School Foods Tool Kit

A Guide to Improving School Foods & Beverages

Part I: How to Improve School Foods and Beverages
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Goals for Improving School Foods and Beverages

- Set nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold outside of school meals, including out of vending machines, snack bars, a la carte, fundraisers, school stores, and other venues to reduce the availability of low-nutrition foods (soda, chips, candy, etc.) in schools.
  - Limit the sale and availability of soft-drinks, fruit “drinks” and “ades” (Fruitopia, Snapple, etc.), sports drinks, and other sugary drinks.

- Improve the nutritional quality and “kid-appeal” of school meals.
  - Help schools to meet the USDA’s nutrition standards for school meals.
  - Promote and serve more whole grains and fruits and vegetables.

- Reduce children’s intake of saturated fat by making 1% or fat-free milk the standard milks sold in your school.

- Strengthen nutrition education in schools.

- Replace fundraisers that sell candy or other junk food with healthy alternatives.

- Urge your school or school district to give children enough time to eat (the USDA recommends at least 20 minutes for breakfast and 30 minutes for lunch).

- Oppose your school or school district entering into an exclusive soft drink contract that encourages the promotion or greater availability of low-nutrition beverages.

- Encourage parents and kids to pack healthy lunches.

- Keep campuses closed during lunch to prevent students from going to fast-food outlets and convenience stores off campus and reduce competition with the school meal programs.

- Reduce junk-food marketing on school campus.

- Keep brand-name fast food out of school cafeterias.

- Implement a policy for offering healthy foods and beverages at school functions, school parties, and staff events.
Help improve children’s diets by setting nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold or served outside of the school meal programs. (For rationale supporting these standards see CCPHA’s Competitive Food Standards Recommendations on p. 37 or at: www.publichealthadvocacy.org.)

Standards might include:

**The following beverages may be sold or served at schools:**

- Fruit-based drinks that contain at least 50 percent fruit juice and that do not contain added sweeteners.

- Water and seltzers.

- Low-fat or fat-free milk, including, but not limited to, chocolate milk, soy milk, rice milk, and other similar dairy or nondairy calcium-fortified milks.

**The following beverages may not be sold or served at schools:**

- Soda pop, sports drinks, punches, and iced teas.

- Fruit-based drinks that contain less than 50 percent real fruit juice or that contain added sweeteners.

- Drinks containing caffeine, excluding low-fat or fat-free chocolate milk.

**All snacks, sweets, or side dishes sold or served on school sites outside of the federal school meal programs shall meet all of the following standards:**

- Have 30 percent or less of its total calories from fat.

- Have 10 percent or less of its total calories from saturated plus trans fat.

- Have 35 percent or less of its weight from sugars, excluding sugars occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, and dairy ingredients.
• Be limited to the following maximum portion sizes:
  
  – One and one-quarter ounces for chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or jerky.
  
  – Two ounces for cookies or cereal bars.
  
  – Three ounces for bakery items, including, but not limited to, pastries, muffins, and donuts.
  
  – Three fluid ounces for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, ice cream.
  
  – Eight ounces for non-frozen yogurt.
  
  – Twelve ounces for beverages, excluding water.
  
  – Entree items and side dishes, including, but not limited to, French fries and onion rings, shall be no larger than the portions of those foods served as part of the federal school meal programs.

Fruits and vegetables shall be offered for sale at any location on the school site where foods are sold.

See *Beverage and Snack Options for School Vending Machines* on p. 40 for examples of foods and beverages that meet these standards that could be sold out of vending machines.
Fact Sheets and Backgrounders

Obesity and Other Diet-Related Diseases in Children

- Heart disease, cancer, stroke, and diabetes are responsible for two-thirds of deaths in the United States.\(^1\) The major risk factors for those diseases often are established in childhood: unhealthy eating habits, physical inactivity, obesity, and tobacco use.

- One quarter of children ages 5 to 10 years show early warning signs for heart disease, such as elevated blood cholesterol or high blood pressure.\(^2\)

- Atherosclerosis (clogged arteries) begins in childhood. Autopsy studies of 15 to 19 year olds have found that all have fatty streaks in more than one artery, and about 10% have advanced fibrous plaques.\(^3\)

- Type 2 diabetes can no longer be called "adult onset" diabetes because of rising rates in children. In a study conducted in Cincinnati, the incidence of type 2 diabetes in adolescents increased ten-fold between 1982 and 1994.\(^4\)

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**Childhood Obesity\(^*\)**

*Obese is defined as at or above the 95\(^{th}\) percentile of body mass index for age based on the 2000 CDC growth charts.

**Data for 1966-70 are for adolescents ages 12-17.

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As the number of young people with type 2 diabetes increases, diabetic complications like limb amputations, blindness, kidney failure, and heart disease will develop at younger ages (likely in their 30s and 40s).

- Obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents over the last two decades. One in seven young people are obese and one in three are overweight.\textsuperscript{5} Obese children are twice as likely as non-obese children to become obese adults.\textsuperscript{6}

- Obesity increases the risk of high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure, and diabetes while still in childhood. Overweight and obesity can result in negative social consequences, e.g., discrimination, depression, and lower self-esteem.\textsuperscript{7,8}

- From 1979 to 1999, annual hospital costs for treating obesity-related diseases in children rose threefold (from $35 million to $127 million).\textsuperscript{9}

### Unhealthy eating habits often begin in childhood.

- Between 1989 and 1996, children's calorie intake increased by approximately 80 to 230 extra calories per day depending on the child's age and activity level.\textsuperscript{10,11} The increases in calorie intake are driven by increased intakes of foods and beverages high in added sugars.

- Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) meet the recommendations for a healthy diet from the Food Guide Pyramid.\textsuperscript{12}

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• Three out of four American high school students do not eat the recommended 5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day.\textsuperscript{13} Three out of four children consume more saturated fat than is recommended in the \textit{Dietary Guidelines for Americans}.\textsuperscript{14}

• Soft drink consumption doubled over the last 30 years.\textsuperscript{15} With each additional serving of soft drink (soda, juice drinks, etc.) consumed each day, the odds that a child will become obese increase by 60\%.\textsuperscript{16} Consumption of soft drinks can displace low-fat milk and 100\% juice from children's diets.\textsuperscript{17} In 1976–78, boys consumed twice as much milk as soft drinks, and girls consumed 50\% more milk than soft drinks. By 1994–96, both boys and girls consumed twice as much soda pop as milk.\textsuperscript{18}


School Nutrition Programs Overview

The Child Nutrition Programs constitute the federal government's approach to addressing the issue of children's access to nutritious food and nutrition education. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is the agency with primary jurisdiction over these programs.

National School Lunch Program

- The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) was created in 1946 "as a measure of national security, to safeguard the health and well-being of the Nation's children and to encourage the domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural commodities and other food."\(^1\)

- The NSLP is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and provides meals in 85,000 public (93%), 6,500 private schools and 6,000 child care institutions.

- More than 50% of U.S. children obtain either breakfast or lunch from the school meal programs.\(^2\) The NSLP serves more than 25 million children daily.\(^3\)

- In fiscal year 2002, federal funding for the NSLP was $6.9 billion.

- School lunches must meet nutrition standards in order for a school food service program to receive federal subsidies. School lunches must contain less than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat. In addition, school lunches must provide one-third of the Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) for protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and calories.

  - Schools are doing an excellent job of providing lunches that include adequate amounts of key nutrients, including protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron (i.e., they provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances [RDA]). In addition, school lunches offered in the 1998-99 school year (SY) provided more iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, and calcium than did lunches in SY 1991-92.\(^4\)

  - Elementary schools met the goal of providing 33% of a day's calories in the average meal, and secondary schools provide 30% of a day's calories.\(^4\)

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- Lunches offered in SY 1998-99 contained fewer calories from fat (33-34%) than lunches offered in SY 1991-92 (38%). In SY 1991-92, only one percent of schools provided lunches that met the recommended level for fat (less than 30% of calories). By SY 1998-99, 22 percent of secondary schools and 18 percent of elementary schools met this recommendation.\(^5\)

- Lunches offered in SY 1998-99 contained fewer calories from saturated fat (12%) than did lunches offered in SY 1991-92 (15%). The standard is that meals contain less than 10% of calories from saturated fat. In SY 1991-92, no schools met the recommendation for saturated fat content, but in SY 1998-99, 17% of secondary schools and 15% of elementary schools met that standard.\(^5\)

- Lunches offered in SY 1998-99 contained less sodium (1,289 mg per lunch in elementary schools and 1,509 mg per lunch in secondary schools) than lunches offered in SY 1991-92 (1,399 mg per lunch in elementary schools and 1,641 mg per lunch in secondary schools). The average school lunch did not meet the target of 800 mg of sodium.\(^5\)

- Legislative language requires many schools to serve whole and 2% milk to students (for more information, see the fact sheet Milk in Schools on p. 19).

**School Breakfast Program (SBP)**

- The School Breakfast Program was created as a grant program in 1966 to serve breakfasts to "nutritionally needy" children. In 1975, the SBP was permanently authorized as an entitlement program.

- The SBP serves over 8 million children daily, and 57% of schools and 71% of public schools participate in the program.

- The federal government provided $1.6 billion for the SBP for fiscal year 2002.

- School breakfasts must meet nutrition standards in order for a school food service program to receive federal subsidies. School breakfasts must contain less than 30% of calories from fat and less than 10% of calories from saturated fat. In addition, school breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the Recommended Daily Allowances (RDA) for protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C, and calories.

  - The average school breakfast meets the RDAs for all targeted nutrients, including protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron. School breakfasts offered in both SY 1998-99 and SY 1991-92 provided more than the recommended amount of protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.\(^5\)

− The average school breakfast meets the recommendation that less than 30% of calories in the breakfast come from fat. In SY 1998-99, school breakfasts contained an average of 26% calories from fat, whereas in SY 1991-92 they contained an average of 31% of calories from fat.⁶

− School breakfasts, on average, meet the recommendation to provide no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat. In SY 1998-99, breakfasts contained 10% of calories from saturated fat and met the recommendation, whereas in SY 1991-92 they contained 14% and did not meet the recommendation.⁶

− The recommend maximum content of sodium in school breakfasts is 600 mg. The average sodium content of elementary school breakfasts is 562 mg, which meets the recommendation. The average sodium content of secondary school breakfasts is 601 mg. Breakfasts in SY 1998-99 were significantly lower in sodium than breakfasts offered in SY 1991-92, when elementary school breakfasts contained an average of 657 mg of sodium and secondary school breakfasts contained 723 mg of sodium.⁶

**Afterschool Snacks**

− In 1998, the USDA began providing reimbursements for snacks served to children in after school programs that meet certain curriculum and student income criteria. The goals of providing snacks are to give children a nutritional "boost" and enable them to take full advantage of educational and enrichment opportunities offered in afterschool programs.

− The afterschool snack program provides snacks to 850,000 children.

− The budget for the afterschool snack program is part of the National School Lunch Program and Child and Adult Care Food Program budgets.

− In order to receive federal reimbursements, afterschool snacks must include a serving of two components from among the following four categories: vegetable, fruit or 100% vegetable or fruit juice; fluid milk; meat or meat alternative; or whole grain, enriched bread and/or cereal.

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Competitive Foods

• “Competitive” foods are foods served in schools that are not part of USDA school meal programs (i.e., not part of school breakfast, school lunch, or afterschool snack programs). They are served or sold in a variety of campus venues, such as a la carte lines, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and snack bars. Competitive foods are increasingly available to students. (For more information, see the fact sheet Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA School Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.) on p. 14.)

Team Nutrition Program

• The USDA’s Team Nutrition program provides nutrition education materials to schools for children and their families. In addition, Team Nutrition uses classroom activities, school-wide events, community programs, and the media to promote healthy eating to children. The program also assists school food service directors with improving the nutritional quality of school meals.

• Currently 20,010 schools (203 preschools, 12,231 elementary schools, 2,730 middle schools, 3,095 high schools, and 9,660 combination schools) participate in Team Nutrition.

• The funding level for Team Nutrition was $10 million in FY 2002.
Special Milk Program

- The Special Milk Program provides milk to children who do not receive it through the other USDA Child Nutrition Programs, including the NSLP and SBP.

- In 2001, 7,000 residential child care institutions and schools participated in the Special Milk Program, as did 1,300 summer camps and 562 non-residential child care institutions.

- In FY 2002, federal funding for the Special Milk Program was $16.8 million.

- About two-thirds (63%) of milk ordered by schools is either 2% or whole milk.\(^7\)

- Milk is by far the largest source of saturated fat – the kind of fat that causes heart disease – in children’s diets, providing one-quarter of their intake.\(^8\)

- Since 95% of maximum bone density is reached by age 18, it is especially important that children consume enough calcium to prevent future osteoporosis. Low-fat and fat-free milk provide the calcium children need without the saturated fat that can cause heart disease later in life.

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Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA School Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.)

Low-nutrition Foods and Beverages Sold Out of Vending Machines, School Stores and Other Venues Undermine the National Investment in the Child Nutrition Programs.

- The federal government invests significant resources ($8.4 billion in FY 2002, including cash payments and commodities) in the school meal programs. Competitive foods of poor nutritional quality undermine taxpayers’ investment in those programs.

- The USDA regulates the nutritional quality of foods served in the school meal programs. For a school food service program to receive federal subsidies, school meals must meet nutrition standards for saturated fat, vitamins, minerals, and protein. Other foods and beverages sold in schools do not have to meet those standards.

What Are Competitive Foods?

“Competitive” foods are foods and beverages served in schools that are not part of USDA school meal programs (i.e., school breakfast, school lunch, or after-school snack programs). They are served or sold in a variety of campus venues, such as a la carte lines, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and snack bars.

- Competitive foods are increasingly available to students. 43% of elementary schools, 74% of middle/junior high schools, and 98% of senior high schools have vending machines, school stores, or snack bars that sell competitive foods.

- While school meals are required to meet comprehensive nutrition standards, competitive foods are not required to meet those standards.

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Currently, the USDA has limited authority to regulate the nutritional quality of competitive foods. During meal periods, the sale of foods of "minimal nutritional value" (FMNV) is prohibited by federal regulations in areas of the school where USDA school meals are sold or eaten. However, FMNV can be sold anywhere else on-campus - including just outside the cafeteria - at any time.

A FMNV provides less than 5% of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for each of eight specified nutrients per serving. FMNV include chewing gum, lollipops, jelly beans, and carbonated sodas. Many competitive foods, such as chocolate candy bars, chips, and fruitades (containing little fruit juice), are not considered FMNV, and therefore are allowed to be sold in the school cafeteria during meal times.

About 19 states have policies that are stronger than the USDA regulation. Those policies vary from West Virginia’s strong nutrition standards to states that do not allow FMNV on school campuses up through the last lunch period. See www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/state_policies_2002.htm to determine your state’s policy.

- Approximately 20% of schools offer brand-name fast-food items, such as foods from Pizza Hut or Taco Bell, for sale in the cafeteria. Fast foods are typically high in fat, saturated fat and sodium.

- Selling low-nutrition foods in schools contradicts nutrition education and sends children the message that good nutrition is not important. The school environment should reinforce nutrition education in the classroom and model healthy behaviors.

- Competitive foods may stigmatize participation in the school meal programs. Children without money to pay for competitive foods may feel self-conscious or embarrassed to receive the reduced-price or free meals available if children with greater financial resources are purchasing competitive foods.

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3 Federal Register: 7 CFR § 210.11. "Requirements for School Food Authority Participation, Competitive Food Services."


Competitive Foods and Children’s Diets and Health

The sale of competitive foods in schools can negatively affect children’s diets, since the majority of competitive foods are low in nutrients and high in calories, added sugars, and fat. The most common items for sale in vending machines, school stores, and snack bars include soft drinks, sports drinks, fruit drinks that are not 100% juice, salty snacks, candy, and baked goods that are not low in fat.

- Both at lunch and during the entire day, students that participate in the NSLP consume significantly more vegetables, milk, and protein-rich foods, and consume less added sugars, soda and fruit drinks than non-participants.

- Only 2% of children (2 to 19 years) meet the recommendations for a healthy diet from the Food Guide Pyramid. Only 16% of children meet dietary recommendations for saturated fat.

- Between 1989 and 1996, children’s calorie intake increased by approximately 80 to 230 extra calories per day depending on the child’s age and activity level. The increases in calorie intake are driven by increased intakes of foods and beverages high in added sugars.

- Teens are snacking more than they used to. The average number of snacks eaten per day increased from 1.6 to 2.0 between 1977 and 1996. Snacks now provide approximately 610 calories to teens’ diets each day, versus 460 calories in 1977.

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• Soft-drink consumption by children increased 40% between 1989 and 1996, from an average of 1.0 to 1.4 servings per day.\textsuperscript{14} 56 to 85% of children drink soda each day (depending on age).\textsuperscript{15,16}

• Children who drink soft drinks consume more calories (about 55 to 190 per day) than kids who do not drink soft drinks.\textsuperscript{17,18} A study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health found that for each additional can or glass of soda or juice drink a child consumes per day, the child’s chance of becoming overweight increases by 60%.\textsuperscript{19}

• Consumption of soft drinks can displace low-fat milk and 100% juice from children's diets.\textsuperscript{20} Only 30% of children consume the recommended number of servings of milk each day, down from 40% in 1989. Just 14% of children eat the recommended amount of fruit.\textsuperscript{21}

• Children and adolescents who are obese miss about 4 school days a month. Frequent absenteeism may lead to lower performance in school.\textsuperscript{22}

• Twenty years ago, boys consumed twice as much milk as soft drinks, and girls consumed 50% more milk than soft drinks. Today, children consume twice as much soft drinks as milk.\textsuperscript{23}


• Milk is an important source of calcium to help children build strong bones. Maximum bone mass for women is acquired by age 20, and low bone density in youth can cause osteoporosis later in life.24

• While a number of different factors cause tooth decay, the American Dental Association concludes that sugared soda increases the risk of dental caries and the low pH of soda can cause tooth erosion.25

**Will Schools Lose Funds if Competitive Foods Regulations Are Strengthened?**

• Not necessarily. North Community High School in Minneapolis replaced most of its soda vending machines and added additional machines stocked with 100% fruit and vegetable juices and water and slightly reduced the prices of healthy beverage options. As a result, the sale of healthier items increased and the school did not lose money.

• Vista Unified School District in California bought its own vending machines and replaced high-fat and sugar snacks with healthier options such as yogurt and granola, fruit, and cheese and crackers and offered less soda and more water, sports drinks, 100% juice, milk, and smoothies. In the first year, the school generated $200,000 more in sales than it had in the previous year.

• A middle school and high school in Philadelphia changed their vending machines’ beverage contents to remove sports drinks (sodas were already banned) and include only 100% juice, 25% juice, and water. Average monthly revenue from the machines did not decrease (see Table).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vending Machine Revenues in Philadelphia Schools (average sales per month)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prior to change in beverages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sayre Middle School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Philadelphia High School</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Milk in Schools

Recommendation: Promote and serve 1% and fat-free milk in schools.

Rationale: Schools should promote and serve 1% and fat-free milk. Milk is by far the largest source of saturated fat - the kind of fat that causes heart disease - in children's diets.\(^1\) While most people do not have heart attacks until they are in their 50s or 60s, heart disease has its roots in childhood. The beginnings of atherosclerosis are seen in kids as young as ten years old, and a quarter of children ages 5-10 years old already have high cholesterol, high blood pressure, or other risk factor for heart disease.\(^2\) Currently, two-thirds (63%) of the milk ordered by schools is high in fat - either 2% or whole milk.\(^3\) Switching to 1% or fat-free (skim) milk is an easy way to help children reduce their risk of heart disease.

Other Facts:

- Milk is an important source of many essential vitamins and minerals in Americans' diets, such as calcium, vitamins A and D, potassium and riboflavin. 1% and fat-free milk provide all the calcium and vitamins A and D found in whole and 2% milk, but with little or no saturated fat.

- 44 million Americans have either low bone mass or osteoporosis, which causes 1.5 million fractures and costs $17 billion a year in direct hospital and nursing home expenses.\(^4\) A healthy diet - especially adequate calcium consumption - and weight-bearing exercise can help build bone mass and prevent debilitating fractures.

- Since 98% of maximum bone density is reached by age 20, it is especially important that children get enough calcium.\(^4\) Median daily intake of calcium by teenage girls (700 mg) is about half of the recommended level (1,300 mg).\(^5\)

- If the average American switched from drinking whole milk to fat-free milk, his saturated fat intake would drop from 12% of calories to 10%, the level recommended by the federal government’s Dietary Guidelines.\(^6\)

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• A child who drinks one cup of 1% milk instead of 2% milk each school day would cut 47,000 calories and 11 pounds of fat from her diet during her 13 years in school.7

• Because milk is a staple in children’s diets, it is especially important to serve and promote low-fat options. Three servings (the recommended number for older children and teenagers) of 2% milk would use up about half of their day’s budget for saturated fat.

### Nutrient Content of Different Types of Milk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Calories 1 cup</th>
<th>Calories 3 cups</th>
<th>Saturated Fat (g) 1 cup</th>
<th>Saturated Fat (g) 3 cups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>480</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2%</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat-free</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• One cup of whole milk contains five grams of saturated fat, which is a quarter of the Daily Value (daily limit) listed on food labels. Because whole milk is so high in saturated fat, the government prohibits the labels of whole milk from bearing the claim that calcium can reduce the risk of osteoporosis. Fat-free and 1% milk are permitted to make that claim.

• Although sales of “lower-fat” milks (1% and fat-free combined) have doubled over the past 25 years, whole and 2% milk still make up 70% of total milk consumption.8

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7 Calculation based on the average fat content of 1% milk (2.6 grams per cup) and 2% milk (4.7 grams per cup) (USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory. Accessed at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp/Data/SR15/wtrank/sr15a204.pdf> on January 15, 2003); the average consumption of fluid milk (0.9 cups per day) (USDA Food Consumption [Per Capita] Data System. Accessed at <http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption/> on January 15, 2003); and 182 school days per year.

Organizing for Change

Strategies for Improving School Foods and Beverages

• Urge your school to adopt strong nutrition standards for foods and beverages sold out of vending machines, school stores, a la carte, fundraisers, and other venues outside of the school meal programs. Find Summary of Recommended Nutrition Standards for Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.) on p. 4.

• Work through PTA, community health council, or other groups to improve school foods and beverages.

• Meet with the person or group that makes decisions on school foods and beverages. For example, school meals are usually the responsibility of school food service, while vending could be managed by the principal, superintendent, food service, or athletic departments. See Tips for Communicating with Decision Makers on p. 23.

• Recruit a health professional - e.g. a pediatrician, family doctor, dietitian, nurse, or dentist - to testify before the school board on the connection between childhood obesity and soft drink consumption. See Sample Testimony on p. 52.

• Encourage your state legislators, governor, city council member, school board, or other elected official to work to enact legislation to improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages sold out of vending machines, a la carte, fundraisers, and other school venues. See Model Legislation based on SB19 passed in 2001 in California on p. 46.

How a Minnesota School Improved its Beverages

Assistant Principal Bryan Bass of North Community High School worked with the district’s Coca-Cola representative to provide healthier choices in vending machines. The school increased the number of vending machines from four to 16, stocked 13 machines with water or 100% juice, two with sports drinks, and one with soda. They also instituted competitive pricing, selling water for $0.75, sports drinks and 100% juices for $1.00, and soda and fruit drinks for $1.25. The water machines were strategically placed in high traffic-areas and students were allowed to drink water in the classroom. Today, soda sales are down, but vending profits have increased by almost $4,000 a year and the total number of cases of beverages sold has more than doubled from the previous school year, with water being the best seller. (Go to CSPI's Examples of Communities and States Improving School Foods and Beverages at www.cspinet.org/schoolfoods for more examples of school and state efforts to improve school foods.)
• Draw your community’s attention to the rising problem of childhood obesity, poor nutrition and school foods and beverages. See Generating Media Coverage on p. 27.

• Urge the food service director to promote and serve low-fat milk at your school. Order the 1% Or Less School Kit at http://cspinet.org/nutrition/schoolkit.html from CSPI and take a look at the fact sheet Milk in Schools on p. 19.

• Draw attention to junk food in schools by conducting a survey of what is sold in school vending machines and publishing the results. Use the Survey of School Vending Machines and How to Compile and Report Survey Results provided on pp. 42 and 43.

• Urge your school not to raise money by selling junk food to kids. Volunteer to organize a fundraiser demonstrating healthy ways to raise revenue, such as organizing a car wash, hosting a fun run, or selling raffle tickets. Creative Financing and Fun Fundraising lists ideas to boost revenue without harming children’s health, by the Shasta County Public Health Department in California. See the fact sheet on p. 44 or visit www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/PublicHealth/CommunityHealth/projlean/fundraiser1.pdf.

• Prevent your school or school district from entering into or renewing an exclusive soft-drink contract. See California Project LEAN’s organizing guide Taking the Fizz Out of Soda Contracts: A Guide to Community Action for opposing these contracts at: www.californiaprojectlean.org/consumer/takingfiz.html.

• Encourage your school to conduct a pilot program to improve school foods and beverages. This first step may be necessary to show that a change is possible and/or affordable. It may help to educate decision makers and lower barriers to improvement.

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How a Letter Made the Difference

In 2002, the Portsmouth, New Hampshire School Board eliminated drinks high in sugar and caffeine including: soda, sweetened lemonade, iced tea, and fruit drinks and replaced them with plain and flavored waters and 100% fruit juice. They also eliminated all candy bars and snacks with little nutritional value and replaced them with crackers, Chex mix, raisins, and fruit snacks. While the school system had been talking about this issue for some time, the catalyst for the change was a letter written to the Board by a local pediatrician. In his letter, he criticized the presence of soda and unhealthy snacks in vending machines at schools and pointed out the correlation with rising obesity rates in children.
Tips for Communicating with Decision Makers

Talk with the people who make the decisions regarding the foods and beverages in your school or school district. Whether you want your local principal to improve the nutritional quality of foods and beverages in vending machines, or your food service director to serve healthier, more appealing meals, or your Member of Congress to support increased funding for nutrition education, it is important to make your voice heard. There are several approaches that you can use to help get your message across to decision makers, including: writing letters, making phone calls, and meeting face-to-face.

Tips for Writing a Letter to Decision Makers
(see Sample Letter to the Superintendent of Schools on p. 56)

- Keep your letter brief.
- You don’t need to be an expert on the issue. Saying what is on your mind and speaking from your heart can be persuasive. However, including specific information or facts from studies, reports or newspaper articles will add to your letter. Check out the fact sheets Obesity and Other Diet-Related Diseases in Children on p. 6 and Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA School Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.) on p. 14 for more information on children’s diets and health.
- Briefly give reasons for your position, for example cite a specific example about your school or child.
- It is very important to clearly tell the decision maker what action you want taken.
- Ask a direct question about the decision maker’s position on the issue to help ensure that you receive a specific response.
- You can best show your concern by offering to provide further information on the subject or assistance in changing the school policy.

Examples of School Food and Beverage Decision Makers:
- Local School Food Service Directors
- Principals and Vice Principals
- Athletic Directors
- Superintendents of Schools
- School Board Members
- PTA
- City and County Legislators
- Mayors
- State Legislators
- Governors
- State Departments of Education Officials
- US Departments of Agriculture Officials
• Remember to thank the decision maker for past efforts. Expressions of thanks or compliments show that you are monitoring the official’s actions.

• Personalized letters sent through the mail, as opposed to faxes and emails, still seem to have the greatest impact on decision makers. If you send an email, include your mailing address first, making it clear that you are a member of the community represented by the decision maker or a parent in that school district.

**Tips for Telephoning Decision Makers** (see *Talking Points for Meetings and Phone Calls* on p. 53)

• Telephoning is an easy, quick, and effective method of influencing decision makers, especially when timing is important. While a telephone call is less likely to generate a response letter, a call closely preceding a key decision shows intense interest in the issue, and highlights that the decision maker’s actions are being closely monitored.

• You may not reach the official with your call, but you will have the chance to register your views. Often, your call will be relayed by a receptionist or an aide who deals directly with the issue.

• In preparation for your call, have a clear idea of the points you want to make and the specific action you want the decision maker to take.

**Tips for Meeting with Decision Makers** (see *Talking Points for Meetings and Phone Calls* on p. 53 and *Myths and Realities: Countering Arguments for Offering Low-Nutrition Foods and Beverages in Schools* on p. 54)

One of the most effective forms of communication with decision makers is face-to-face communication. Such a meeting requires the school principal, assistant superintendent of schools, or the food service director to deal more directly with your concerns and increases his or her understanding of the importance of the issue to you and others. And a meeting also gives you the chance to better understand their position.

**Before the Meeting**

Attending the meeting alone or inviting other people to attend the meeting with you can both be effective. A group meeting shows that the issue is not simply a personal concern but an issue of importance to other individuals and groups in the community. Invite friends, other parents, health professionals, or members of organizations that might share your concern and further your cause. For example, ask a pediatrician to join you to lend his or her expertise if you want to discuss reducing junk food in school vending machines.
or a dentist to discuss banning soda in schools. (See section on Working With and Engaging Others on p. 33 for ideas.)

Schedule the meeting. Depending on the nature of the office, you may be able to request a meeting by phone or you may need to send a written meeting request. If that is the case, fax, email or mail a letter. Include a summary of the issues you want to address, a brief rationale and the names of people and/or organizations that will be attending the meeting.

Preparing for the Meeting

Prepare an outline for the meeting. You may have only a few minutes to state your case, so be prepared. Anticipate questions that the decision maker might ask and draft questions you will want to ask them in return.

Designate a meeting leader if you are going as a group and decide ahead of time who will make key points and ask questions. A rehearsal is helpful and can be done in person or by conference call.

Prepare materials to be given to the decision maker and any of his or her staff who might attend the meeting. Possible materials include:

- The fact sheet Obesity and Other Diet-Related Diseases in Children on p. 6
- The fact sheet Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA School Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.) on p. 14,
- Copies of reports such as Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks are Harming Americans’ Health which can be found at: www.cspinet.org/sodapop/liquid_candy.htm
- Newspaper editorials or published letters to the editor supporting your position
- A copy of Model Legislation on p. 46
- A Sample Resolution on p. 50
- A list of supporting organizations and individuals (find examples of possible partners in the Working With and Engaging Others section on p. 33)
- More materials and suggestions are in the Additional Resources list on p. 62.

During the Meeting

Begin by politely introducing yourself; if there is a group of people with you, all members should introduce themselves. Establish common ground between yourself and the decision maker, perhaps by expressing appreciation for a recent decision or public statement the policy maker has made.

Present your views precisely, politely, and persuasively. Start by outlining the action you want the decision maker to take and then give your arguments. Know beforehand what you want to say, and come prepared with relevant information and facts. Keep your presentation short - i.e., no more than five minutes. Allow the decision maker to ask questions as you go along, and answer respectfully and thoughtfully with relevant facts, personal stories, and specific information. Don't
worry if you do not know the answer to a question, assure the decision maker that you will find the information and send it as soon as possible.

**Ask where the decision maker stands on the issue.** Find out what action he or she intends to take. Press for specifics if you feel the decision maker is evading the issue. If it is immediately clear that he or she agrees with you, express your appreciation and encourage the decision maker to play a leadership role regarding the issue.

Listen carefully to what the decision maker says. Be careful not to automatically tune out or get discouraged if you hear criticism in his or her questions or comments. Instead, use the questions as a barometer of his or her concerns about the issue and as an opportunity to further clarify the issue.

End the meeting by thanking the decision maker for talking with you and for considering your concerns. Talk about next steps and confirm that you will send any additional information that you have offered to them.

**After the Meeting**

Send a note of thanks to the decision maker and any staff members, summarizing your position on the issue, and providing any additional information you promised to provide. If appropriate, let any other individuals or organization you are working with know how the meeting went and where the decision maker stands on the issue.

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**School Staff and Parents Propose a Pilot Project**

Aptos Middle School, known as San Francisco’s most diverse middle school, made the decision to provide healthier school foods and beverages. Parents and staff proposed a pilot project to the superintendent who readily agreed. The move was undertaken after noticing that a number of children were making lunch entirely out of soda and chips. Some of the new healthier options offered at lunch include: fresh deli sandwiches, sushi, pasta, salads, homemade soups, and fajitas. Along with soda and chips, gone are Slim Jims, nachos, pre-packaged burritos, mega-cheeseburgers, French fries, hot wings, and oversized pizza. The Physical Education Department reports that replacing soda with healthier choices in the locker room vending machines has resulted in an increase in revenue.
Generating Media Coverage

The media inform the public about issues, influence public opinion, can promote timely citizen action, and can exert direct pressure on decision makers. Decision makers follow their local media carefully, especially coverage of their own activities. As a policy tool, the media provide the opportunity to get the word out in the following ways: news stories, feature stories, editorials, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, radio call-in shows, and talk shows. Keeping your issue visible in the news also encourages others to help you in your cause.

How to Get in the News

Meet with key reporters at newspapers and TV and radio stations to tell them about your efforts to improve school foods and beverages (see Talking Points for Meetings and Phone Calls on p. 53 and Myths and Realities: Countering Arguments for Offering Low-Nutrition Foods and Beverages in Schools on p. 54). Keep them informed about new developments.

• Supply the press with regular and reliable ideas for news stories such as:
  
  − Conduct a survey of what is sold in school vending machines (see Survey of School Vending Machines and How to Compile and Report Survey Results on pp. 42 and 43) and announce your results to the press either in a news release or at a press conference (see sample Press Release on p. 59).
  
  − Informally let the press know that you will be meeting with the superintendent of schools to discuss your issue (see section on Tips for Communicating with Decision Makers on p. 23). Let key reporters know how the meeting went.
  
  − Testify before the school board on the connection between childhood obesity and soft-drink and junk-food consumption (see Sample Testimony on p. 52). Notify the press in advance that you will be testifying and supply them with a copy of your testimony.
  
  − Attend a school board or PTA meeting where your issue is being discussed. Afterward, give a report to the press about the meeting.
  
  − Ask a school board or PTA member to introduce a resolution to ban soda in schools (see the Sample Resolution on p. 50). Invite the press to the meeting and supply them with a copy of the resolution.
- Organize a fundraiser for your school that demonstrates an alternative to selling junk food in schools. TV cameras love action, so host a fun run, talent show, or all-night-skate-a-thon and invite a TV reporter to do a feature story (see Creative Financing and Fun Fundraising on p. 44).

- Invite a newspaper reporter to write a story or a television reporter to do a feature piece on what foods are offered in schools and what kids are eating from a la carte lines, vending machines, school stores, or stadiums, or on what is sold in school fundraisers.

- Set up a display of soft drink cans or one-pound boxes of sugar in a prominent location in the community (library, town hall, at school, etc.) to demonstrate the amount of soda or sugar children consume annually.

  - For example, the average child drinks one and half servings of soda pop per day (USDA Changes in Children’s Diets: 1989-1991 to 1994-1996). This is equal to 365 cans of soda or 31 one-pound boxes of sugar per year.

- National news stories can be “brought home” to the local community. Keep an eye on national news stories covered on the TV news or in your newspaper and add a local spin. For example, after a story comes out on a new obesity study, ask reporters to write about how school foods and beverages may be contributing.

- For news stories, timeliness is critical. To publicize an upcoming event, send an advisory one week before the event and follow it up with a reminder one to two days before the event. Contact editors and reporters directly via phone, fax, or email; do not just leave a press release at their front desks.

- For television news coverage, provide interesting visuals, events or happenings, such as testifying before the school board, a display of soda cans, or gathering signatures on petitions at the local grocery store.

- Some local television and radio stations have “talk” or “magazine” format shows about subjects ranging from gardening to government. Find out which shows are taped locally and open to guests. Call the producer for that show and arrange for a spokesperson for your issue to be a guest on the show.

- Radio call-in shows often have open discussions, which offer the opportunity for you to simply call from home and discuss issues on the show without having to contact the station in advance. Make your call brief, to the point, and supported by the facts. Encourage listeners to take action on the issue.
Working with the Press

• Remember that television or radio news stories are often short. When making a prepared statement to the press or speech that you hope the news will cover, summarize your main points in one or two initial sentences so that your message has a better chance of being aired. Keep statements at press conferences to between one and three minutes.

• Attracting media coverage is a matter of being enthusiastic, friendly, cooperative, and well-informed about the issue. It also takes persistence. Do not become discouraged if you do not get coverage of your issue every time you try - editors and reporters must balance your issue with all the other news that is happening on a given day.

Tips for Writing a Press Release (see Sample Press Release on p. 59)

• News releases should begin with a short, captivating, newspaper-style headline.

• Five questions should be answered in the first or second sentence (the lead): who, what, when, where, and why.

• Write short sentences and short paragraphs (about two to three sentences per paragraph).

• Paragraphs are in order of declining importance. This structure permits an editor to cut the story from the bottom up if space is tight and not lose important elements of the story. It is also important to catch an editor’s interest early by making the most important and interesting points first.

• Give the exact dates of events. Use “Monday, October 1, 2003” rather than “next Monday” or “tomorrow.” Provide the address as well as the name of a meeting place.

• Never editorialize within the text of a news release. An opinion expressed in the release should be attributed to someone through a quote.

• The name and phone number of the person whom the press should contact with questions about the release should be in the upper right-hand corner.

• Place the date of the release in the upper left-hand corner. The date can be either for immediate release or embargoed until a specific date, indicated with the title “For Release on Monday, October 1, 2003” or “For Immediate Release.”

• Type “###” under the last line of the release (this is a standard symbol for indicating the end of a release).

• Before mailing or delivery, check carefully for accuracy of content and typing.
Letters to the Editor (see Sample Letter to the Editor on p. 58)

A letter to the editor is a good vehicle for educating the public and decision makers about an issue. Letters also help editorial writers gauge the interest in the community for particular issues and may stimulate them to take an editorial stance on an issue. Letters to the editor may be sent to professional publications and trade magazines as well as newspapers. Do not neglect the weekly suburban and community newspapers in your area.

Tips for Writing a Letter to the Editor

• All letters should be typed, if possible, or neatly printed and submitted by U.S. mail, email or fax. Letters should include the author’s address, phone numbers, and email address. Newspapers do not print letters from people whom they cannot contact to confirm authorship.

• An effective format for a letter is: a topic paragraph, a paragraph elaborating on the writer’s views, and a conclusion. Keep your letter short, to no more than 150-250 words, and be aware that editors may cut your letter for space reasons.

• Try to keep the letter’s tone lively, yet logical. Bland and dull letters, emotional outbursts, or personal attacks are unlikely to be printed.

• Do not make false or misleading statements. Be sure to verify facts and quoted material in the letter.

• Timing is important. A letter has the best chance of being printed if the issue you are writing about has been in the news recently. Be creative in looking for opportunities. For example, tie your letter to a recent article on childhood obesity.

• It helps to give your letter a local slant. Point out a decision maker’s position or the work that local citizens are doing on this issue.

• To get the maximum effect from your letter, send a copy, particularly if it is printed in a newspaper, to the decision maker, school, or agency whom you are trying to influence (and to CSPI!).
Getting Your Newspaper to Publish an Editorial

Convincing the editor or editorial board of your local paper to run an editorial in support of your issue can be particularly useful. Editorials can be one of the most persuasive ways of influencing decision makers and enable you to reach a large audience with your message.

Tips for Meeting with Editorial Writers and Editorial Boards

- Determine if the newspaper has taken a position on the issue. If they have already editorialized on your issue, you may want to plan your visit with the editor or board for when you have new or timely information to share, for example, when the school board is meeting on the issue.

- You can go to the meeting alone. However, enlisting others to attend shows the editorial writers that the concern for the issue is broad based. Keep the group small - no more than four or five people. (See Working With and Engaging Others section for ideas on p. 33.)

- Make an appointment by calling or sending a brief note explaining what you would like to discuss, the timeliness of the issue, and who will attend the meeting. You also could include a memo to the editor, a press release, or a fact sheet with your note.

- Prepare background materials for the meeting. Possible materials include:
  - The fact sheet Obesity and Other Diet-Related Diseases in Children on p. 6
  - The fact sheet Foods and Beverages Sold Outside of the USDA School Meal Programs (Vending, a la Carte, Fundraisers, etc.) on p. 14
  - Copies of reports such as Liquid Candy: How Soft Drinks are Harming Americans’ Health found at www.cspinet.org/sodapop/liquid_candy.htm
  - Newspaper editorials or published letters to the editor that support your position
  - A list of supporting organizations and individuals (find examples of possible partners in the Working With and Engaging Others section on p. 33)
  - More materials and suggestions are in the Additional Resources list on p. 62

- During the meeting, state your points clearly (see Talking Points for Meetings and Phone Calls on p. 53 and Myths and Realities: Countering Arguments for Offering Low-Nutrition Foods and Beverages in Schools on p. 54). Encourage the editor to write about the issue. Remember that while you want to be well-informed, you do not have to be an expert. If he or she does not agree with your position, then state your views clearly, respond to questions, try to answer objections, and leave behind your materials. Do not engage in a lengthy, heated or pointless debate.

- After the meeting, send a note of thanks to the editor and answer any questions that you were not able to answer during the meeting. Let other organizations you are working with know how the meeting went. If the newspaper writes an editorial, send a copy to the decision makers or agency whom you are trying to influence (and to CSPI)!
Other Activities for Reaching Out to Your Community

Whether you are urging your local school board to improve nutrition on campuses or asking your state legislator to support legislation to implement nutrition standards for competitive foods, building your case among a broad constituency can bolster your efforts. Outreach activities could include:

- **Handing out Leaflets/Flyers** - Create a persuasive, informational piece on your issue to hand out at a school board meeting, local shopping center, community fair, political forum, town meeting, or other community event. Leaflets/flyers also can be posted on bulletin boards at your place of worship, school, supermarket, public library, and other public locations. (See Sample Flyer/Leaflet on p. 61.)

- **Circulate a Petition/Open Letter** - Gathering a number of signatures on a document can influence decision makers, and asking citizens to sign a letter or petition is an excellent way to introduce the issue to others and generate interest within your community. The signed petition also can be shared with the press to show community interest in an issue and perhaps generate press coverage of your issue. (See Sample Petition/Open Letter on p. 60.)

- **Organize a “Coffee” in Your Home** - This can be an opportunity to not only inform your friends and neighbors about an issue, but to enlist their assistance and advice. Be certain that you are prepared to give each person information, as well as instructions on how they can help - whether that means that you provide them with a sample letter to send to their school board members, the food service director, or legislators or copies of a petition to circulate. Make sure the snacks and beverages you provide are healthy! (See Talking Points for Meetings and Phone Calls on p. 53.)

- **Offer to Speak at Community Events** - You can offer to give a short presentation to community groups (Kiwanis, Lions, Rotary, League of Women Voters, Jr. League, etc.), religious groups, at PTA meetings, school health councils, senior citizen centers, or any other community organization that invites outside speakers.

- **Raise the Issue at Public Meetings** - Attend town hall meetings held by local, state, or federal legislators and raise the issue of school foods and beverages.
Working With and Engaging Others

Individual action can make a difference, but you may find the involvement of others is needed to convince decision makers to improve the quality of foods and beverages in your school. You can work with and seek the support of parents, community leaders, health professionals, who you think might share your goals. In your community, you may be able to work with existing networks of individuals or groups, or you may need to bring together a new group.

Working with Existing Networks/Organizations

Sometimes you will find that there are existing school, health, or other interested groups or coalitions that you can work through or with to improve school foods and beverages.

- Work through the PTA either at the school or district level by joining a committee, making a presentation, or getting a resolution passed.
- Work with a local school health council. The council usually includes members from within the school system, health department, and community members such as doctors, dentists, nutritionists, and non-profit organizations like the American Cancer Society and American Heart Association. The council usually reports to the county Superintendent and the county health officer.

Types of Alliances

- A loose arrangement of parents, healthcare professionals, organizations, etc. that share a common goal (for example: a list of individuals or organizations that sign on to a letter to the school board but do not meet formally).
- An on-going network of individuals and/or groups that share common goals on one or more issues.
- A separate organization made up of individuals and/or groups that share broader goals with its own organizational identity and perhaps with funding, letterhead, and staff.

Ideas for Getting Others on Board

- Identify individuals and/or organizations who might be interested in the issue and invite them to join your effort.
- Call, write or meet with individuals or representatives from organizations to familiarize them with the substance of the issue and with the goals of your effort.
- Meet with existing coalitions to discuss and develop a strategy to achieve your goals.
Finding Help

- Look on-line, in the phonebook, or with the local chamber of commerce, which often has a list of local organizations.

- Approach individuals and groups that you know have influence within your community or have expertise on an aspect of the issue. Recruiting a health care professional brings credibility to a meeting with decision makers and editorial writers by turning vague complaints about health-related topics into specifics backed up by medical practice and science.

- Do not ignore a local group because its national organization has not yet taken a stand on the issue. In many organizations the local chapter can decide its own stand on local issues. Also, search out local groups that are not affiliated with a national organization such as neighborhood groups or civic associations.

- If an individual or organization cannot formally participate, ask them to communicate on their own with decision makers. For example, the local public health department may not be able to take a position on legislation, but it might be able to develop a fact sheet on the link between soda and childhood obesity which could be helpful to your cause.

Combining Strengths & Working Together

- As a group, individuals and organizations might work together to influence and change policy in a number of ways, including: joint letters or visits with decision makers; public statements or press releases; organizing phone banks or letter writing campaigns; sponsoring public forums; circulating petitions, etc.

- Individuals or organizations that are not able to participate fully may still be able and willing to educate and activate people through newsletters, email networks, meetings, and other means, or develop fact sheets and other materials.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Working as a Group

Creating an alliance with other stakeholders demonstrates to decision makers that a broad group of individuals and/or organizations share a common goal. Other advantages of working together are that you can pool resources and expertise, as well as share the work load.

While there are many important advantages to working with others, there are some disadvantages as well. For example coalitions can add to your workload. Building and maintaining a coalition can take time and resources away from working directly on an issue. In addition, group decision making and consensus building take time and may require you to make concessions in the substance of what you are advocating or the methods by which you work.
Potential Organizations and Individuals with which to Partner

- PTAs, teachers, principals, and other school officials
- City, county, and state health departments
- Local school food service directors
- Health professionals, e.g., dietitians, nutritionists, nurses, dental hygienists, dentists, medical doctors, etc.
- State and local affiliates of national organizations, such as:
  - American Cancer Society
  - American Dental Association
  - American Diabetes Association
  - American Dietetic Association
  - American Heart Association
  - American Public Health Association
- City, county, and state Cooperative Extension Services
- Large health care providers, such as hospitals or HMOs
- Community food and nutrition programs and local organizations involved in domestic and world hunger problems, such as WIC clinics, food stamp offices, church groups, and food banks
- Food cooperatives
- Produce industry
- Local community service organizations (e.g., Lions Club, Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club, Knights of Columbus, etc.)
- Community development corporations
- Local colleges or universities
- Public Interest Research Groups (PIRG) based at colleges and universities
- Women’s groups and clubs (e.g., American Association of University Women, League of Women Voters, National Organization of Women, Junior League, Organization of Business and Professional Women)
- Local or state Wellness Councils (which also could provide a list of worksites that have wellness programs and which may be interested in health issues)
- Local chapters of the NAACP
- Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops
- YMCA and YWCA
- recreational centers and parks