

## Prevention First: School Nutrition

### Creating Supportive Nutrition Environments in Schools

**Challenge:** Obesity rates have more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years.<sup>1</sup> Healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating, can lower their risk for becoming obese and developing related diseases.<sup>2</sup> The dietary behaviors of children and adolescents are influenced by many sectors of society. Schools play a particularly critical role in establishing a safe and supportive environment with policies and practices that support healthy behaviors. Schools can provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy eating behaviors. The types of foods and beverages offered throughout the school day can have an impact on student health. To help address childhood obesity and create a school environment that supports health, school administrators can ensure that nutrition education is part of a comprehensive school health education curriculum and that school-based marketing and fundraising are consistent with supporting healthy choices.

**Objective:** Implement policies and practices that create a supportive nutrition environment at school.

#### Our Commitment to School Health:

- Provide support to local education agencies in the development of policies that establish standards for all competitive foods and beverages available during the school day.
- Provide professional development, training, and technical assistance to food service directors, principals, and staff in the following areas:
  - USDA meal program guidelines and promotion of healthy foods and beverages.
  - Healthy fund-raising and celebrations (with or without the use of healthy food).
  - Marketing and promotion of healthier foods in food consumption areas.

#### Contact Information and Emphasis:

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<sup>1</sup>Ogden CL, Carroll MD, Kit BK, Flegal KM. Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 2014;311(8):806-88814.

<sup>2</sup>Office of the Surgeon General. The Surgeon General's Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation (<http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/obesityvision/obesityvision2010.pdf>). Accessed December 4, 2014.

