

Recommendations

The members of the 2011 Task Force on Childhood Obesity are encouraged to continue their advocacy efforts to address Kentucky's health crisis in ways that have the greatest likelihood of preventing and reversing chronic diseases associated with childhood obesity and the consumption of unhealthy processed foods.

HCR 13 charged the task force to make recommendations to the General Assembly for strategies that address the problem of childhood obesity and that encourage better nutrition and increased physical activity among children. Meeting that charge, the task force recommends the General Assembly take the following actions.

The task force recommends the General Assembly take action to achieve the following goals by the year 2020:

- Adopt a statewide organized, integrated system of physical activity initiatives and nutrition education strategically planned and adequately funded through public and private partnerships to improve health, prevent and reverse disease, and stimulate the local food economy through supporting a just, sustainable food system that will increase access to healthy food and spur economic development in both urban and rural communities.
- Reduce the level of childhood obesity with a goal to rank Kentucky in the top 10 states with the lowest levels of childhood obesity.
- Adopt a nationally recognized physical activity and nutrition education program in all Kentucky schools with a curricula focused on science-based research demonstrating the link between the consumption of fruits and vegetables and disease prevention.
- Create a coordinated data collection system for state health indicators including type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, heart disease, childhood obesity, physical activity levels for children of all ages, and data in grades kindergarten to 12 on the degree to which children have access to and are consuming seven servings of fruits and vegetables per day and reducing intake of sugary drinks.

The task force recommends the General Assembly take the following actions to improve nutrition and nutrition education in schools and communities:

- Require schools to improve actual nutritional content of school meals served.
- Require schools to implement the nutritional standards required by the federal Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010.
- Encourage schools to have kitchen gardens that involve students, that grow vegetable and lentils, and that encourage students and parents to have kitchen gardens at home.
- Make incentive grants available for schools to improve and update school kitchens to increase access and opportunities for students to select nutrient-rich fresh produce.
- Require additional nutrition education for school nutrition specialists that includes science-based research linking antioxidant-rich fruits and vegetables to disease prevention using research from the James Graham Brown Cancer Center, University of Louisville and the nationally recognized T. Colin Campbell Foundation.
- Create incentives for schools to adopt practical, disease-prevention-focused curricula modeled after the T. Colin Campbell Foundation online nutrition education program and the research of the Prevention and Control Program, James Graham Brown Cancer Center,

University of Louisville that has shown certain fruits and vegetables to inhibit and repair DNA damage.

- Support community partnerships with organizations like Campbell Wellness and Whole Foods of Kentucky to demonstrate the unique health and economic benefits of school gardens that make it possible for Kentucky schools to introduce students to a wide variety of fruits and vegetables while teaching students how to make whole meals using produce.
- Require the Department of Education to set standards higher than those set by the federal government in evaluating and assessing nutrition programs in schools that can be a model for the nation.
- Require the Department of Education to create financial incentives for schools to improve the nutrition of school meals and food education by introducing school gardens; increasing the number of colorful selections of fresh or frozen produce; and significantly decreasing the use of processed foods, sugary drinks, salt, sugar, and fat.
- Require the Department of Education to act to make Kentucky a national model in addressing childhood obesity and associated diseases by aggressively implementing public and private partnerships and other creative solutions to increase the number of servings of fruits and vegetables consumed by students by expanding the selection and enhancing the presentation of colorful Kentucky-grown produce in schools and by establishing an organized mechanism to ensure the implementation of these directives across all grade levels.
- Require the Department of Public Health and the Department of Agriculture to strive to make Kentucky a top tier state in addressing childhood obesity and associated diseases by promoting whole-grain cereals and breads and seven daily servings of fruits and vegetables while significantly decreasing processed foods and the use of salt, sugar, fat, and sugary drinks.

The task force recommends the General Assembly take the following actions to increase opportunities for physical activity and education in schools and communities:

- Clarify the recreational use statute to make it clear that schools that allow community use of their facilities are immune from liability.
- Specify that schools may charge a nominal fee for recreational use of their facilities and consider creating a statute that specifically addresses the recreational use of school facilities.
- Encourage biking and walking by incorporating sidewalks and bike lanes into community design, including funding for biking and walking in highway projects.
- Support Safe-Routes-to-School programs and implement traffic-calming measures designed to improve traffic flow.
- Address physical activity through a coordinated school health program that includes an assessment of the school's health policies and programs and development of a plan for improvement.
- Create incentives for schools to adopt curricula that increase opportunities for students to engage in physical activity during the school day that go beyond national standards; and require the Department of Education to evaluate and assess physical activity programs in schools and to create financial incentives for schools to improve physical activity programs in schools.
- Require the Department of Education to strive to make Kentucky a national model in addressing childhood obesity by aggressively implementing creative solutions to improve

physical activity in schools and establish an organized mechanism to encourage schools to implement programs across all grade levels.

- Require the Department of Public Health and the Department of Transportation to strive to make Kentucky a top tier state in addressing childhood obesity by improving opportunities for physical activity for all citizens and communities.