



LET'S MOVE *Cities & Towns*

Become a Let's Move City or Town

The First Lady is calling on mayors and elected officials across the country to join her *Let's Move!* campaign. *Let's Move Cities and Towns* engages mayors and other municipal leaders in the campaign to solve the problem of childhood obesity within a generation. *Let's Move Cities and Towns* emphasizes the unique ability of communities to solve the challenge locally, and the critical leadership mayors and elected officials can provide to bring communities together and spur action.

Let's Move Cities and Towns is designed to encourage mayors and elected officials to adopt a long-term, sustainable, and holistic approach to fight childhood obesity. This initiative recognizes that every city is different, and every town will require a distinct approach to the issue. Once an elected official signs up as a prospective *Let's Move City* or a *Let's Move Town*, he or she will choose at least one significant action to take over the following twelve months in each of the four pillar areas:

1. Help Parents Make Healthy Family Choices
2. Create Healthy Schools
3. Provide Access to Healthy and Affordable Food
4. Promote Physical Activity

Requirements:

Let's Move Cities and Towns must submit a first quarter and end-of-year update, describing the city's or town's plan, timeline, and actions. These reports will be

posted online. Then, a city or town may become a *Let's Move City* or *Let's Move Town*.

Let's Move Cities and Towns for a given year may be recognized in the following ways:

Let's Move! Intergovernmental Affairs representatives will seek out cities and towns to highlight and celebrate initiative.

Accomplishments and ideas for future action may be highlighted on the *Let's Move!* website.

Mayors from *Let's Move Cities and Towns* will be invited to participate in conference calls with White House and federal agency staff to share ideas, discuss barriers, celebrate progress.

Let's Move Cities and Towns will receive a certificate of acknowledgement confirming qualification as a *Let's Move City* or *Let's Move Town*.

Mayors from *Let's Move Cities and Towns* may be invited to attend events to celebrate collective success in combating childhood obesity.



A Call to Action

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One-third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma. A recent study put the health care costs of obesity-related diseases at \$147 billion per year. This epidemic also impacts the nation's security, as obesity is now one of the most common disqualifiers for military service.

In an address to mayors in January, 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama called them to take a leadership role in the *Let's Move!* campaign to solve the epidemic of childhood obesity *within* a generation. "The idea here is very simple: to put in place common sense, innovative solutions that empower families and communities to make healthy decisions for their kids," stated Mrs. Obama.

Steps for Mayors and Elected Officials

To become a prospective *Let's Move City* or *Let's Move Town*, mayors and elected officials can make an impact by:

1. **Helping Parents Make Healthy Family Choices:** Offer parents tools, support, and information to make healthier choices for their families.
2. **Improving the Health of Schools:** Promote healthier food in schools.
3. **Increasing Physical Activity Opportunities:** Promote physical activity in your schools, city, or town.
4. **Making Healthy Food Affordable and Accessible:** Eliminate food deserts in your community and improve the affordability of healthy food.

Mayors and elected officials are encouraged to take action in each of the four areas. The following sections outline ideas for strategies and programs to take a leadership role. These are some ideas to get started – this program should be tailored to the characteristics and needs of the particular city or town. *Let's Move Cities and Towns* welcomes your ideas, input, and feedback on efforts that are really working and those that aren't. Mayors and elected officials can be the leaders on this effort across the country and with all of us working together, this problem can be solved.



Healthy Communities

Lack of access to proper nutrition is one reason why many children are not eating the recommended levels of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

More than 23 million Americans, including 6.5 million children, live in low-income urban and rural neighborhoods that are more than a mile from a supermarket. These communities, where access to affordable, quality, and nutritious foods is limited, are known as food deserts.

Food insecurity and hunger among our children is even more widespread. A recent USDA report showed that in 2008, an estimated 49.1 million people, including 16.7 million children, lived in households that experienced hunger multiple times throughout the year. Too often, these same school age children are not eating the recommended level of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy products. So, *Let's Move!* to ensure that all families have access to healthy, affordable food in their communities.

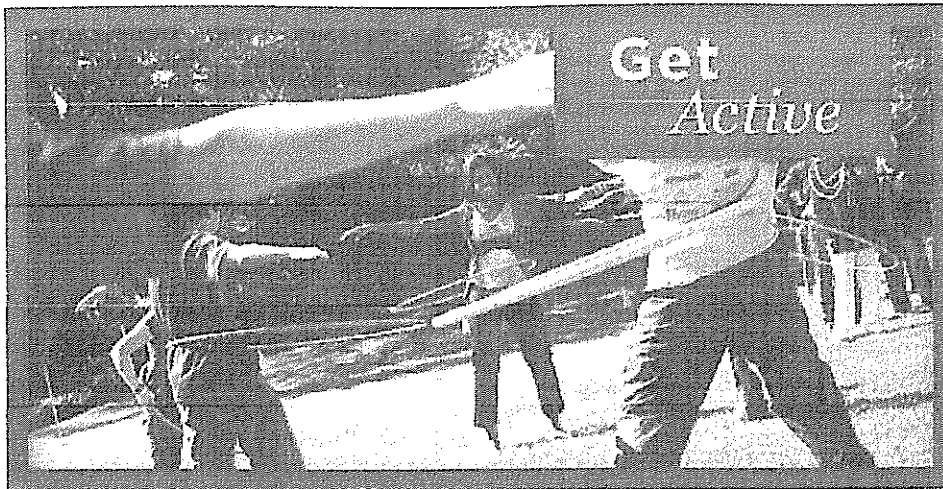
Healthy Food Financing Initiative

The Obama Administration has announced a new program—the Healthy Food Financing Initiative—a partnership between the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Agriculture and Health and Human Services to invest \$400 million a year to provide innovative financing to develop healthy food retailers to underserved areas and help places such as convenience stores and bodegas carry healthier food options.

Lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. This is a solvable problem. Financing tools for healthy food retailers in the form of tax credits, grants or low-cost loans and technical assistance form the core of this initiative. This initiative serves the dual purposes of providing employment and business development opportunities in low-income communities while facilitating access to healthy food options.

Farmers Markets are another simple but major ingredient in solving access issues in many communities. And many markets now participate in the WIC, SNAP, Double Dollar, and Seniors benefits program so that fresh produce is not out of reach for those with limited or fixed incomes.

Through these initiatives and private sector engagement, the Administration will work to eliminate food deserts across the country within seven years.



Get Active

Physical activity is an essential component of a healthy lifestyle. In combination with healthy eating, it can help prevent a range of chronic diseases, including heart disease, cancer, and stroke, the three leading causes of death. Physical activity helps control weight, builds lean muscle, reduces fat, promotes strong bone, muscle and joint development, and decreases the risk of obesity. Children need 60 minutes of active and vigorous play every day to grow up to a healthy weight.

If this sounds like a lot, consider that 8-18 year-olds devote an average of 7 1/2 hours to using entertainment media including TV, computers, video games, cell phones and movies in a typical day, and only a third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity. To increase physical activity, today's children need safe routes to walk and ride to school, parks, playgrounds and community centers where they can play after school and be active in sports, dance or fitness programs that are exciting and challenging to keep them engaged.

Let's Move! to increase opportunities for kids to be physically active, both in and out of school and create new opportunities for families to be moving together.

Active Families: Building in a few minutes of activity periodically during the day keeps energy flowing.

Active Schools: A variety of opportunities are available for schools to add more physical activity into the school day including: additional physical education classes, before and after school programs, recess, and opening school facilities for student and family recreation in the late afternoon and evening.

Active Communities: Mayors and community leaders can promote physical fitness by working to increase safe routes for kids to walk and ride to school, parks, playgrounds and community centers, and sports and fitness programs.



Healthy Families

Adults decide what kids eat and they will eat what is available, so surrounding them with healthier options leaves them no choice but to eat better food.

Set the Family Up for Success

Small changes in five key areas make a big difference and add up to real results: More Fruits and Vegetables, Less Sugar and Fat, Healthier Snacks, Portion Size, and Eating Together as a Family.

Fruits & Vegetables

- Kids should eat five fruits and vegetables a day
- Fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables all count
- Fruit or carrot sticks make great snacks
- Juices should be 100% juice with no added sugar
- Mix in vegetables into dishes, add peas to rice, or cucumber to a sandwich

Healthy Choices to Reduce Fat and Sugar

- Switch to low or non-fat milk, yogurt and cheese
- Choose lean cuts of meat like skinless chicken or extra lean ground beef for hamburgers or pasta sauces
- Bake or grill instead of fry
- Substitute olive or vegetable oil for butter
- Substitute water or low-fat milk for sodas or sweetened beverages
- Drink less soda or sugar-sweetened drinks
- Switch to lower sugar breakfast cereals
- Switch desserts like ice cream and cake for fruit based desserts

Snacks

- Reduce the number of snacks served each day
- Leave a bowl of fruit or carrot sticks on the kitchen table
- Differentiate between snacks that require permission (cookies), versus snacks that kids can take freely (fresh or dried fruit)
- Have kids drink water at snack time
- Save "treats" for special occasions

Portion Size

Kids are smaller than adults and should eat smaller portions

Use smaller plates for kids

Don't force kids to clean their plates if they are full

Portions should be about the size of the back of a fist—a child's fist for a child's portion

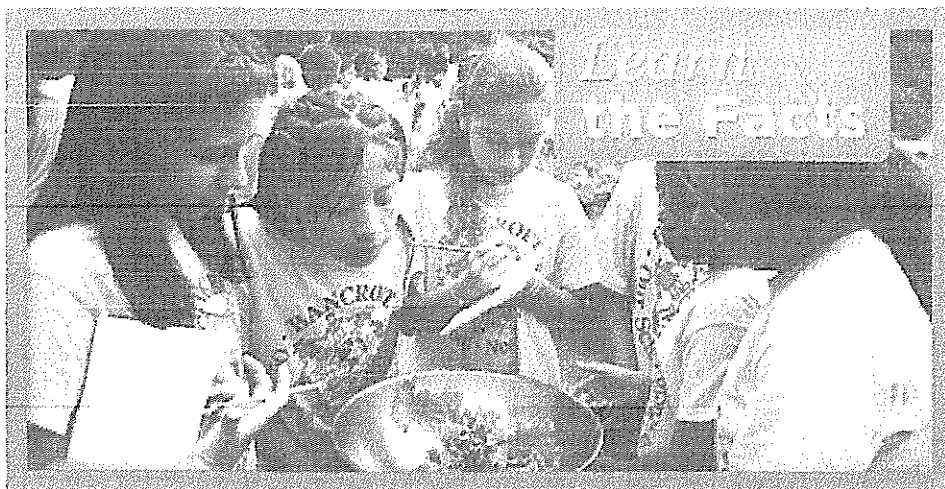
Start with a small portion. Children can have seconds if they want

Eat Together

Family meals focus on eating and enjoying food and each other

Eating together is a chance to model good behavior

Regularly scheduled meal and snack times help kids learn structure for eating



Learn the Facts

"The physical and emotional health of an entire generation and the economic health and security of our nation is at stake."

- First Lady Michelle Obama at the Let's Move! launch on February 9, 2010

Obesity by the numbers

Over the past three decades, childhood obesity rates in America have tripled, and today, nearly one in three children in America are overweight or obese. One third of all children born in 2000 or later will suffer from diabetes at some point in their lives; many others will face chronic obesity-related health problems like heart disease, high blood pressure, cancer, and asthma.

How did we get here?

Thirty years ago, most people led lives that kept them at a pretty healthy weight. Kids walked to and from school every day, ran around at recess, participated in gym class, and played for hours after school before dinner. Meals were home-cooked with reasonable portion sizes and there was always a vegetable on the plate. Eating fast food was rare and snacking between meals was an occasional treat.

Kids today lead a very different kind of life. Walks to and from school have been replaced by car and bus rides. Gym class and school sports have been cut and are often replaced now by afternoons with TV, video games, and the internet. Parents are busier than ever and families eat fewer home-cooked meals. Snacking between meals is the norm, not the exception.

While kids thirty years ago ate just one snack a day, they are now trending toward three—so they're taking in an additional 200 calories a day just from snacks. And one in five school-age kids has up to six snacks a day.

Portion sizes have also exploded. Food portions are two to five times bigger than they used to be. Beverage portions have grown as well. In the mid-1970s, average sweetened drink portions were 13.6 ounces. Today, kids think nothing of drinking 20 ounces of soda at a time.

In total, we are now eating 31 percent more calories than we were forty years ago—including 56 percent more fats and oils and 14 percent more sugars and sweeteners. The average American now eats fifteen more pounds of sugar a year than in 1970.

And the average American child spends more than 7.5 hours a day watching TV and movies, using cell phones and computers for entertainment, and playing video games, and only a third of high school students get the recommended levels of physical activity.

That's the bad news. The good news is by making a few simple changes we can help our kids lead healthier lives—and we already have all of the tools we need to do it. We just need the will.

Let's Move!

We can solve the challenge of childhood obesity within a generation so that children born today will reach adulthood at a healthy weight if we all work together. Through the *Let's Move!* campaign—a comprehensive, collaborative, and community-oriented initiative that addresses all of the various factors that lead to childhood obesity—we are engaging every sector of society that impacts the health of children to provide schools, families and communities the simple tools they need to help kids be more active, eat better, and get healthy.



Let's Move! in New Orleans

The First Lady travels to New Orleans, Louisiana to kick off the next phase her Let's Move! initiative to raise a healthier generation of kids. Check out a slideshow with the First Lady, kids and NFL players practicing some football drills.

[READ MORE](#)



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TAKE THE *President's* CHALLENGE

Challenge yourself for six weeks to set active lifestyle goals, log your activities and earn awards. GO!

LET'S MOVE BLOG

MOST RECENT

OCTOBER 8, 2010

Soccer on the South Lawn

Posted by Erin Edgerton

Getting 60 minutes of play every day is important and yesterday students from several Washington, DC elementary schools got their 60 minutes on the south lawn at the White House. As part of the ongoing South Lawn Series, players from the DC United soccer team led the kids in drills and games, showing them just how fun exercise can be. The students ran, jumped, kick soccer balls and ended the day with apples as a healthy snack. [Continue reading story](#)

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