phone call to the media prior to the event to see if they will be attending.
- If you need additional information on an athlete, contact the appropriate organization.
- The public relations staff at the SA also may be able to assist with media relations..
- For assistance at the RO, contact our Public Affairs Office at (303) 844-0312 (Mountain Plains Region).



J.D. Crouse and his escort for the day, Damian Watson, talk with TV crews in Omaha, Nebraska.

APPENDIX: RESOURCES

- Talking Points
- Media Advisory
- Contact Numbers
- Proclamation

The USDA prohibits discrimination in its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, or call (800)795-3272 (voice) or (202)720-6382 (TTY). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



TALKING POINTS FOR ATHLETES AND SCHOOL/SITE REPRESENTATIVES

These are some points to work into your discussion or presentation to the children. Their attention span may be short, so you may want to keep your presentation brief (10–15 minutes). The children will want to see a demonstration of your skills, talk to you, and get your autograph.

Nutrition Messages

- Eat Smart, Play Hard. Your body needs good nutritious foods to stay healthy and have energy. You need to have good foods to feel like running and playing.
- Healthy foods are served through your summer food service program. These foods give you energy to run, play, and think.
- Healthy foods help your body grow as it should. The vitamins and minerals in the foods help you grow strong and healthy. (Give examples of how you incorporate good eating with physical activity.)
- When you eat smart, you can play hard.

Athlete Messages

These are just things to think about that might interest the children.

- Explain:
 - Your sport.
 - How you got involved in the sport and how children today get involved in your sport in your area.
 - How much you travel and how you stay fit while on the road.
 - How often you practice.
 - Favorite sports stories and places you've been.
- Demonstrate your sport or show the children the equipment you use.
- Tell the children what you like doing outside of your sport.



Sara McMann speaks to children at the Pheasant Ridge, site for Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County.



MEDIA ADVISORY

U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Mountain Plains Region
1244 Speer Blvd. Denver, CO 80204 Phone: 303-844-0312 Fax: 303-844-6203

(DATE)

CONTACT: (Name, phone #)

ATHLETE VISITS (LOCATION) TO ENCOURAGE KIDS TO EAT SMART AND PLAY HARD

WHO: Name of athlete

WHEN: Time, Date

WHERE: Location
Address
City, State ZIP

Athlete/organization and the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) have formed a partnership to promote FNS’s Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ campaign. Athlete will visit location on date and talk to children about the importance of choosing a healthy diet and being physically active as part of being an athlete. (He/She) will also sign autographs for the children.

The USDA’s Summer Food Service Program was created to ensure that children in lower-income areas could continue to receive nutritious meals during long school vacations, when they do not have access to school lunch or breakfast. Although millions of children depend on nutritious free and reduced-price meals and snacks at school for 9 months of the year, just a fraction of that receive the free meals provided by the SFSP during the summer months.

SFSP draws children into supervised activities that are safe, fun, and filled with learning opportunities. Children benefit nutritionally by receiving complete, wholesome meals, and parents benefit from some help in stretching their food dollars. The program encourages communities to provide safe places for children to go to be with other children and supportive adults.

Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ is USDA’s campaign to encourage children to eat nutritious foods while remembering to exercise and stay physically fit. The campaign is promoted through USDA programs such as the National School Lunch Program, the National School Breakfast Program, the Summer Food Service Program, and the After School Snack program. During the school year, more than 35 million children participate in these FNS programs.

For more information on USDA Child Nutrition Programs and the Eat Smart. Play Hard.™ campaign, visit www.fns.usda.gov.

Organization has provided free lunch/breakfast/snacks to children in the summer for the past ___ years. Organization sponsors ___ sites. About ___ children attend the site each day.



CONTACT NUMBERS

STATE CONTACTS

Colorado (303) 866-6650

Iowa (515) 281-4760

Kansas (785) 296-2276

Missouri (573) 751-6250

Montana (406) 444-2521

Nebraska (402) 471-2746

North Dakota (701) 328-2294

South Dakota (605) 773-3110

Utah (801) 538-7692

Wyoming (307) 777-6262

FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE CONTACTS

Mountain Plains -- Special Nutrition Programs

SFSP Team - (303) 844-0354

Public Affairs Staff - (303) 844-0312

