

Best Practices for Schools

Concerns are plentiful these days regarding child and teen obesity; most people are aware that approximately 32% of those ages 6-19 are overweight. Poor eating habits combined with physical inactivity is causing serious health problems in children and teens that were once only seen in those over the age of 40. We all need to be concerned about childhood obesity whether we have children or not. This generation of children could be the first in history to be outlived by its parents!

School is a major part of the day for most children and can serve as a model for healthy lifestyle choices for students and families. The Ohio State Board of Education has nutrition standards for school meals as well as standards for physical activity. Congress is currently working toward improving the federal nutrition standards for school meals. Parents, school staff, and other concerned groups such as Wellness Committees are also scrutinizing school breakfast, lunch, and extra items, known as “competitive foods,” for nutritional value.

According to “Making it Happen! School Nutrition Success Stories,” increasing the nutritional value of the foods available in schools can be addressed by using 1 or more of the following approaches:

- Establish nutrition standards for competitive foods
- Influence food and beverage contracts
- Make more healthful foods and beverages available
- Market and promote healthful choices
- Limit student access to competitive foods
- Develop fundraising and student activities to promote student health

Become an advocate for more nutrition and physical activity for our school-aged children! For more complete information regarding best practices for schools please use the following links:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/TN/Resources/makingithappen.html>

<http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/team.html>

<http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Grants/2010app.html>

http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/NH_Best_Practices.pdf

<http://www.aahperd.org/naspe/professionaldevelopment/physicalBest/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/>

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/about-wecan/index.htm>

<http://aom3.americaonthemove.org/>

<http://www.kidshape.com/>