

# Parents

## WHERE OUR STUDENTS ARE TODAY

- In Ohio 92.8% of high school students reported they did not eat fruits or vegetables three or more times every day in the past seven days.<sup>1</sup>
- Childhood obesity is at an all-time high.<sup>2</sup> Eating patterns that are established in childhood often continue into later life, making early intervention on adopting healthy nutrition and physical activity a priority.

## WHY IT MATTERS

- Good nutrition in childhood promotes growth, health, learning, and reduced risks for chronic disease.
- A well balanced diet is necessary for children to do well in school and lead healthy and productive lives.
- Undernourished children are more susceptible to infection and more likely to miss school.<sup>3</sup>
- Recent studies indicate that what a child eats directly affects the physical structure of his or her brain, as well as memory, attention, and reasoning skills.<sup>4</sup>
- Teachers will tell you that well-nourished kids are ready to learn and do better in class.

## LET'S MOVE! A SALAD BAR TO YOUR SCHOOL

- Academic research and actual experience in schools across the country are demonstrating that school children increase their consumption of fruits and vegetables on an average of 1.2 servings per student per day when given a variety of choices in a school salad bar.<sup>5</sup>
- Increased daily access to a variety of fruits and vegetables provides a personal experience about choices that can shape healthy lifelong behaviors.
- Childhood obesity cannot be solved by removing a single food, but only by understanding the greater need to provide kids with healthy, balanced meals and opportunities for daily physical activity.

Review the school menu with your kids and encourage them to try new foods, especially the healthy foods offered.

School meals are "rightsized." Based on their age, students are getting the right portions and healthy choices like fruits and vegetables.

## Be a role model.

When it comes to eating right and being physically active, kids take their lead from parents.

If you want your kids to eat their fruits and vegetables, and drink their milk, actions speak louder than words.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System 2011

<sup>2</sup>Source: Ogden C, Carroll M, Curtin L, Lamb M, Flegal K. Prevalence of High Body Mass Index in US Children and Adolescents, 2007-2008. *J Am Med Assoc* 2010; 303 (3): 242-249.

<sup>3</sup>Source: Center for Ecoliteracy.

<sup>4</sup>Source: The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools.

<sup>5</sup>Source: <http://saladbars2schools.org/pdf/Riverside-SBP.pdf>

<sup>6</sup>Source: Fisher J. Meeting calcium recommendations during middle childhood reflects mother-daughter beverage choices and predicts bone mineral status. *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. 2004; 79(4): 698-706.

