

Action Areas for Improving School Foods

The area of nutrition in the schools is quite large. The following provides a sense of the variety of issues that can be addressed.

Foods Sold and Served

Breakfast and lunch programs
Beverages in vending machines
Snacks in vending machines
After-school snack programs
Candy as classroom rewards
School parties and celebrations
Fundraising events
Issues:
Nutritional standards
Pricing
Portion size
Promotion of healthy foods
Procurement of food products

The Food Environment

Facilities
Time allowed for lunch
Marketing of foods in school
Nutrition education in the curriculum
Guidelines for home-packed foods

People Considerations

Parent education
Teacher training
Teachers and administrators as role models
Food service personnel training
Coordination with parent-teacher organizations

Hot Issues

- Restricting sales of carbonated beverages in school vending machines
- Improving the nutritional quality of snacks served in school vending machines
- Developing a District School Wellness Policy by August 2006 (required by Federal law)

In 2004, a large number of schools and school districts were successful ESPECIALLY in regards to the BEVERAGES in school VENDING MACHINES.

In 2005-2006, a lot of attention will be given to School Wellness Policies, since all schools receiving Federal subsidies for meal or snack programs must have a wellness policy by August 2006. See <http://www.schoolwellnesspolicies.org/>.

What You Can Do

Get to know administrators, health professional staff, and teachers and find allies who support your efforts. Making personal contact, by phone or in person, with these individuals lets them know there is support for change in the community and it allows you to identify opportunities for making change happen.

Letter writing, especially from parents, can also be very effective. Letters can be sent to the district superintendent, other staff, and the school board, as well as to local newspapers.

Key Resources and Guides for Action

To help plan your strategy and actions, consider spending some time reviewing existing guides and resources. Links to important materials are on the Nutrition in the Schools Network web site at http://www.greeneearthinstitute.com/nutrition/advocacy_organizing.html.

Key resources include (available via the website):

- American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement on soda in schools
- School Foods Tool Kit: A Guide to Improving Schools Foods & Beverages (CSPI)
- Roadmap to Healthy Foods into Schools (Natural Ovens)