

Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report, 2011



National Action Guide

The Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report, 2011 National Action Guide highlights selected behaviors, environments, and policies that affect childhood obesity nationally. It provides information on selected food environment indicators related to less healthful behaviors among children such as the consumption of less healthy foods and sugar drinks.

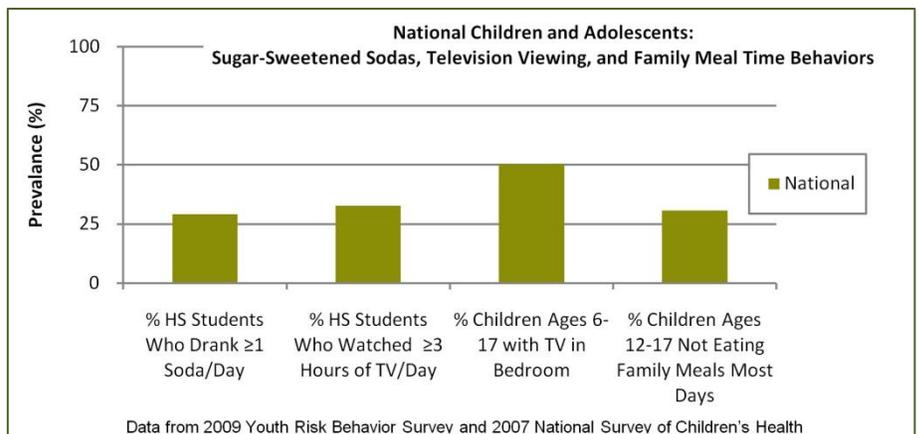
The behavioral indicators describe sugar drink consumption, television viewing, television in the bedroom, and family meal time among children and adolescents. The policy and environmental indicators measure components of food environments across child care facilities, schools, and the community. For detailed descriptions of the indicators and how they relate to healthy eating and obesity, please see the **Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report** at <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/>.

This guide provides potential actions that state leaders, coalitions, community-based organizations, and professionals can take alone or in partnership to support state residents' purchase and consumption of more healthful foods.

Behavioral Indicators

The National Action Guide provides an overview of four behavioral indicators for the nation:

- Percentage of high school students who drank ≥ 1 sugar-sweetened soda per day
- Percentage of high school students who watched television ≥ 3 hours per day
- Percentage of children, ages 6-17, with television in their bedroom
- Percentage of children, ages 12-17, who do not eat meals with their families most days of the week



Policy and Environmental Indicators

Child Care Facility Food Environment

State licensing regulations that ensure child care facilities maintain healthy food environments can help instill healthy eating habits.

Indicator	National Data
• State regulations restrict sugar drinks in child care centers and family child care homes	2 states
• State regulations require access to drinking water throughout the day in child care centers and family child care homes	27 states
• State regulations limit television and video time in child care centers and family child care homes	18 states

Potential Actions

- Enact or revise licensing regulations and Quality Rating Improvement Systems to reduce or eliminate the availability of less healthy foods and sugar drinks, and to restrict screen time in child care settings.
- Encourage child care providers to conduct self-assessments of their centers or homes to identify improvements that they can make in their policies, practices, and environment related to healthier foods and beverages.
- Integrate nutrition and screen time best practices into provider training, certification and continuing education opportunities.
- Provide technical assistance and resources to child care providers through a state network of early childhood development and health that includes multiple stakeholders including Child Care Resource and Referral agencies, Cooperative Extension, Advisory Councils, Health Consultants, and the AAP State Chapter Child Care contact.
- Increase access to healthier foods in child care with Farm to Preschool programs, purchasing cooperatives, and gardening initiatives.

Resources

- Preventing Obesity In The Child Care Setting: Evaluating State Regulations: http://cfm.mc.duke.edu/wysiwyg/downloads/State_Reports_Final.pdf
- Caring for Our Children: Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs: http://nrckids.org/CFOC3/PDFVersion/preventing_obesity.pdf
- Food Research & Action Center: Child Care Food Program Wellness Tool Kit: <http://frac.org/federal-foodnutrition-programs/child-and-adult-care-program/child-care-wellness-plans-and-policies/>
- National Child Care Information and Technical Assistance Center: Quality Rating & Improvement System Resource Guide: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/grisresourceguide/>
- National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies: <http://www.naccrra.org/>
- AAP Healthy Child Care America: <http://healthychildcare.org/cccc.html>

School Food Environment

Schools are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthful eating by eliminating sugar drinks and high energy density foods (foods high in added sugars and fats) from the selection of foods offered on the school campus.

Indicator	National Data
• Percentage of middle and high schools that offer sugar drinks as competitive foods	64.4%*
• Percentage of middle and high schools that offer less healthy foods as competitive foods	51.4%*
• Percentage of middle and high schools that allow advertising of less healthy foods	49.0%*

*Because national estimates were not available for these indicators, these data reflect the medians of state estimates.

Potential Actions

- Work with school districts to enroll elementary, middle, and high schools in USDA's Team Nutrition program and apply for certification through the HealthierUS School Challenge.
- Collaborate with state and district school officials to establish school wellness and nutrition policies to increase free drinking water access and eliminate the sale of sugar drinks on school grounds, including vending machines, concessions, and fundraisers.
- Support school districts in implementing strong nutrition standards that restrict the availability of less healthy foods and sugar drinks.
- Work with school districts to revise existing food and beverage contracts so that only healthier food options are available to students.
- Collaborate with state and school district officials to redefine or eliminate beverage "pouring contracts" in schools.

Resources

- USDA Team Nutrition and HealthierUS School Challenge website: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/healthierUS/index.html>
- Making It Happen: School Nutrition Success Stories: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/Making-It-Happen/index.htm>
- Water in Schools website: <http://www.waterinschools.org/>
- CDC Fact Sheets about IOM Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/nutrition/standards.htm>
- NPLAN: Model Healthy Beverage Vending Agreement: <http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/model-healthy-beverage-vending-agreement>
- CDC resource on Local Wellness Policy Tools & Resources for schools: <http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/healthtopics/wellness.htm>



Community Food Environment

Strategies to improve the community food environment include increased access and availability to healthier food retailers. The modified Retail Food Environment Index (mRFEI) measures the number of healthy and less healthy food retailers within a census tract using the formula shown.

$$mRFEI = 100 \times \frac{\# \text{ Healthy Food Retailers}}{\# \text{ Healthy Food Retailers} + \# \text{ Less Healthy Food Retailers}}$$

For this indicator, healthy food retailers include supermarkets, supercenters, and produce stores.† Less healthy food retailers include convenience stores, fast food restaurants, and small grocery stores with 3 or fewer employees.† Higher mRFEI scores indicate more access to healthy food retailers and fewer less healthy food retailers.

Indicator	National Data*
• Modified Retail Food Environment Index across census tracts within state	10
• Modified Retail Food Environment Index across impoverished census tracts within state	7

*The numbers shown for national data are the medians of all state scores.

† Areas without these types of healthy food retailers may still provide adequate access if smaller stores and fast food restaurants provide quality and affordable healthy foods and beverages.

Potential Actions

- Provide incentives for small food store owners in underserved areas to carry healthier, affordable food items (e.g. tax breaks/credits, loans, and grants to purchase equipment to store produce and fat free/low fat dairy; or facilitate linkages to wholesale distributors).
- Create incentive programs to attract supermarkets and grocery stores to underserved neighborhoods (e.g., tax breaks/credits, loans, and grants to cover start-up and investment costs; economic development programs; supportive zoning, negotiation assistance).
- Target public transportation and public safety efforts to ensure community residents can access healthy food retailers easily and affordably.
- Promote farmers' markets, farm stands, mobile markets, and community gardens as venues for healthy foods.
- Support restaurant programs that offer and promote healthier food options.

Resources

- NPLAN Creating a Healthy Food Zone Around Schools: <http://www.nplanonline.org/nplan/products/creating-healthy-food-zone-around-schools>
- PolicyLink Improving Access to Healthy Food: http://www.policylink.org/site/c.lkIXLbMNjRE/b.5136643/k.1E5B/Improving_Access_to_Healthy_Food.htm
- The Food Trust: Our Projects: Community-Based Programs <http://www.thefoodtrust.org/index.php>

General Resources

The national and state data sources included in the Children's Food Environment State Indicator Report, 2011 are available at <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/>. For more information, please contact FoodEnvironmentReport@cdc.gov or visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao>.