



## Food Marketing in Schools How Can You Help?

Children and adolescents learn about healthy eating at school, and it is important that they get consistent messages about healthy eating throughout the school campus.<sup>1,2</sup> Marketing and advertising of unhealthy foods and beverages sends mixed messages to students about healthy eating.<sup>2</sup> Schools can help encourage students to eat healthy foods and beverages by making them available whenever food is offered or sold, using posters and signs to promote them, and serving meals and snacks that are appealing to students.<sup>1</sup>

### What's Happening at School?

Knowing the answers to the following questions can help you support healthy food marketing and promotion in your child's school. If you don't know the answers to these questions, check out the school handbook or school website, attend a school wellness meeting or Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meeting, or simply ask your child's teacher.

1. Does the school district or school have policies or practices related to marketing and advertising on school grounds? District wellness policies should include language about marketing foods and beverages that meet the **Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards**.
2. How does the school promote healthy foods and beverages? Are there posters, signage, or images promoting healthy foods and beverages (e.g., low-fat milk, water)?
3. Does the school do student surveys and provide taste-testing opportunities to guide the development of school meal menus?
4. Are there opportunities for parents to help promote healthy foods and beverages?
5. Do classroom teachers use food or coupons for specific foods or restaurants as student rewards?



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion





## Ideas for Parents

You can be involved in your child's school by **attending** meetings, workshops, or training events offered by the school; **communicating** with school staff and other parents; **volunteering** for school events or in your child's classroom; **reinforcing** healthy messages and practices your child learns at school; **helping** make decisions about health in the school; and **being part** of community activities supported by the school. Here are some specific ideas for how you can support your child's school in providing healthy food marketing and promotion.

- E-mail or discuss with other parents the importance of having consistent messages about healthy foods and beverages within the school.
- Look for opportunities to get involved with promoting healthy foods and beverages (e.g., organize a group to paint a mural in the cafeteria, or do taste tests with students).
- Join the school or district committee (e.g., wellness committee) that sets the policies for health and wellness, and work to include language about food and beverage marketing in these policies.<sup>1,3,4</sup>
- Consider **assessing** current food marketing practices. The results can help guide policy changes.



Check out additional resources for parents related to the school nutrition environment and services, physical education and physical activity, and managing chronic health conditions at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/P4HS.htm>.

## REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School health guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep*. 2011;60(RR05):1-76.
2. Institute of Medicine. *Food Marketing to Children and Youth: Threat or Opportunity?* Washington, DC: National Academies Press; 2006.
3. Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity. School food: opportunities for improvement. <http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/reports/RuddBriefSchoolFoodPolicy2009.pdf>. Accessed on May 28, 2019.
4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health. Atlanta: US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2012.

