

# Support a healthy food environment in all aspects of the school day.

## School Meals

The National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs provide nutritious meals to all children enrolled in participating schools. These meals are provided by your school district's financially self-supported Food Service Department and must meet the nutritional standards set forth by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

All school food service programs are evaluated by a state agency to ensure that they meet specific nutritional requirements. Lunch must provide 1/3 of the Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for key nutrients, breakfast must provide 1/4 of the RDA, and all meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Schools are working to further improve the nutritional content of school meals by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.

Contact your school district's food service director for more information on the meals served in your district.



## Competitive Foods

In addition to the nutrition guidelines for school meals set by the federal government, **Massachusetts Action for Healthy Kids (Mass AFHK)** has developed standards to address “competitive foods,” those foods and beverages sold outside the reimbursable school meals programs. These may include a la carte snacks and beverages available in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraising activities, and classroom parties.

The standards are used in compiling the A-List, a comprehensive list of “A-acceptable” products.

The John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition (JSI) manages the A-List by evaluating new products against the Mass AFHK *Standards* to assure their “A-acceptability.”

**The A-List and the Standards are available on the JSI website:**

**A-List:**

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/  
vending project/healthysnacks.htm](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/vending_project/healthysnacks.htm)

**Standards:**

[www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/  
MA\\_Food\\_Standards.pdf](http://www.johnstalkerinstitute.org/MA_Food_Standards.pdf)



Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) is a nationwide initiative dedicated to creating healthy school environments by advancing sound nutrition and physical activity practices in schools across the country. AFHK is composed of 51 state teams including Massachusetts AFHK. [www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

# Taking Action for Healthy Kids School Wellness Policy Guide

for Parents



[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

## Why focus on wellness?

- Well-nourished children are more likely to attend school regularly and achieve academic success.
- Overweight children and teens are more likely to develop chronic diseases and become overweight adults.
- Wellness policies are intended to raise nutritional awareness, promote healthy eating habits, and encourage physical activity among members of the school community.

### The School Wellness Policy

All school districts are required to have a wellness policy in place according to the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 (Public Law 108-265).

As part of the wellness policy, school districts must set goals for nutrition education, physical activity, campus food provision, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness.

Participation in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the policy should include food service directors, school nurses, physical educators, teachers, school administrators, local school committee members, parents, students, and members of the community.

## Parents Take Action for Healthy Kids

### As a parent, you can:

- Familiarize yourself with your school district's wellness policy by requesting a copy from the school office.
- Learn about your school district's policies regarding foods and beverages used in fundraisers, classroom parties, vending machines, school stores, and school meals.
- Work with other parents to promote student wellness and support the district's wellness policies regarding non-food fundraisers and classroom parties.
- Be a positive role model for children by demonstrating healthy eating habits and being physically active.
- Reinforce wellness messages taught at school by providing healthy meals and snacks at home, providing nutritious snacks to take to school, and encouraging healthy school food choices.
- Limit time spent on video games, non-homework related computer use, and television viewing. Look for opportunities to be physically active as a family.



## Additional Resources:

*We Can!* (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition) is a national program designed for families and communities to help children maintain a healthy weight. The website provides helpful tips and practical resources for parents and their children.

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/)

The *Kidnetic.com* website provides fun activities and information about healthy eating and active living for children ages 9-12. The site also features a special section for parents.

[www.kidnetic.com/Parents/](http://www.kidnetic.com/Parents/)

United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *MyPyramid* website provides an interactive way for individuals to assess their current diet and physical activity as well as develop a personal eating plan.

[www.Mypyramid.gov](http://www.Mypyramid.gov)

USDA's *Eat Smart. Play Hard. Healthy Lifestyle!* website provides information and resources about healthy eating and physical activity to parents and caregivers.

[www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/](http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/)

*Cooks for Kids* is a series of free training programs that can be viewed online. Each episode focuses on healthy food and cooking techniques that can be used at school, in restaurants, and at home.

[www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Education/Satellite/CFK/satinfo.html](http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/nfsmi/Education/Satellite/CFK/satinfo.html)

*Jump Up and Go* is a multidimensional, collaborative program intended to help children, their families, and their communities become more physically active and develop lifelong healthy behaviors. Parents can download tools for implementing the program on the website.

[www.jumpupandgo.org](http://www.jumpupandgo.org)