



A PATCHWORK OF PROGRESS

Changes in Overweight and Obesity Among California 5th, 7th, and 9th Graders, 2005-2010

Policy Recommendations

The epidemic of childhood obesity will not be solved by calling for individual behavior change alone. To address this health crisis, state and local leaders must address the conditions in schools and communities that contribute to the epidemic and undermine parents' efforts to protect their children's health.

Immediate policy steps must be taken to:

1. Eliminate the sale and distribution of unhealthy (high fat, high sugar, high calorie) foods and beverages in pre-schools, schools, and after-school programs and ensure full implementation of food and beverage standards that have already been enacted.
2. Eliminate the sale of sweetened beverages, including sports drinks, on city, county and school district properties and establish taxes on sugary drinks at the state and local levels to pay for the harmful effects of those products and to pay for programs to remediate those effects.
3. Provide financial incentives for establishing grocery stores, farmers markets, and physical activity facilities, and improving walkability and bikeability, particularly in low-income communities.
4. Ensure that all children receive physical education that meets minimum standards for quality, duration and frequency, and in which students are active, classes are of appropriate size, and teachers are appropriately credentialed and trained.
5. Make school recreational facilities available for after-hours use by children and families, especially in neighborhoods that lack adequate, safe and accessible park and recreational facilities.
6. Eliminate advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages to children and youth.
7. Adopt and implement "complete streets" policies to provide safe and convenient roadway access for people who walk, bike or use wheelchairs.
8. Prioritize health goals, including access to healthy foods and physical activity, in city and county policy-making activities including land use decisions, redevelopment priorities, general plans, zoning ordinances, and community and economic development plans.