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Research BRIEF

Youth Community Connections

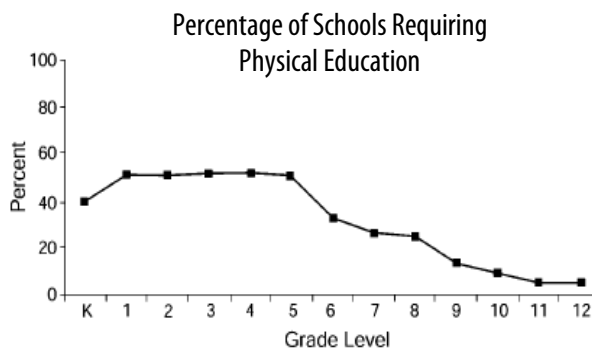
Minnesota's Statewide Afterschool Alliance

Afterschool Programming Promotes Healthy Lifestyles

Quality afterschool programs help to prevent obesity in youth.

YOUNG PEOPLE ARE BECOMING MORE OBESE

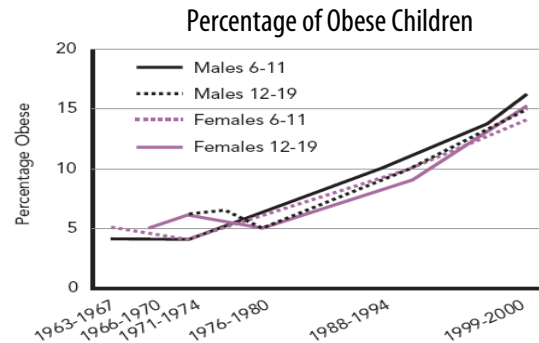
Youth in America are increasingly becoming obese. Obesity rates have tripled since 1970, and by 2010 half of all school age children will be overweight. Sedentary lifestyles and poor eating habits are two of the leading influences on the current trend. As fewer and fewer schools are requiring physical education, the time children spend out of school becomes even more important. Body Mass Index (BMI) has been shown to grow fastest during the summer - a time when quality summer learning programs can have a great impact.



THE COSTS OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY ARE HIGH

There are high consequences for not addressing the increasing rates of obesity in our young people, both for the young people themselves and for our communities.

- ◆ Diagnoses of Type 2 (adult onset) diabetes have increased tenfold.
- ◆ Hospital costs resulting from obesity in youth have increased from \$35 million (in 1970) to \$127 million (in 1999).
- ◆ Today's youth could become the first generation to have a shorter lifespan than their parents.
- ◆ Obese youth are more likely to be teased or ostracized, negatively impacting their personal well being as well as their experience at school.



THE EATING HABITS OF CHILDREN ARE DETERIORATING AND SEDENTARY LIFESTYLES ARE BECOMING MORE COMMON

- ◆ Only 20% of youth in high school consumed recommended daily serving of fruits and vegetables.
- ◆ Nearly a quarter of male students in MN consume 3 or more glasses of soda or pop in a day.
- ◆ 62% of youth age 9-13 do not participate in any organized physical activity outside of school hours.
- ◆ On average youth spend 4.5 hours a day watching TV or playing video games.
- ◆ More than 55% of boys and 74% of girls in MN get 20 minutes of exercise on 4 or fewer days of the week (the recommended amount is 60 minutes per day).

AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMS CAN ADDRESS MANY AREAS OF CONCERN

Quality afterschool and summer learning programs:

- ◆ Provide consistent opportunities for active youth participation during the times youth are most likely to be inactive: after school and during the summer
- ◆ Offer an environment where youth feel safe enough - both physically and emotionally - to try new activities and build new skills.
- ◆ Provide meals and snacks that can serve as nutritious examples for dietary habits.
- ◆ Provide caring adult who can act as healthy role models.
- ◆ Serve groups of children most at risk for obesity.

Sources

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- ◆ Institute of Medicine of the National Academies, Fact Sheet: “Schools Can Play a Role in Preventing Childhood Obesity.” September 2004.
- ◆ Hitti, Miranda. “Summer May Boost Childhood Obesity.” WebMD Health News, February 28, 2007.
- ◆ “Afterschool Programs Can Keep Kids Active.” American College of Sports Medicine, May 31, 2007
- ◆ Battista, Jackie; Nigg, Claudia R.; Chang, Jo Ann; Yamashita, Marisa; Chung, Richard. “Elementary After School Programs: An Opportunity to Promote Physical Activity for Children.” California Journal of Health Promotion. Vol 3, Issue 4. 108-118. 2005.
- ◆ Afterschool Investments: “Promoting Physical Activity and Healthy Nutrition in Afterschool Settings: Strategies for Program Leaders and Policy Makers.” US Department of Health and Human Services. August 2006.
- ◆ 2007 Minnesota Student Survey
- ◆ National Afterschool Association: “Active Kids After School: The Role of Afterschool in Obesity Prevention.” (www.naaweb.org)