



Healthy Foods for Kids

*Guidelines For Good Nutrition At
School*

Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota
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This is the second edition of Minnesota’s Action for Healthy Kids Healthy Food Guidelines. Use this information to help you plan healthful, flavorful food choices at your school or program.

This edition offers an expanded list of foods, calling out more foods and beverages commonly featured in cafeterias and vending machines. This edition also offers a graduated approach to choosing healthful foods. You will note two sets of standards—an “Initial Standard” and a “Gold Standard.” The Initial Standard is considered a starting point for making healthful food choices. It is a great bridge between popular food choices and the best possible food choices. The Gold Standard guidelines are the optimal direction for selecting healthful foods.

If you have any questions on the use of these guidelines, please contact us-Action for Healthy Kids MN at afhkmn@aol.com



Healthy Foods For Kids *Guidelines For Good Nutrition At School*

WHO WE ARE:

ACTION FOR HEALTHY MINNESOTA KIDS (AFHK MN), IS A COALITION OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS, AND INDIVIDUALS, DEDICATED TO IMPROVING CHILDREN'S NUTRITION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY.

Members include-

- Departments of Health
- School Food Service
- Health Insurance Organizations
- Schools
- Professional Membership Associations
- Industry
- Anyone interested in making kids healthier

Introduction

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a nationwide initiative dedicated to improving the health and educational performance of children through better nutrition and physical activity in schools. This effort represents a response to our nation's epidemic of overweight, sedentary, and undernourished children and adolescents.

Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota (AFHK MN) is one of 51 State Teams established as an outgrowth of the 2002 Healthy Schools Summit. The goal of AFHK is to encourage and facilitate meaningful change in schools. Guidance and direction are provided by more than 40 national organizations and government agencies representing education, health, physical activity and nutrition.

Why focus on schools?

Schools are all about learning. Along with parents, schools help shape children's ideas, habits and lifestyles.

More than 95 percent of all children between ages five and 17 are part of a school environment. Food is a significant component of that experience. In fact, meals and snacks at school can provide one-third to one-half of a child's daily nutritional needs.¹

Given this fact, schools become a perfect place to teach children how to feed not only their brains, but also their bodies.

For several reasons, a healthful food program is important to an optimal school experience:

GOOD
NUTRITION IS
LINKED TO
BETTER
LEARNING

- Good nutrition is linked to better learning. Studies suggest eating healthfully helps students achieve their full academic potential.
- Good nutrition is associated with decreased discipline and emotional problems.
- Nutrition education and high-quality meals can instill healthy eating habits that can improve health.
- Nutritious eating may reduce the risk for several health problems currently affecting children including weight concerns, type II diabetes and high blood pressure.

GOOD
NUTRITION
CAN HELP
STUDENTS
ACHIEVE
THEIR FULL
ACADEMIC
POTENTIAL

Many schools are making positive changes in the food and beverages they offer children. Programs are moving from high-fat, high-sugar, high-sodium choices to ones that mirror what is taught in classroom curriculums—good nutrition is pivotal to good health.

Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota developed *Healthy Foods for Kids* to help administrators, food service operators, school nurses, parents and staff take the guesswork out of how to feed kids well.

Healthy Foods for Kids makes it easy for any school interested in doing right by their students to do just that.

***Note:** Though *Healthy Foods for Kids* was developed for the school environment, the guidelines and ideas are of value to any venue where kids eat including community centers, daycare settings, camps, etc. They may also be useful in adult environments such as worksites.

About this resource

Healthy Foods for Kids is divided into the following sections:

- 1) **How to use the guidelines.** This section systematically outlines how and when to use the guidelines.
- 2) *Healthy Foods for Kids* guidelines. This table offers specific information about the amount of fat and added sugars recommended for various food categories, such as drinks, snack foods and dairy products. Included in the table are recommendations for preferred food or drink options and advice for limiting the availability of certain foods or drinks that may not be as nutritious.
- 3) **Rationale for the guidelines.** This section contains scientific reasoning for the criteria used in each category.
- 4) **Ideas for working together to make changes in schools.** Included in this section are ideas and key strategies to support the incorporation of good nutrition within the school environment.

RESEARCH SHOWS
FOR ANY GIVEN
PYRAMID GROUP,
LESS THAN 1/2 OF
CHILDREN EAT
THE NUMBER OF
SERVINGS
RECOMMENDED. ²



How to use the guidelines

These guidelines have been developed to make it easier for schools to improve the nutritional quality of *non-regulated foods and beverages* offered to students while they are on campus.

Non-regulated foods and beverages include items sold or offered:

- In vending machines
- As *'a la carte* items in the cafeteria
- In school stores
- At or as fund-raising events
- At snack bars
- In concession stands
- At classroom parties
- During school-related meetings

NOTE: School meals, which include the National School Breakfast Program, The National School Lunch Program and the After-school Snack Program are governed by the United States Department of Agriculture's regulations and are not the subject of these guidelines.

View these guidelines as instructional. These guidelines were developed to help inform school health teams or committees, parent or student organizations and/or school staff that great tasting and nutritious options for non-regulated foods and beverages are available. Nutritious foods are accepted, and even sought after, by kids and can be revenue-friendly.

The guidelines can be used:

- By school food services to select healthful *'a la carte* items
- By school administrators for purchasing vending items
- To determine which items are sold in school stores, concession stands, snack bars or selected for fund-raising events
- To offer alternative choices for school-related meetings and classroom parties
- To provide parents with ideas for foods to serve at home

The *Healthy Foods for Kids* guidelines are meant to complement the federally regulated School Breakfast, School Lunch and After-school Snack Program guidelines that already meet specific nutrition criteria.

The guidelines were developed to encourage dialogue and create a partnership between school staff and parents to establish eating environments that are nutritious and enjoyable.

**Healthy Foods For Kids
Guidelines For Good Nutrition At School**

Category	Suggested Initial Standard (A place to start)				Gold Standard (Options to consider)
	Serving Size Limits	Fat ^A	Sugars ^B	Food Items that Meet the Initial Standard	
Milk	16 oz.	1% or nonfat	100% milk flavored or plain	1% or nonfat milk that is 100% fluid milk or hot chocolate that is made with 100% milk	Initial standard and contains no artificial sweeteners ^C
Water	None	Not applicable	No added sugars	Bottled or canned water, plain or flavored without added sugars; carbonated or un-carbonated	Initial standard and contains no artificial sweeteners or caffeine or added vitamins, minerals or other nutrient
Fruit Juice	8-12 ounces ^D	Not applicable	No added sugars	100% fruit juices and fruit spritzers made with 100% fruit juices, fruit smoothies made with 100% fruit and 100% fruit juice	Initial standard and contains no artificial sweeteners
Soft drinks, sport drinks, coffee, coffee-based beverages, tea and flavored beverages	12 ounces	3 grams of fat or less per 8 ounces	No added sugars	Diet soft drinks, coffee, tea, and skim milk coffee drinks without added sugars	Initial standard and contains no artificial sweeteners or caffeine. No soft drinks or sports drinks
Yogurt	8 ounces or less	Non-fat and low-fat	Sugars are not the first ingredient	Non-fat and low-fat yogurts	Initial standard and contain no artificial sweeteners
Ice cream and frozen desserts	4 ounces	5 grams or less per 4 ounces	Sugars are not the first ingredient	Products made with low-fat ice cream, ice milk or frozen yogurt or 50% real fruit juice or a combination of these ingredients	Initial standard and contain no artificial sweeteners

Category	<i>Suggested Initial Standard</i> (A place to start)	<i>Suggested Initial Standard</i> (A place to start)	<i>Suggested Initial Standard</i> (A place to start)	<i>Suggested Initial Standard</i> (A place to start)	Gold Standard (Options to consider)
	Serving Size Limits	Fat^A	Sugars^B	Serving Size Limits	
Fruits and Vegetable	No limit	5 grams or less	Sugars are not the first ingredient	Canned, frozen or fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruit, canned fruit in juice, Serve with low-fat dip and sauces on the side to make food more appealing	See Initial standard
Nuts, seeds and trail mix	1.5 to 2.0 ounces	Not applicable	Sugars are not the first ingredient	Serving sizes of 2 oz or less including peanuts, sunflower seeds, flavored nuts and trail mixes	Initial standard for sugars, plus, serving sizes of 1.5 oz or less and no artificial sweeteners
Cookies	1 ounce	6 grams of fat or less per 1 ounce	Sugars are not the first ingredient or 35% or less added sugars by weight ^B	Some cookies	Initial standard, plus, made with <u>whole grains</u> , containing 2-3 grams of fiber per serving and no artificial sweeteners
Cereal and breakfast bars	1.5 oz	6 grams or less per 1.5 ounces	Sugars are not the first ingredient or < 35% by weight	Some cereals and breakfast bars	Initial standard, plus, made with <u>whole grains</u> , containing 2-3 grams of fiber per serving and no artificial sweeteners
Bakery items	2 ounces	6 grams or less or less per 2 ounces	Sugars are not the first ingredient or < 35% by weight ^B	Some small muffins, bagels, scones and other pastries	Initial standard, plus, made with <u>whole grains</u> , containing 2-3 grams of fiber per serving and no artificial sweeteners
Crackers, chips, popcorn	1.25 to 1.5 ounces	6 grams or less per 1.5 ounces	Sugars are not the first ingredient or < 35% by weight ^B	Serving sizes of 1.5 oz. products such as low-fat or baked chips, pretzels, cereal mixes, popcorns, crackers, animal and graham crackers	Initial standard, plus, serving sizes of 1.25 oz. or less, made with <u>whole grains</u> , containing 2-3 grams of fiber and no artificial sweeteners
Meat/ Meat substitutes	3 ounces	5 grams of fat per ounce or less except for peanut butter	Not applicable	Unbreaded chicken, turkey, ham, lean ground beef, water-packed tuna, Canadian bacon, beef jerky, peanut butter	See Initial standard
Cheese	1 ounce	7 grams or less per 1 ounce	Not applicable	Low-fat natural cheeses such as mozzarella, reduced fat Colby, reduced fat cheddar and others. Low-fat processed cheese - not imitation cheese.	No processed cheese

Footnotes

A. FAT

The general goal is to have an individual item provide no more than 35% of total calories as fat. Each gram of fat provides approximately 9 calories. To determine the percentage of total calories provided by fat multiply the total grams of fat in the product by 9 then divide this by the total calories then multiply by 100.

$$(\text{Total Fat grams} \times 9) / \text{Total calories} \times 100 = \text{Percent of total calories provided by fat}$$

B. SUGARS

The purpose of this criteria is to limit added sugars, rather than natural sugars found in real fruit and milk. Unfortunately, the source of the sugars is not identified on food labels. If a product contains little or no fruit or milk, added sugars can be calculated. Aim for products with less than 35% of added sugars by weight.

To calculate the percent of sugars by weight, read the label for the total number of grams from sugars, divide it by the total weight in grams and multiply by 100. In other words:

$$(\text{Grams of sugar} / \text{Total weight in grams}) \times 100 = \text{Percent sugar by weight.}$$

For example, a product with 10 grams of sugars with a weight of 30 grams would be approximately 33% sugars by weight and meet the criteria.

C. ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

Artificial sweeteners include: Aspartame (NutraSweet® or Equal), Acesulfame potassium (Sunnet®), Sacharrin (Sweet'N Low®), Sucralose (Splenda®), Neotame, Stevia.

Rationale For Guidelines

PEOPLE EAT MORE FOOD AND MORE CALORIES WHEN THEY ARE SERVED LARGER PORTIONS

THE PORTION SIZE THAT YOU ARE EATING MAY ACTUALLY BE TO TWO OR THREE STANDARD SERVINGS

For ease of use, these guidelines focus on three criteria - **portion size, dietary fat and added sugars**. They were selected because they can contribute excess calories to children's diets and often have a negative impact on nutritional balance. In some circumstances, the overall nutritional contribution of a food was considered more important than its calorie, fat or sugar content. Examples include low-fat chocolate milk, nuts and seeds.

The portion size for water and fruits and vegetables was not limited because of the low calorie and high nutritional value of these items. It is important to keep in mind that in the context of a balanced diet all foods can fit. However, if most individual items offered to children are of poor nutritional quality, overall dietary balance is poor. These guidelines help identify foods that are more healthful choices on an item-by-item basis.

Criteria for additional nutrients that can have an impact on children's health will be determined in future versions of these guidelines.

1. *Serving size*

Research shows that people will eat more food and thus more calories when they are served larger portion sizes. This can lead to weight problems.^{3,4} The serving sizes used in these guidelines are consistent with USDA portion recommendations. Sensible serving sizes can help prevent overweight and obesity.

The portion size that you are eating may actually be two or three standard servings. Use the Nutrition Facts label as a tool. To see how many servings a package contains, check the "servings per container" listed on the Nutrition Facts label. Many times even those small packages often have more than one serving inside.

TOO LITTLE
CARBOHYDRATES
PUT CHILDREN AT
RISK FOR LESS
THAN OPTIMAL
GROWTH AND
DEVELOPMENT

2. *Fruits and vegetables*



Many children enjoy eating fruits and vegetables when they are offered a variety of great tasting, attractive options. Unfortunately, enticing fruits and vegetables are not easily accessible to many children. Food surveys show that one-half of children eat less than one serving of fruit a day. One-third do not eat even one serving of vegetables a day that is *not* fried.⁵

Eating a diet rich in a variety of fruit and vegetables is linked to better health. It may protect against heart disease, stroke, overweight and obesity and some types of cancer.^{6,7,8} At least two servings of fruit and three servings of vegetables are recommended for children each day.⁹

3. *Carbohydrates*



Carbohydrates are an important part of a healthy, well-balanced diet. They are the preferred source of energy for the brain and the body. In fact, the body needs at least 130 grams of carbohydrate in order to function. Experts recommend children consume 45 to 60 percent of their calories from carbohydrates. Too little carbohydrate puts them at risk for less than optimal growth and development.

There is a distinctive difference between types of carbohydrates. Some provide much more nutritional value than others.

STUDIES SHOW
CHILDREN WHO
EAT HIGHER
ADDED-SUGAR
DIETS EAT
FEWER
VEGETABLES
AND FRUITS AND
DRINK LESS MILK

4. Added sugars

As much as 20 percent of the calories kids eat each day come from added sugars – double what health experts recommend.

Diets high in added sugars are known to be less nutritious than diets moderate to low in added sugars.^{10,11,12} Experts believe it may be because high-sugar foods displace other, more nutritious, foods. In fact, studies show children who eat higher added-sugar diets eat fewer vegetables and fruits and drink less milk. They may also consume more calories.^{13,14,15,16} Both teenage boys and girls consume the largest amount of added sugars.

Some sugar is found naturally in foods and is not considered “added”, such as the sugar found naturally in whole fruits, 100% fruit juice and milk.

The sugar category on the nutrition facts panel combines the total amount of naturally occurring sugar as well as a food’s added sugars content. To find specific information on “added sugars” read the product’s ingredient list for terms like *sucrose, high-fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, dextrose, glucose fructose, maltose, honey and corn sweeteners*. Currently, there is no easy way to determine exactly how much added sugars are in a food if the food also contains natural sugars. The ingredient list is the best indicator of added sugars content.

Small amounts of added sugars can enhance flavor and encourage children to eat more nutritious foods like chocolate milk, whole-grain cereal and canned or frozen fruit. Foods such as these are preferred to less nutritious alternatives.

Artificial Sweeteners

Artificially sweetened beverages and foods can provide a low calorie alternative to those with special health concerns, such as diabetes. The artificial sweeteners currently on the market have undergone testing to demonstrate their safety⁴³ Nonetheless, they are not a necessary part of a child’s diet and, if available, diet beverages may displace the consumption of other healthier beverages such as milk. In addition, the acid in artificially sweetened soft drinks can contribute to dental erosion.⁴⁴ As schools seek foods with less added sugars, there is a potential for increasing use of artificial sweeteners in the foods children are offered. Because of their size, children are exposed to higher amounts of these sweeteners per pound of body weight. The impact of this potential increased exposure is unknown. Furthermore, exposure to sweet tasting foods and beverages in childhood may influence food preferences for sweeter foods in adulthood.⁴⁵ It is for these reasons that consideration should

be given to eliminating artificially sweetened foods from the school environment.

5. *Whole grains*



American children eat very few whole-grain food products and therefore miss out on the high nutritional value of these foods. Several studies have shown that individuals who eat more whole-grain foods are at lower risk for developing certain cancers, heart disease and type-2 diabetes.^{17,18,19} Three servings of whole-grain foods per day are recommended. The easiest way for children to get more whole grains at school is by selecting whole-grain breakfast cereals such as Cheerios®, Shredded Wheat® and oatmeal, or by offering whole-grain breads and crackers such as Wonder’s 100% Whole Wheat Bread® and Triscuits® whole-wheat crackers.

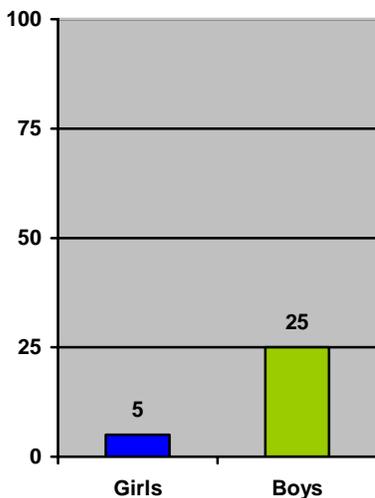
6. *Beverages*



Beverages can play a significant role in health and nutrition. What a person chooses to drink can contribute to good nutrition or have a negative impact. Soda pop, fruit drinks and sports drinks offer minimal nutrition yet can be significant sources of calories.

Water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices, low-fat and non-fat milk plus other beverages equivalent to the nutrition of milk such as soy-based beverages, can help enhance the quality of a child’s diet. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than 8-12 ounces of 100% fruit or vegetable juice each day for school-aged children.

Adequate Calcium Intake By Age 13



BY AGE 13,
ONLY
5 % OF GIRLS
AND
25 % OF BOYS
ARE MEETING
THEIR CALCIUM
NEEDS.

AS MUCH AS
HALF OF
ADULT BONE
MASS IS BUILT
DURING THE
ADOLESCENT
YEARS

Supplemented beverages

Water-based beverages with added sugars or artificial sweeteners that are supplemented with vitamins, minerals or other dietary supplements are not recommended. The recent NIH State-of-the-Science Conference found little evidence of benefit from supplements and supported the 2005 Institute of Medicine committee concerns about the safety of these products and the potential for toxic intakes of vitamins or minerals from multiple servings of supplemented products⁴⁶

Beverages and health

Impact on weight

Regular soft drinks and other sweetened beverages are the biggest source of added sugars in the American diet. Research suggests drinking them can contribute to obesity because people who do, consume more calories than others.^{20,21} Studies indicate that people are more apt to consume more calories when they drink sweetened beverages because the beverages are less filling than food.^{22,23,24}

Drinking one 20-ounce soft drink each day, in addition to one's normal diet, could lead to a 26-pound weight gain in one year. Other beverages high in added sugars, such as sports drinks and fruit drinks, also add unnecessary calories for most children. In some cases they can contain as much added sugars as soft drinks. Water remains the best beverage choice to quench thirst between meals.



Bones

Soft drinks and highly sugared beverages are replacing milk in many children's diets thereby putting them at risk for poor nutrition.^{25,26} Most children are currently not getting the recommended amount of calcium in their diet.²⁷ In fact, between the ages of five and 18 at least 65 percent of children do not consume an adequate amount of calcium. That number increases significantly during adolescence. By age 13, 95 percent of girls and 75 percent of boys are lacking what they need.

Consuming too little calcium can mean children will not develop peak bone mass at a critical time in their lives. As much as half of adult bone mass is built during the adolescent years—bone mass that is needed to last a lifetime. Too little calcium as well

as poor nutrition increases a child's risk for poor growth, bone fractures and osteoporosis.^{28,29}

Because several nutrients are needed for healthy bones, simply adding calcium to foods is not sufficient. Drinking low-fat milk with most meals is the easiest way for children to get the calcium and nutrients they need for strong bones. Three to four servings of dairy foods are recommend for children each day.



Teeth

In addition to concerns about obesity and bone health, soft drinks and highly sugared beverages increase the risk of cavities and enamel erosion. The acidity of both regular and diet soft drinks also has a negative impact on tooth enamel.^{30,31}

Other considerations

Caffeine

Caffeine is not recommended for children because it is a mildly addictive stimulant that has been associated with behavioral abnormalities, nervousness, irritability and other unpleasant side effects.^{33,34} Physical activity is a wonderful alternative for students seeking ways to be energized.

100% juices

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than eight to 12 ounces of 100% fruit or vegetable juice each day for school-aged children and no more than four to six ounces each day for children one to six years of age.³⁵ These guidelines comply with this recommendation. Some children may drink more juice if they need to supplement calorie intake.

7. Total fat

The American Academy of Pediatrics has found that lowering fat, saturated fat and cholesterol in the diets of children over the age of two is safe and may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease in adulthood.³⁶

The number of fat grams used for these guidelines is based on 35 percent or less of calories from fat. This agrees with the dietary guidelines for children established by the Institute of Medicine.

A reduction in all fats usually results in a reduction of saturated fat, trans fat* and dietary cholesterol.³⁷ These guidelines include nuts and seeds because of their monounsaturated fat content.

IT IS
ESTIMATED
THAT U.S.
CHILDREN
VIEW AT LEAST
20,000
COMMERCIALS
EACH YEAR [32]

FOOD IS THE
MOST
FREQUENTLY
ADVERTISED
PRODUCT
CATEGORY ON
U.S.
CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION.

FOOD ADS
ACCOUNT FOR
MORE THAN
50% OF ALL
ADS TARGETED
TOWARD
CHILDREN.

Monounsaturated fats have been associated with a decreased incidence of coronary artery disease and some types of cancer.
38

* **Trans fats** have been linked to an increased risk for heart disease. They are found primarily in processed foods and bakery goods. The words "partially hydrogenated" in a food's ingredient list indicate the presence of trans fats. No amount of trans fats is recommended in a healthful diet.

8. *Snack items*



Snacking has increased in frequency over the past decade⁴⁰. Snacks are responsible for one-fourth of the calories a child eats in a day and contributes to one-fifth of his or her nutrient intake.

Today, snacks tend to be higher in calories and lower in vitamins and mineral than meals.⁴¹ High-calorie snacks are often "empty calorie" snacks meaning they provide plenty of calories yet offer few vitamins and minerals. Often these foods are not filling and do not satisfy hunger. That can lead to overeating and increased weight.⁴²

Other considerations

Sodium

In an effort to keep these guidelines easy to use they do not specifically give sodium limits in the food categories. However, limiting sodium to 2300 milligrams per day to reduce the risk of elevated blood pressure is recommended. (2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans)

ONE STUDY
ON
PROGRAMMING
FOR
CHILDREN'S
TELEVISION
FOUND 44% OF
FOOD ADS
PROMOTED
FOODS FROM
THE FATS AND
SWEETS GROUP.
(39)

Ideas for working together to make changes in schools

“COMMUNITY BUILDING MUST BECOME THE HEART OF ANY SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT EFFORT.”

THOMAS SERGIOVANNI
PROFESSOR, EDUCATION

Many school districts and food service directors are actively improving the nutrition within their food service program. The *Healthy Foods for Kids* guidelines can be used to initiate or enhance these efforts so as to provide a healthier environment for students and staff. Additional changes at school such as scheduling recess before lunch, offering breakfast and invigorating the cafeteria’s ambiance can support this goal.

There are a variety of local and national resources to assist in these efforts. Schools and parents may want to consider the following suggestions as they look for ways to promote healthy eating at school.

1. Find out about your current program and how it operates

■ Determine what is currently being done at your school. Look at menus, vending choices, what’s taught about nutrition in the health curriculum, fund-raising events that include food, etc. Talk to teachers, administration, foodservice staff, nursing personnel, students and parents regarding their views on the foods served at school.

■ Think about goals for the food program at your school. Find out what is working well and what may need improvement. Are you interested in making changes to the vending machine foods? Do the beverages served through vending and at meals supports good nutrition? Can the food service operation take advantage of seasonal foods? Can it change the presentation of the most healthful foods it serves to entice students to purchase them, etc.?

Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm> CDC School Health Index, a self-assessment tool for schools

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/changing.html> USDA Team Nutrition, Changing the Scene Kit, Improving the School Nutrition Environment

<http://cspinet.org/schoolfood/index.html> Center for Science in the Public Interest, School Foods Tool Kit

http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools National Association of School Boards of Education, Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: Part I- Physical Activity, Healthy Eating and Tobacco Use Prevention

2. *Get partners on board*

- Identify and involve the decision makers at school. Food service directors, administrators, business managers, the school board and parent-teacher organizations may influence the ability to make changes.

- Consider forming a school health team or nutrition advisory council. Engage staff, administration, community members, health professionals, parents and students. Keep interested and influential parties informed on the group's intentions and actions.

Resources:

<https://fns.state.mn.us/FNSProg/NSLP/NSLPResource.htm> Minnesota's Make The First Move Tool Kit: Creating a Team

<http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfood/> Center For Science in Public Interest: forming a team

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html> Changing the Scene from USDA refer to pdf formatted items

- Get “buy-in” from influential parties, e.g. connect with the food service director or contract company, administration, the business manager and other decision makers.

- Find examples of neighboring schools or schools in other parts of the country that have made successful healthful changes to their school food programs. Use these illustrations to build the case that good things can happen through good intentions.

- Consider piloting the *Healthy Foods for Kids* guidelines in one district school or one segment of a school's food program, e.g. vending. Start small, build on successes.

- Recognize that change takes time and various factions within a school may have no interest in change. Discover what barriers lie between the status quo and change—work to erase those barriers.

- Look to outside experts, health professionals and health organizations to support your goals. They can offer a wealth of ideas plus valuable contacts for initiating change.

3. *Recognize and answer to revenue needs*

■ Learn how schools and school food service is funded. Find examples of other schools that have made healthful changes without sacrificing revenue.

Resources:

Action for Healthy Kids:
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>

California LEAN's Bright Ideas:
<http://www.californiaprojectlean.org/brightideas/genBrightIdeasList.asp?CATNID=1004>

From MN Tool Kit:
<https://fns.state.mn.us/FNSProg/NSLP/NSLPResource.htm#toolkit>

- Learn about and share cost-effective strategies with school administrators, staff and parents. Possible strategies:
- Make healthier foods more price appealing—increase pricing of less nutritious foods.
- Involve students in identifying healthier foods of interest. Obtain their input—utilize their ideas for change.
- Re-negotiate contracts to enable school-adopted guidelines to be implemented.

4. *Consider strategies that support the goal of good nutrition at school.*

- Review existing policies, develop new ones.
- Consider some of these ideas:
 - ▶ Allow water as the only beverage available in the classroom.
 - ▶ Restrict the availability of vending machines during the school day.
 - ▶ Use non-food items for fundraising.
 - ▶ Allow adequate time for lunch and breakfast (Children should have at least 20 minutes to eat lunch; 10 minutes to eat breakfast.)

IF WE DO NOT
CHANGE OUR
DIRECTION,
WE ARE
LIKELY TO
END UP
WHERE WE
ARE HEADED.

CHINESE PROVERB

- ▶ Time school lunch to encourage hearty appetites and less stressful eating. It is recommended that school lunches last at least 25 minutes and be served to elementary students *after* recess.
- ▶ Provide adequate space for comfortable seating in the cafeteria.
- ▶ Close the campus so students can not leave the school premises during school hours.
- ▶ Integrate nutrition education into the school curriculum.
- ▶ Provide nutrition-related in-service to staff.
- ▶ Encourage staff to model healthy eating behaviors.
- ▶ Educate parents and staff about a healthy school environment in newsletters and other channels for school communication.

Resources:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00042446.htm>,
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Guidelines for School
Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating

Closing Thoughts

We hope you find these guidelines useful. Please share with us your experiences in using them and any ideas you have to improve them. We welcome your comments. We can be reached at AFHKMN@aol.com.

Thank you for taking an interest in Minnesota children!

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Toolkits and Fact Sheets

Minnesota Department of Health Fact Sheets,

<http://health.state.mn.us/divs/cfh/na/factsheets/ca/nutphysact.html>

Nutrition in Youth; Soft Drinks; Physical Activity in Youth; Weight Management in Youth,
The Effects of Hunger on Children's Health

Vending Snack Guide (poster). Minnesota Department of Education

<https://fns.state.mn.us/FNSProg/NSLP/NSLPResource.htm#toolkit>

School Foods Tool Kit: A Guide to Improving School Foods and Beverages. Center for
Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) www.cspinet.org/schoolfoods

School Health Index: A Self-Assessment and Planning Guide, Centers for Disease Control
and Prevention (CDC). http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/SchoolHealth/tools_summary.htm

Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide. National Association of
State Boards of Education (NASBE) <http://www.nasbe.org>

Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment. Team Nutrition. USDA
Available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/changing.html>

Minnesota's Changing the Scene, Make the First Move: Building a Healthy School Nutrition
Environment. Available at <https://fns.state.mn.us/FNSProg/NSLP/NSLPResource.htm#toolkit>

Additional Web Sites:

- ◆ <http://www.cnr.berkeley.edu/cwh/resources/childrenandweight.shtml>
- ◆ <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org>
- ◆ <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/index.htm> Healthy Schools Healthy Youth
- ◆ <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/> Nutrition and Physical Activity

Local Resources:

- ◆ Action for Healthy Kids Minnesota
- ◆ County Health Departments
- ◆ Midwest Dairy Council
- ◆ Minnesota Department of Education
- ◆ Minnesota Department of Health