



# The Development and Implementation of Nutrition Standards and Policies in a Private School in Seattle

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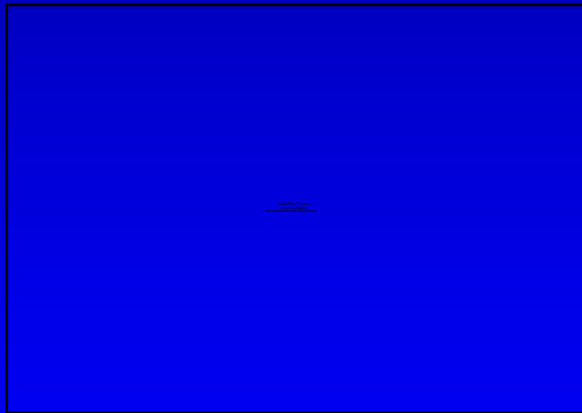
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## Specific Aims

1. Develop and Implement a School Nutrition Policy
2. Provide a healthy school lunch menu

## MCH Concern

- The rate of overweight children has nearly tripled in the last 30 years<sup>1</sup>
- The Surgeon General has declared overweight prevalence in children and adolescents "a major public health concern"<sup>2</sup>
- Children who are overweight are at an increased risk of developing health complications such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease<sup>2</sup>
- Being overweight can negatively affect children's social and psychological development<sup>2</sup>
- Reducing child and adolescent obesity requires efforts by families, schools, communities, government and industry<sup>3</sup>
- The School environment can play a vital role in shaping children's health behaviors because children spend the majority of their day in school<sup>5</sup>
- A school nutrition policy and a healthy school lunch program could make a significant difference in the long-term health of children<sup>5</sup>



- Through its Healthy People 2010 initiative, the federal government has set a national goal to reduce the number of overweight children from 11 to 5 percent<sup>3</sup>
- Washington State Legislature passed a law (SB 5436) in 2004 requiring every school district in the state to adopt a nutrition and physical activity policy
- Washington's new 2007 Cover All Kids law (SB 5093) includes nutrition and physical activity goals to be met by all schools by 2010
- Unfortunately, children enrolled in private schools don't necessarily reap the benefit from these same bills



## Approach

- Focus Groups: Concerned parents mobilized to discuss their concern about the lack of a school nutrition policy and the long-term consequences poor nutritional food choices could have on their children's health
- Grounded Theory Employed: Parents asked to rank order areas of concern and ultimately came to a consensus about how to resolve the issue within the school
- A nutritionist was hired as a consultant to approach school administrators with suggestions

## Findings

- A School Nutrition Policy was developed and implemented
- A set nutritious lunch menu provided for students
  - Children no longer allowed to select "a la carte" items
  - Pop removed from the menu
- Food Reward Campaigns attached to student fundraising eliminated
- Eliminating the use of candy as rewards on the playground
- "Birthday Friday" initiated, birthdays celebrated 1 day a month rather than individually



## Public Health Implications

The population of young children at risk for obesity and other adverse health outcomes is rising at an alarming rate. Young children need guidance from their parents AND their schools, to instill the knowledge necessary to make good choices throughout life. Just as children need healthy food choices in their homes, it is also necessary to provide these options within the schools, where children spend the majority of their time.

## References

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