

Model Guidelines

for
Health &
Wellness

Meeting the Requirements
of the Child Nutrition and
WIC Reauthorization Act



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LEGISLATION PASSED TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND WELLNESS



In recognition of the declining nutritional intake and increasing obesity in children, **Congress passed the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, which requires, by law, that by the first day of the school year in 2006, each school district participating in the National**

School Lunch Program adopt local school wellness policies that address healthy eating and physical activity. The Act aims to improve children's health by expanding the availability of nutritious meals and snacks to more children in schools while also promoting increased activity. The law places the responsibility of developing a wellness policy at the local level so the individual needs of each school district can be addressed.

School districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness. School districts must also establish nutrition standards for all foods that are available on each school campus during the school day, with the objective of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity. School districts are required to measure the implementation of the wellness policy and to involve a broad group of individuals in its development.

The Act clearly demonstrates Congress' commitment to seeing school districts make efforts to prevent and reduce childhood obesity.

Legislation Highlights

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 states that by the first day of the school year beginning after June 30, 2006, each local educational agency participating in the National School Lunch Program shall establish a local school wellness policy that:

- includes goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and a program designed to promote student wellness;
- includes nutrition guidelines for all foods available on each school campus during the school day;
- encourages the increased consumption of a variety of healthy foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products, through new initiatives to creatively market healthful foods, such as salad bars and fruit bars;
- improves student nutrition behaviors on the school campus, including an increase of healthier meal choices by students, as evidenced by greater inclusion of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean dairy and protein in meal and snack selections;
- reinforces the regulations and guidance issued in the School Lunch Act; and
- involves parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, and the public in the development of the school wellness policy.



HELPING CHILDREN ACHIEVE BALANCE

Poor eating habits and sedentary lifestyles are more prevalent in children today than in the past two decades. The percentage of overweight children aged 6-11 years has more than doubled in the past 20 years and among adolescents aged 12-19, the figure has more than tripled.¹ Less than 40 percent of children and adolescents in America meet the Dietary Guidelines for saturated fat,² and almost 80 percent of young people do not eat the recommended number of servings of fruits and vegetables. Factors contributing to this trend include large portion sizes and the over-consumption of nutrient-poor foods, as well as children's decrease in level of activity due in part to increased use of computers, decline in participation in extracurricular activities, and a generally more sedentary lifestyle. The percentage of high school students who attended physical education classes daily decreased from 42 percent in 1991 to 25 percent in 1995, and remained stable at that level until 2003 (28 percent).³



The burden placed on our society by obesity and related chronic diseases is enormous. Since 1980, obesity rates have doubled in children and tripled in adolescents and we have already begun to see the impact of the obesity epidemic on other illnesses like diabetes and heart disease.⁴

¹ Journal of the American Medical Association 2002, 2004

² USDA Surveys 1994-1996, 1998

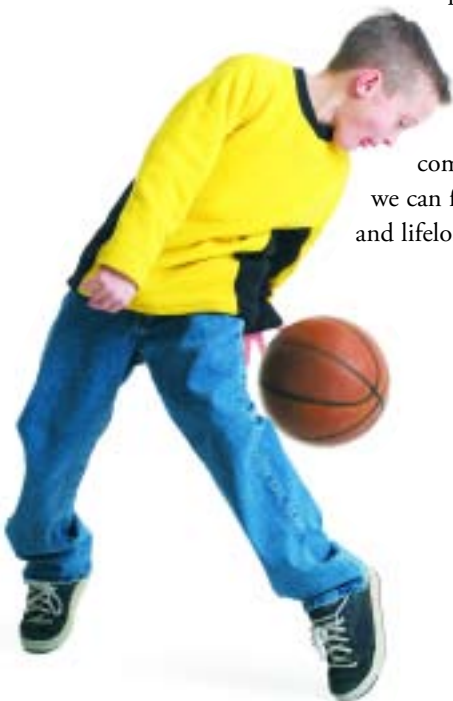
³ Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report 2004

⁴ William H. Dietz Statement before Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee on Public Health, U.S. Senate, May 21, 2002 from CDC Resource Guide for Nutrition and Physical Activity Interventions to Prevent Obesity and Other Chronic Diseases

It is critical that children learn and adopt healthy behaviors while they are young, including establishing better eating habits. Tackling this issue at an early age helps young people develop good habits before they face health concerns. Poor health habits are more difficult to change at later ages.

The school setting can play a major role in children's health and nutrition habits, either through the examples provided by teachers and other adults, the food available in the school cafeteria and other areas on campus, or through exposure to behaviors of teachers and other students. An effective nutrition and wellness policy can help students learn the skills they need to make healthy choices.

Encouraging physical activity and good nutrition are paramount. By implementing a comprehensive policy—that includes consideration of and sensitivity to students, schools, families and the community environment—we can foster good nutrition and lifelong healthy choices.



- Focus on cups instead of servings.
- Increase servings from dairy group to 3 cups daily. Children 2 to 8 years should consume 2 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products. Children 9 years of age and older should consume 3 cups per day of fat-free or low-fat milk or equivalent milk products.
- Consume whole-grain products often; at least half the grains should be whole grains.
- Choose fiber-rich fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners, such as amounts suggested by the DASH eating plan and USDA food guidance system.
- Consume sugar- and starch-containing foods and beverages less frequently to reduce calories.
- Keep total fat intake between 25 to 35 percent of calories for children and adolescents 4 to 18 years of age, with most fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids, such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.

IMPLEMENTING GUIDELINES FOR YOUR SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

Since one size does not fit all, efforts to improve children's health must be attentive to culture, language, and differences in social, economic, and physical environments and should be targeted to reach high-risk populations. Many organizations and agencies are developing recommendations and guidelines for schools and school districts to consider as they contemplate their local policies.

The following guidelines were developed to assist school districts as they create policies for their schools that will address the key issues outlined in the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act. The guidelines allow school districts flexibility in designing policies to meet the unique school characteristics within their own district, including school size, multicultural populations, rural versus urban schools, language differences, financial issues, and other community variants. School districts are encouraged to use these guidelines as a basis for developing their own comprehensive health and wellness programs.

Districts are also encouraged to gather feedback



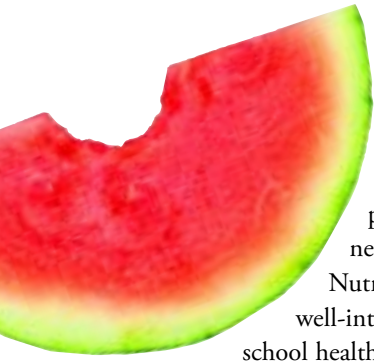
from community members and explore other resources outlined in this document. Forming a Local Wellness Committee (p. 18) will provide schools additional guidance in establishing policies that are appropriate for their districts. As districts and schools develop and implement policies, it is important that they meet local, state and federal laws and guidelines.

These model guidelines were developed with input from the following organizations:

- *American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD)*
- *American Association of School Administrators (AASA)*
- *Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO)*
- *National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP)*
- *National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP)*
- *National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE)*
- *National PTA*
- *National School Boards Association (NSBA)*
- *School Nutrition Association (SNA)*

Additionally, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) collaborated in the document's review and rollout. It is the hope of all these organizations that these guidelines will help local districts in developing policies that will meet the needs of their communities, as well as local, state and federal guidelines. The guidelines are part of a growing body of tools and resources designed to support local education agencies and their partners in meeting the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

NUTRITION EDUCATION



1) School programs should ensure that students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 receive nutrition education that provides the knowledge they need to adopt healthy lifestyles.

Nutrition education should be well-integrated within a comprehensive school health education program and should include instruction that helps students learn more about the importance of various food groups; caloric, sugar and fat intake; healthy cooking methods; the recognition of the role media play in marketing and advertising foods and beverages; and the relationship of a balanced diet and regular exercise to a healthy lifestyle.

2) Nutrition concepts should be reinforced by all school personnel, and should be integrated into various subject areas, such as literature, science, social studies and other subjects.

3) Nutrition education should include reinforcement of the importance of physical activity and the health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle.



- 4) Every school district should utilize the services of a qualified nutrition professional to lead the effort to implement nutrition education.
- 5) Staff primarily responsible for nutrition education should be properly trained and regularly participate in professional development activities to effectively deliver quality nutrition education.
- 6) School districts should provide educational information and encourage healthy eating and physical activity for families, both within the home and outside the home. Family members should be engaged as a critical part of the team responsible for teaching children about health and nutrition.



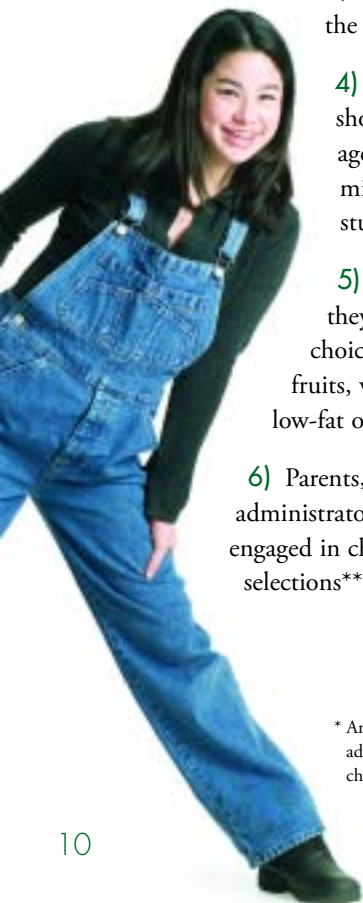
FOODS AND BEVERAGES SERVED/ SOLD DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

- 1) Foods and beverages offered over the course of a school week should be nutrient-dense, including whole grain products and fiber-rich fruits and vegetables to provide students a variety of choices to maintain a balanced diet.
- 2) Foods and beverages available during the school day should include a variety of healthy choices that are of excellent quality, appealing to students, and served at the proper temperature.
- 3) Foods and beverages available during the school day should minimize use of trans and saturated fats, sodium and sugar as defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- 4) Food and beverage providers should offer modest portion sizes age-appropriate* for elementary, middle, and high school students, respectively.
- 5) If a la carte foods are available, they should include a variety of choices of nutritious foods, such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or non-fat dairy foods.
- 6) Parents, teachers, students, school administrators and school boards should be engaged in choosing the competitive food selections** for their local schools.

* An age-appropriate diet is one that provides adequate nutrition and is appropriate for a child's state of development.

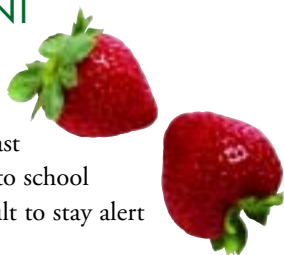
- 7) Nutrition information for products offered in snack bars, a la carte, vending and school stores should be readily available at the product display.
- 8) Drinking water and hand-washing facilities should be conveniently available for students at all times.
- 9) Carbonated beverages should not be available to elementary school students during the school day.
- 10) Carbonated beverages should only be available in middle and high schools where a full array of milk, juices, water and other products are available.
- 11) Classroom snacks should reinforce the importance of healthy choices.
- 12) Classroom celebrations, especially in elementary schools, should encourage healthy choices, and portion control. Parents and families should receive guidance from the school on foods that are appropriate for such celebrations.
- 13) Schools should encourage fundraisers that promote positive health habits such as the sale of non-food and nutritious food items, as well as fundraising to support physical activity events.
- 14) Foods and beverages sold at fundraisers should reinforce the importance of healthy choices.

** USDA defines competitive foods as foods offered at school, other than meals served through USDA's school meal programs—school lunch, school breakfast, and after-school snack programs.



FOOD ENVIRONMENT

- 1) Students should be encouraged to start each day with a healthy breakfast since children who come to school hungry may find it difficult to stay alert and learn.
- 2) Bus schedules and morning breaks should be coordinated to allow students ample time before class to eat breakfast if they haven't eaten at home. If a full breakfast program is not feasible, schools should consider having healthy breakfast items available that students can purchase on campus in school stores or vending machines.
- 3) Lunch periods should be scheduled as near the middle of the school day as possible.
- 4) Recess for elementary grades should be scheduled before lunch, if at all possible.
- 5) Students should be provided sufficient time to eat during meal periods, with at least 10 minutes for breakfast and 20 minutes for lunch from the time the student is seated.
- 6) Dining areas should be attractive and include enough seating areas to accommodate all students who would like to sit and eat lunch, as well as enough serving areas so that students do not have to spend too much time waiting in line.



- 7) Students should be reminded to wash their hands before meals (to prevent the spread of germs and reduce the risk of illness).



- 8) Districts and schools should set policy on the display of corporate logos and trademarks on school grounds and ensure that companies adhere to the policy.
- 9) Promotional activities should incorporate nutrition education and be connected to activities that encourage physical activity, academic achievement, and positive youth development. Additionally, they should be limited to programs that are requested by school officials to support teaching and learning.



FOOD SERVICE OPERATIONS



- 1) School districts should develop a coordinated and comprehensive outreach, promotion and pricing plan to ensure maximum participation in the school meal program, and should ensure that all eligible children qualify and receive free and reduced-price meals.
- 2) Schools should ensure that students eligible to receive free or reduced-price meals and milk are not treated differently from other students or easily identified by their peers.
- 3) Schools should employ a food service director who is properly qualified, certified and/or credentialed according to professional standards to administer the school food service program and satisfy reporting requirements.
- 4) All food service personnel should have adequate pre-service training, participate in ongoing

professional development and hold a state-issued or equivalent training certificate.

- 5) School food service providers should adopt methods of cooking that decrease fat, calorie, and sodium levels in food.
- 6) Schools should plan menus that, over the course of a week, will meet the nutrition standards recommended in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- 7) Schools should involve families and community organizations in the development of policies and programs to ensure that school meal options are culturally sensitive and meet special dietary needs.
- 8) Schools should ensure that required and effective food safety practices are applied to all foods prepared, sold or served at school or school-sponsored events.



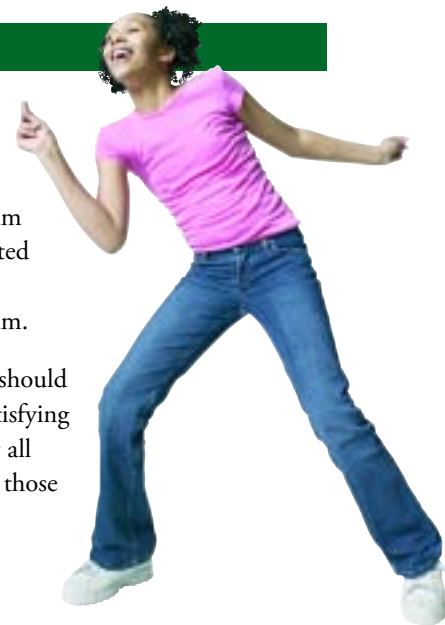
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 1) Schools should ensure that every student from kindergarten through twelfth grade receives regular, age-appropriate* quality physical education.
- 2) Schools should facilitate students' participation in at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity in accordance with nationally recommended guidelines.
- 3) All physical education classes should be taught by certified physical education teachers.
- 4) Physical education should be designed to build interest and proficiency in the skills, knowledge and attitudes essential to a lifelong physically active lifestyle. It should include providing information, fostering a positive atmosphere, encouraging self-discipline, developing motor skills, and promoting activities that can be carried out over the course of students' lives.



* Age-appropriate physical education is activity that utilizes movement concepts, motor skills, cognitive skills and intensity appropriate for a child's state of development.

- 5) The physical education curriculum should be coordinated with the health education curriculum.
- 6) Physical education should provide safe and satisfying physical activity for all students, including those with special needs.
- 7) Whenever possible, elementary schools should provide daily recess that encourages physical activity.
- 8) Schools should not use participation or non-participation in physical education classes or recess as a way to punish or discipline students.
- 9) After-school programs should include supervised, age-appropriate physical activities that appeal to a variety of interests.
- 10) Schools should ensure that students have adequate space and equipment to participate in structured physical activity.
- 11) Schools should ensure that physical activity facilities on school grounds are kept safe and well-maintained.
- 12) Schools should provide information to parents to help them promote and incorporate physical activity and healthy eating into their children's lives.



LOCAL WELLNESS COMMITTEE

- 1) School districts should have a diverse Local Wellness Committee comprised of parents, teachers, food service staff, school administrators, students, school board members, and others from various socio-economic, cultural and ethnic communities to create policies and routinely evaluate, modify and improve their effectiveness.
- 2) School districts should recruit community members for the Local Wellness Committees who are involved in efforts to improve the overall health and well-being of children and youth. These stakeholders can share and apply lessons learned from other programs.
- 3) The Local Wellness Committee should monitor and evaluate the school district's policies to ensure they are properly implemented and progress is made in improving and maintaining students' nutrition and physical activity patterns.
- 4) School districts should encourage each school to set up a school-based committee to oversee the implementation of these policies at the school level.
- 5) School districts should supplement their efforts by seeking nutrition and physical activity partnerships with relevant community organizations and corporate citizens.
- 6) Because school staff and support personnel serve as role models, school districts should encourage activities and create programs that support healthy lifestyles for all school district employees.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

- 1) Prior to developing new health and wellness guidelines, school districts should assess the nutrition and physical activity needs of students. These assessments should assist in identifying and prioritizing needs, shaping new policies, and providing a basis for formative and summative assessments of student health before and after implementation of the new policies. Local Wellness Committees should consider partnering with a local university, hospital or health care organization to conduct these assessments.
- 2) School districts should designate one or more persons with operational responsibility to ensure that schools are meeting the policy requirements.
- 3) To satisfy the requirements of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the Local Wellness Committee should monitor the school district's implementation of the wellness policy and evaluate student health and activities. Such monitoring will help gauge whether or not policies have in fact been implemented, whether or not they are effective, and their overall impact on student health. The results may also highlight areas in need of further change and help shape future local policy. School districts are encouraged to meet with their Local Wellness Committee at least once or twice per year and provide evaluation data to assess whether the policies are remaining effective in improving student health.



Implementing Guidelines for Your School Wellness Policy

www.nassp.org/s_nassp/index.asp
www.aasa.org
www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools
www.schoolnutrition.org
www.pta.org
www.eatright.org
www.ccsso.org
www.naspeinfo.org
<http://aaheinfo.org>
www.serve.org/nche/downloads/nutrition_act_2004.pdf
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/108-265.pdf
www.ncsl.org/statefed/humserv/SummaryS2507.htm
<http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/108th/education/childnutrition/billsummaryfinal.htm>

Nutrition Education

www.eatright.org/Public/Other/index_adaposchild.cfm
www.schoolnutrition.org
www.sne.org

Foods and Beverages Served/Sold During the School Day

www.usda.gov/cnpp/dietary_guidelines.html
www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines
www.eatright.org/Public/NutritionInformation/92.cfm
www.chccs.k12.nc.us/StudentServices/HealthServices/FundraisingIdeas.pdf
http://pasaorg.tripod.com/nutrition/pdfs/nonfood_fundraising.pdf
www.reacheverychild.com/feature/fundraisers.html
www.gao.gov/new.items/d04673.pdf
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/MakingItHappen/index.htm

Food Environment

<http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/newsroom/jcnm/02spring/conklin>
www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/fithealthy.html
www.nfsmi.org/Information/eating_at_school.pdf
www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr34/fanrr34-5/fanrr34-5.pdf
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/state_policies_2002.pdf
www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Lunch/CompetitiveFoods/report_congress.htm
www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines
www.caru.org/guidelines/index.asp

Food Service Operations

www.schoolnutrition.org
www.nasbe.org/HealthySchools/healthy_eating.html
www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html
www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/NationalInitiative/guide.htm

Physical Activity and Physical Education

<http://naspeinfo.org>
www.emc.cmich.edu/BrainBreaks/default.htm

Local Wellness Committee

www.corpschoolpartners.org
www.actionforhealthykids.org/html/main.htm
www.emc.cmich.edu/mm/default.htm
<http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/companion/index/#chapters>

Monitoring and Evaluation

<http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/shi>
www.aecf.org/publications/data/using_external_evaluators.pdf
<http://ctb.ku.edu>
www.wkkf.org/Programming/Extra.aspx?CID=281&ID=3
www.wkkf.org/Pubs/Tools/Evaluation/Pub770.pdf
http://nahic.ucsf.edu/index.php/companion/article/chapter_4

