



CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

Unleashing the Power of People Working Together

FACT SHEET

CHILDHOOD OBESITY CRISIS

- Overweight and obesity have reached epidemic proportions and are the biggest children's health concern to the public ahead of drug abuse, alcohol, smoking and bullying.¹ In California, a third of our children and 1 in 4 teens are overweight or obese. Nationally, overweight levels have doubled in children and tripled for teens over the past 20 years.²
- 1 in 3 children born in the year 2000 (and 1 in 2 children of color) will likely develop type 2 diabetes in their lifetime unless something is done to address the obesity crisis.³
- If the obesity epidemic continues, there is evidence that this is the first generation of children who will have a shorter life expectancy than their parents.⁴
- Poverty is linked to overweight and obesity. Children and youth living in areas that lack access to safe places to play and places like grocery stores and farmers markets that carry fresh fruits and vegetables but, on the other hand, have readily available and affordable calorie-dense foods, are more likely to suffer from overweight and obesity.⁵
- Research links overweight/obesity, poor nutrition, and lack of physical activity to negative physical, academic, social and psychological outcomes.⁶
- The costs of overweight and obesity are staggering and growing. California costs attributable to physical inactivity, obesity and overweight in 2006 were projected to reach \$41 billion.⁷ Obesity has contributed to one quarter of health care spending growth nationally.⁸

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS—AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE SOLUTION

- Publicly-funded afterschool programs at more than 4,000 sites in California target low-income families—the right focus for obesity prevention work.
- Publicly-funded afterschool programs at the elementary level require attendance 5 days a week, 3 hours a day, the equivalent of 90 extra school days a year.
- In a safe environment, afterschool programs offer the opportunity for healthy snacks, increased physical activity, applied nutrition education, youth empowerment, and community and family partnerships.
- Afterschool programs have the time and staff to address the obesity crisis head-on.
- In California, a regional infrastructure is in place to provide support for afterschool programs. The new Healthy Behaviors Learning Center sites offer a new tool to help other afterschool programs embrace obesity prevention work that ties directly to improved academic, social and psychological outcomes.

¹ C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2009. C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research Unit, Vol. 7, Issue 2, August 10, 2009.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Prevalence of Overweight Among U.S. Children and Adolescents. National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1976-80 and 1999-2000.

³ K. M. Venkat Narayan; James P. Boyle; Theodore J. Thompson; Stephen W. Sorensen; David F. Williamson. Lifetime Risk for Diabetes Mellitus in the United States. *JAMA*. 2003;290:1884-1890.

⁴ S. Jay Olshansky, Ph.D., et al., "A Potential Decline in Life Expectancy in the United States in the 21st Century," *New England Journal of Medicine*, Volume 352:1138-1145, March 17, 2005.

⁵ Theresa A. Hastert, Susan H. Babey, Allison L. Diamant, and Richard Brown. "Low-Income Adolescents Face More Barriers to Healthy Weight," UCLA Health Policy Research Brief, UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, December 2008.

⁶ *Successful Students through Healthy Food and Fitness Policies, Student Wellness: A Healthy Food and Physical Activity Policy Resource Guide*, California School Boards Association and Project LEAN. See at www.Californiaprojectlean.org/resourcelibrary. Also, "Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity, American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement," Committee on Nutrition, *Pediatrics* Vol. 112 No. 2, August 2003.

⁷ *The Economic Costs of Overweight, Obesity, and Physical Inactivity among California Adults in California Adult-2006*. A Study for the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, conducted by Chenoweth & Associates, Inc., July 2009.

⁸ Kenneth E. Thorpe, Curtis S. Florence, David H. Howard, and Peter Joski. *The Impact Of Obesity On Rising Medical Spending*. Health Affairs, W4-480, 2004.
<http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/content/full/hlthaff.w4.480/DC1>

August 2009