



Creating Healthy Schools

Marketing of Unhealthy Food and Beverage Choices

At our school, we want to support healthy habits during the school day, on school property, and during school sponsored meetings and events. Schools are required to write School Wellness Policies. Our School Wellness Policies help students learn and practice healthy behaviors while at school. That's why school administrators, staff, teachers and families are working together to support these policies, which include a section on banning the marketing or promotion of unhealthy foods or beverages to students in the school and during the school day.

Why is food and beverage marketing important?

Research shows that food and beverage marketing aimed at children has a large impact on their food choices. During the past 20 years, food and beverage companies have increased the ways they market their products to children. As marketing toward children has increased in the United States, so have the rates of children becoming overweight and obese. We want to make our school a positive and healthy place, and one way we are doing that is by taking steps to remove any marketing of unhealthy foods and if appropriate, replacing it with messages that support healthy eating and physical activity. As a family, you can help children limit their computer and television time. That one step will limit their exposure to marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages, helps them make better food choices, and gives them more time for physical activity. Combined these steps will have a positive impact on their health.



How can I get more involved?

There are several ways you and your family can reduce the amount of unhealthy marketing your child sees. Below are a few examples:

School Policy

- Talk with your school's principal or other school officials to reduce the amount of branded food and beverages in your child's school.
- Talk with other parents and school officials to remove any marketing on gym scoreboards, vending machines, and posters.
- Get involved with the PTO (parent teacher organization) and talk about the food choices offered at school.

Marketing and advertising on TV and online in the home

- Set a good example by eating healthy yourself.
- Limit TV watching to no more than 2 hours a day.
- Avoid having a TV in your child's bedroom.
 - Watch TV with your children so you know exactly what they are seeing.
 - Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity and avoid the unhealthy marketing messages!
 - Limit and monitor Internet use. There are no limits on Internet marketing toward children.
 - Talk about peer pressure. Many ads will count on the fact that kids are especially sensitive to peer pressure to be "cool." Remind your kids that advertisers are counting on this vulnerability to sell things.

Other Resources:

- The National PTA created a Healthy Lifestyles program to encourage health in the school and the home. Information can be found at: <https://www.pta.org/home/programs/Healthy-Lifestyles>
- California Project LEAN is a public health program designed to address nutrition and physical activity in school. They have created a resource for how parents can be involved in their local school wellness. Information can be found at: [http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/ParentsInAction_web\(1\).pdf](http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/docuserfiles/ParentsInAction_web(1).pdf)
- Action for Healthy Kids works with parents across the nation to promote the improvement of school wellness. Resources can be found at: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/what-we-do/parents-for-healthy-kids>



Marketing on packaging at the grocery store

- Grocery shopping can be a great way to teach your child about food and nutrition.
- Discuss where fruits, vegetables, milk, and meats come from and why your child needs these foods.
- In the cereal aisle, pick two cereals that are low in sugar and offer your child the choice.
- If your store has one, use the checkout lane without any candy. If your store doesn't have a candy-free lane, ask the manager to set up one.

Marketing of fast food

- Talk about "super sizing." Your kids need to know that a 32-ounce soda is not a "good deal." It is a low-priced way to add more sugar and empty calories.
- Agree on fast-food rules, like eating as little fast food as possible. Point out why schools around the country have banned sodas and junk food. If you do stop to eat at a fast food restaurant, try to pick the healthier items from the menu, like fresh fruit, salads, and grilled chicken.

I'm interested in learning more!

Who do I contact?

Principal: _____

PTO President: _____

School Wellness Coordinator: _____

District Wellness Coordinator: _____

