

# POINTERS FOR PARENTS

## Do You Know What Your Children Are Eating?

(NAPSA)—It is twelve noon in the school cafeteria. Your child grabs a tray and reaches for the prepared school lunch...or does he? Unbeknownst to their parents, many students opt for more appealing, less healthful alternatives. How about French fries and a soda—and perhaps candy for dessert?

Today's generation of American children may be the first to have a lower average life expectancy than their parents—not because of disease or poverty but because of an overabundance of foods...and too little physical activity.

Many overfed children are undernourished because they are eating too much of the wrong kinds of foods, and they are less active than ever before. It is easy to see why nine million American children are overweight, triple the number in 1980. Even among children ages 2 to 5, childhood obesity has increased 35 percent in the past 10 years.

Schools play a major role in the solution. Making schools healthier is the mission of Action for Healthy Kids, which organizes thousands of parents and community volunteers on State Teams (representing each state and D.C.) working to help schools improve the nutrition and physical activity of kids.

Initiatives include alerting educators to the link between good nutrition, physical activity and academic achievement; improving foods offered in school cafeterias, stores, and vending machines; increasing opportunities for physical activity throughout the day; adding time for physical education and nutrition education; and offering health-promoting initiatives such as ReCharge!, a turn-key after-school program developed by



### Academic achievement improves when children eat nutritious foods and are more active.

Action for Healthy Kids and the National Football League.

The 2004 Child Nutrition Act requires that all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program implement a Local Wellness Policy by July 2006. The legislation stipulates that parents help determine policy components, such as goals for nutrition education and physical activity, and standards for the nutritional value of foods and beverages available at school.

#### What can parents do?

- Talk with children about what foods and beverages are available at school.
- Teach children the importance of choosing nutritious foods and beverages such as low-fat milk instead of soft drinks.
- Contact your school or district administrators to be involved in drafting your district's Local Wellness Policy.
- Join your Action for Healthy Kids State Team to help make thousands of children in your community and state healthier.
- Be a good role model: when it comes to healthy lifestyle choices, your children's best teacher is you.

To learn more about initiatives in your state and to get information on the ReCharge! after-school program, visit [www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org).