



# New York State Association of School Nurses

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"Caring for New York's Future"

## Position Statement

### Childhood Obesity

#### HISTORY

Children have become increasingly less healthy as a result of the obesity epidemic. Sixty percent of New York adults are overweight or obese, as are one-third of the children. The prevalence of obesity continues to soar. Proper nutrition and exercise are essential components for the academic success of a child. The school setting is the ideal forum for promoting and implementing nutritional and exercise programs.

#### RATIONALE:

##### **Facts about Childhood Obesity:**

- ✓ Obesity is a disorder in which the body fat content has become so high that it creates health problems or an increased risk of health problems (Reily, 2007).
- ✓ Body mass index (BMI) provides the best simple means of defining overweight and obesity in children and adolescents.
- ✓ Reasons for childhood obesity, include, but are not limited to, lack of insurance, inadequate benefits, and increasingly higher co-pays.
- ✓ 30 percent of children are overweight in New York (Daines, 2010).
- ✓ Children who habitually consume sugar-sweetened beverages rather than water may find more satiating but less sweet food, such as vegetables, legumes and fruits, unappealing or unpalatable. (Brownell, 2009).
- ✓ Roughly 7.6 billion dollars is spent in New York annually to treat obesity-related illnesses.
- ✓ Consuming sugary food and beverages can result in a rapid rise and fall of blood sugar. The fluctuation in blood sugar can lead to hunger, which can ultimately result in overeating.
- ✓ Childhood obesity is linked to many serious health concerns such as high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary artery disease and asthma.
- ✓ School nurses play crucial roles in monitoring and educating students regarding the health effects of being overweight, in addition to prevention and treatment.

## CONCLUSION

It is the position of the New York State Association of School Nurses that school nurses provide education on obesity in an effort to decrease childhood obesity. The school nurse, as a health and wellness committee member can achieve this goal by providing students, families and staff with education on the importance of well-balanced diets and consistent exercise routines. The school nurse can offer guidance with school breakfast and lunch programs. In addition, the school nurse can be an advocate for community activities.

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*The mission of the New York State Association of School Nurses is to advance the practice of school nursing and enhance the educational success of students by promoting quality health services*