



Opening School Grounds to the Community After Hours: A Toolkit for Increasing Physical Activity Through Joint Use Agreements

In many communities, where safe places to play are few and far between, schools offer a variety of recreational facilities – from gymnasiums and running tracks to sports fields and playgrounds – to meet residents’ needs. But districts often close their property to the public after hours, concerned about security, maintenance, liability, and other costs.

The good news is that school districts, local governments, and community-based organizations can share the costs and responsibilities of opening school property to the public after hours through joint use agreements.

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Family Meals, Adequate Sleep and Limited TV May Lower Childhood Obesity

ScienceDaily (Feb. 8, 2010) — A new national study suggests that preschool-aged children are likely to have a lower risk for obesity if they regularly engage in one or more of three specific household routines: eating dinner as a family, getting adequate sleep and limiting their weekday television viewing time.

In a large sample of the U.S. population, the study showed that 4-year-olds living in homes with all three routines had an almost 40 percent lower prevalence of obesity than did children living in homes that practiced none of these routines.

Other studies have linked obesity to the individual behaviors of excessive TV viewing, a lack of sleep and, to a lesser extent, a low frequency of family meals. But this is the first study to assess the combination of all three routines with obesity prevalence in a national sample of preschoolers.

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Food Politics: The Surgeon General’s Vision for a Healthy and Fit Nation

Marion Nestle writes...

I recently received this request from Daniel posted to Feedback:

Would you mind writing a blog post on the new surgeon general’s obesity report? ...Is there a food politic element to why this has gone under the radar? ...I find it ironic that Michael Pollan’s Food Rules generated substantially more press than a report by the United States Surgeon General.

I’m not surprised. Pollan’s book is a hot best seller (it’s #1 on Amazon books, and for good reason, in my opinion). The need to prevent obesity and how to do it is not exactly front-page news.

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[Surgeon General’s Vision](#)

Beverage industry douses tax on soft drinks

Los Angeles Times- The idea had been floated as a way to finance a healthcare overhaul while combating obesity. But the industry has lobbied key lawmakers and financed scientific studies favorable to its position.

Reporting from Washington - Employing a broad-based lobbying effort, the soft drink industry has smothered a plan to tax sugared beverages -- a plan advocates said would have reduced obesity and helped finance healthcare reform.

Only months ago, public health advocates thought the tax would be a natural for congressional Democrats looking for revenue to fund expanded health insurance coverage. The soaring costs of treating ailments related to excess weight -- including diabetes and heart disease -- added urgency to the issue.

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Readers Choose Most Influential Research: Top articles emphasize the importance of environment and physical activity.

RWJF- Recently, RWJF asked Web site visitors and subscribers to choose the most influential childhood obesity research for the past year. The results are in, and the five articles receiving the most votes demonstrate the perceived importance of environment.

The article receiving the most votes, "Proximity of Fast-Food Restaurants to Schools and Adolescent Obesity," indicated that adolescents with fast-food restaurants within one half mile of schools were more likely to be overweight or obese and less likely to consume fruits and vegetables.

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CAPITAL CULTURE: First lady tackling child obesity

Associated Press- By now, it is abundantly clear that Michelle Obama loves french fries. The first lady talks about this “guilty pleasure” all the time, trying to ward off any notion that she is a nutrition nanny even as she cajoles Americans to eat better. Now, her conversation with the public about the nation’s health and fitness is about to get a lot more pointed.

After laying the groundwork for nearly a year, she launches a campaign on Tuesday against childhood obesity that she hopes will change the way millions of Americans eat, exercise, look and feel.

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