

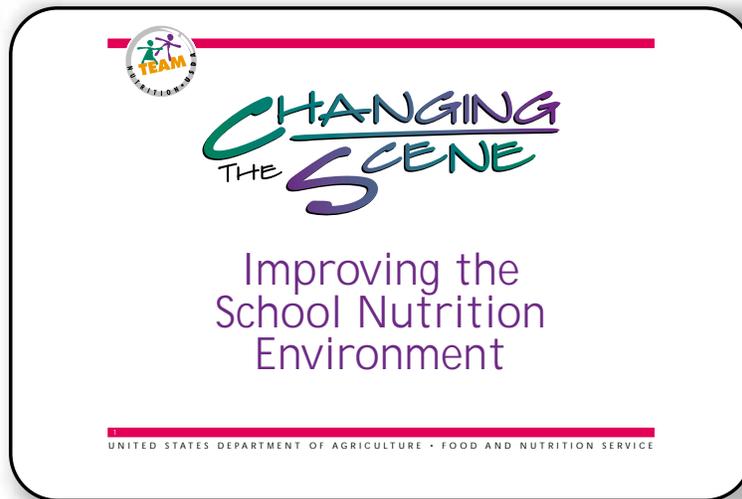
CHANGING THE SCENE



Improving the School Nutrition Environment



Presentation Script



SLIDE 1

Welcome to *Changing the Scene: Improving the School Nutrition Environment*

Thank you for coming to this important presentation. The fact that you are here indicates that you are interested in one of the most important issues facing our Nation today—children’s nutrition and health.

The reality is—our children are facing a health crisis. Our schools have an important role to play in helping address the crisis. But schools can’t do it alone—we need a little help from our friends.

Alarming Trends

- Diets are falling short of the mark
- Desirable physical activity levels are not being met
- Obesity rates are skyrocketing
- Adult diseases are showing up in children



SLIDE 2

There are some alarming trends that are harming our children's health and their ability to learn and do well in school. For example:

- Diets are falling short of the mark—
 1. Only 2 percent of children actually meet the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid.
 2. Less than 15 percent of school children eat the recommended servings of fruit.
 3. Only 30 percent consume the recommended milk group servings.
 4. Teenagers today drink twice as much carbonated soda as milk.
- Too many children are physically inactive; nearly half of young people ages 12-21 do not engage in physical activity on a regular basis.
- The percentage of young people who are overweight has more than doubled since 1970. Childhood obesity is recognized as a national epidemic.
- As many as 30,000 children have Type 2 diabetes, a type of diabetes that was once almost entirely limited to adults.

Adverse CVD Risk Factor Levels in Children

Percent of children, aged 5-10, with 1 or
more adverse CVD risk factor levels:

27.1

Percent of overweight children, aged
5-10, with 1 or more adverse CVD risk
factor levels:

60.6

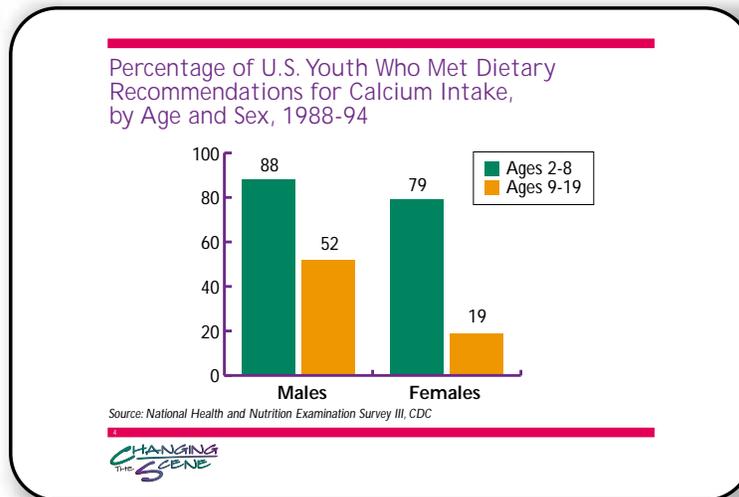
Source: Freedman DS et al. Pediatrics 1999; 103:1175-82



SLIDE 3

Children, as young as elementary school age, are increasingly at risk for other diet related diseases.

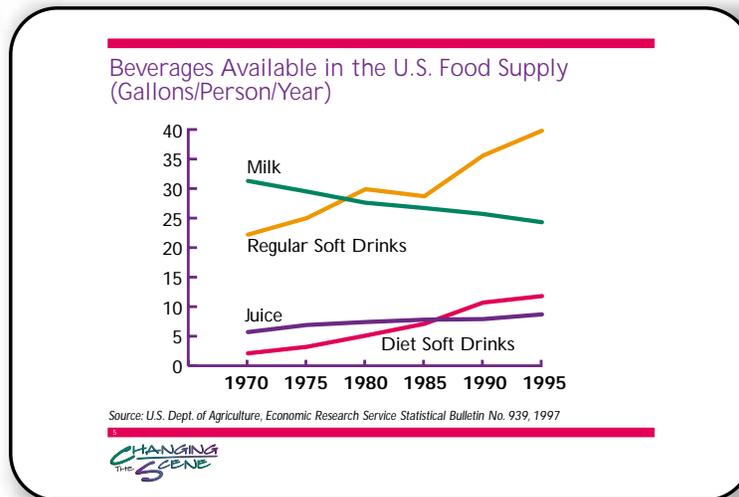
- A recent study in *Pediatrics* reported that more than one fourth of children, aged 5-10, had one or more adverse cardiovascular disease risk factors.
- And that number rose to **60.6 percent** among **overweight** children of the same age.



SLIDE 4

Osteoporosis is another growing concern and many of today's children may be setting the stage for problems in later life. At a time in their lives when calcium is most critical for formation of strong bones, the story is not a good one.

- 88 percent of boys and 79 percent of girls, ages 2-8, meet dietary recommendations for calcium, but
- only 52 percent of boys and only 19 percent of girls, ages 9-19, meet those recommendations.



SLIDE 5

Trends in the supply of beverages in the country's food supply can help us understand one of the environmental influences that affect whether or not children and teenagers meet their calcium needs.

- In 1970, there was far more milk than regular soft drinks in the food supply. By 1980, soft drinks had climbed ahead—and look at the dramatic surge between 1985 and 1995.
- There is a similar story in juice and diet soft drinks. Juice has not declined, but diet soft drinks have grown at a much higher rate.

Schools Can Make a Difference

Nutrition and
physical activity
are important to students



SLIDE 6

Schools can make a difference—both in improving learning readiness today, and improving eating and physical activity patterns for long term health. Studies show that nutrition and physical activity are linked, and both are very important.

- Participation in the School Breakfast Program has improved students' test performance, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, increased attention, and improved behavior and emotional adjustment.
- Physical activity among adolescents is consistently related to higher levels of self-esteem and lower levels of anxiety and stress.

What Can Be Done?

Improve the
School Nutrition
Environment



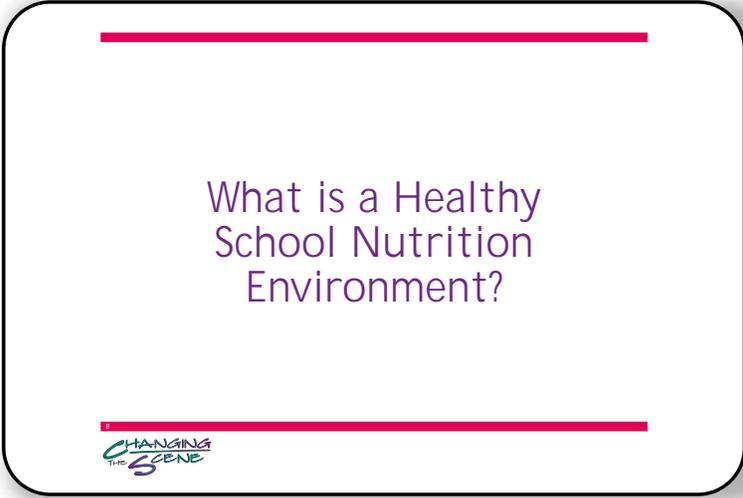
SLIDE 7 What can be done?

If we are going to turn these negative trends around, we must take action to improve the school nutrition environment.

A healthy school nutrition environment can help prevent health problems and help students have healthier, more productive lives.

Schools are the perfect place to create an environment for children where healthy lifestyles are consistently reinforced, and easy to learn and adopt.

We need your help to make our school a place where students can learn about, and participate in, healthy eating and physical activity.



What is a Healthy School Nutrition Environment?

SLIDE 8

What is a healthy school nutrition environment?

A healthy school nutrition environment is one where nutrition and physical activity are taught and supported in the classroom, the dining room, and throughout the school.

This environment provides positive messages that help students develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. It also provides an opportunity to practice these healthy habits.

This includes the opportunity to make personal choices from healthy food options in the school dining area and throughout the school; the opportunity to eat in pleasant and comfortable surroundings; and the opportunity for physical activity that is fun.

By providing these messages and opportunities, lifestyle choices are being taught not only in class but by the environment students experience each school day.

Students learn what they live.

Components of a Healthy School Nutrition Environment

- A Commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity
- Quality School Meals
- Other Healthy Food Options
- Pleasant Eating Experiences
- Nutrition Education
- Marketing



SLIDE 9

There are six components that contribute to a healthy school nutrition environment:

- 1. A Commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity**
- 2. Quality School Meals**
- 3. Other Healthy Food Options**
- 4. Pleasant Eating Experiences**
- 5. Nutrition Education**
- 6. Marketing**

Each component is important—and each component makes a valuable contribution to the whole school nutrition environment.

The following slides will give you some Definitions of Success for each of the six components. These are minimums; we may want to add to them.

A Commitment to Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Nutrition and physical activity are part of each school day
- Policies are in place and enforced
- School foodservice is on the team
- School health councils give support



SLIDE 10

Children need a healthy diet and physical activity in order to do their best. Our school can be a great place for children to learn this lesson.

A commitment to nutrition and physical activity includes:

- Nutrition and physical activity are part of each school day and are taught in all grades, pre-kindergarten through grade 12.
- There are school policies that address mealtime scheduling, dining room atmosphere, nutrition education, physical activity, and all foods sold on school campuses and at school-sponsored events.
- School foodservice professionals are part of the education team and are included in decision making that affects the school nutrition environment.
- School health councils are formed and used to support nutrition and physical activity program goals.

Quality School Meals

- School meal programs are available
- Healthy, appealing choices are available
- Food safety is a priority
- Menus meet nutrition standards



SLIDE 11

Healthy school meals provide energy for children’s minds and bodies. Studies confirm what parents and teachers have said for years—children who are not well fed have a hard time learning.

Definitions of Success for quality school meals include:

- School meal programs (lunch, breakfast, and afterschool snacks) are available to all students and they are encouraged to participate.
- A variety of healthy choices that appeal to students, including cultural and ethnic favorites, are available. Quality, taste, and appearance are a high priority: food is served attractively, hot foods are served hot, and cold foods are served cold.
- Food safety is a priority.
- Menus meet nutrition standards established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Other Healthy Food Options

- All foods and beverages available at school make a positive contribution to healthy choices
- Parents make healthy options available
- Food is not used for fund-raising



SLIDE 12

The quality of the school nutrition environment depends on the quality of all foods offered at school. Foods of low nutritional quality that compete with healthy school meals send mixed messages to students.

Definitions of Success for other healthy food options include:

- All foods and beverages available at school make a positive contribution to the overall diets of children and come from the five major food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid.
- Parents make a positive contribution by providing healthy food choices for parties, celebrations, and bag lunches brought from home.
- Food is not used for fund-raising. School groups are encouraged to raise funds by selling non-food items.

Other Healthy Food Options

- Food is not used as a reward or punishment
- Access to vending machines is limited



SLIDE 13

Additional Definitions of Success include:

- Food is not used as a reward or punishment.
- Access to vending machines is limited:
 - no access in elementary schools
 - no access until after the end of the school day in middle and junior high schools
 - no access until after the end of the last school lunch period in high schools

Pleasant Eating Experiences

- Meals scheduled at appropriate times
- Students have time to eat and socialize
- Adequate serving and seating areas



SLIDE 14

Children will enjoy their food more and may try more healthy options if they can relax, eat, and socialize without feeling rushed. Student needs must be considered when decisions are made regarding mealtime schedules and dining room atmosphere.

Definitions of Success for pleasant eating experiences include:

- Meals are scheduled at appropriate times—for example, lunch is not served before 11:00 a.m. or after 1:00 p.m.
- Students have time to eat and socialize with their friends. They should spend a minimal amount of time in line and have plenty of time to eat their food and socialize.
- Adequate serving and seating areas are available—new and renovated schools are designed to adequately address space, lighting, foodservice equipment, and materials.

Pleasant Eating Experiences

- Dining room décor is attractive
- Creative methods are used to keep noise levels appropriate
- Drinking fountains are available
- Handwashing equipment and supplies are available



SLIDE 15

Additional Definitions of Success include:

- Dining room décor is attractive, making the area pleasant for meals.
- Creative, innovative methods are used to keep noise levels appropriate—no “eat in silence,” no whistles, no buzzing traffic lights.
- Drinking fountains are conveniently available for students to have access to water throughout the school day.
- Handwashing equipment and supplies are in a convenient place so that students can wash their hands before eating.

Nutrition Education

- Available in pre-K through grade 12
- Focuses on skill development
- Integrated into core curriculum
- Dining room and classroom are linked
- School is a Team Nutrition School



SLIDE 16

Building nutrition knowledge and skills helps children make healthy eating and physical activity choices. Nutrition education for children is essential. It must be appropriate for their ages, culturally relevant, fun, and participatory.

Definitions of Success for nutrition education include:

- Nutrition education and physical activity are available in all grades, pre-kindergarten through grade 12.
- The focus is on skill development so that children are able to learn and adopt healthy eating behaviors.
- It is integrated into the core curriculum areas such as math, science, and language arts.
- Nutrition education is offered in the school dining room and in the classroom, with coordination between school foodservice staff and teachers.
- The school is enrolled as a Team Nutrition School and conducts nutrition education activities and promotions that involve students, parents, and the community.

Marketing

- Healthy eating and physical activity are actively promoted
- Students receive positive, motivating messages
- Schools promote healthy food choices



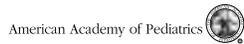
SLIDE 17

Making healthy food choices and physical activity available for students is important but it is only one step in the process. The benefits have to be promoted.

Definitions of Success for marketing include:

- Healthy eating and physical activity are actively promoted to students, parents, teachers, administrators, and the community.
- Students receive positive, motivating messages about healthy eating and physical activity throughout the school setting.
- Schools promote healthy food choices and don't allow advertising that promotes less nutritious food choices.

Call to Action



SLIDE 18 Call to Action

Many people are concerned about the issues we have discussed today. Recently, five medical and health related associations developed a call to action for their members to become involved at the local level. The Associations, working with USDA's Team Nutrition, developed 10 keys for local schools to use to write their own prescriptions for change. You have a copy of that Call to Action in your handouts.

Working on this initiative are the:

- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Dietetic Association
- National Hispanic Medical Association
- National Medical Association



19-15 (Developmental) Increase the proportion of children and adolescents, age 6 to 19 years, whose intake of meals and snacks at schools contributes proportionately to good overall dietary quality.



SLIDE 19

Healthy People 2010, the nation's roadmap for improving the health of all people in this country, has an objective that recognizes the role of schools.

- The objective calls on schools to increase the proportion of children and adolescents whose intake of meals and snacks at schools contributes proportionately to good overall dietary quality.
- That's really what we have been talking about today...how to improve the eating patterns of our students.

School Meals Initiative

- New nutrition standards for school meals
- Team Nutrition to support those standards



SLIDE 20 School Meals Initiative

Both of these initiatives build on the Congressional mandate that school meals be consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Schools are making great progress, but all of us are learning that it will take more than healthy school lunch menus to get students to develop healthy eating patterns. It will take all of us working together.

It's Time to Act!



- Changes need to be made
- Make a commitment now
- Join our team
- Begin the journey—one step at a time



SLIDE 21

It's time to act. Changes need to be made to improve the nutrition environment in our school(s). We need to take action now to create a healthier future for our children.

We need your help; please join our team. Everyone has a role to play:

- Teachers
- School foodservice staff
- Parents
- Administrators
- Students
- Community members

Please join our team. Let's get started on our important journey—one step at a time!