

## New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids

### Communities Making a Difference to Prevent Childhood Obesity

The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids is a statewide program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation that focuses on building and strengthening childhood obesity prevention activities in Trenton, Camden, Newark, Vineland and New Brunswick.

#### THE PROBLEM

Today, more than 23 million children and adolescents in the United States—nearly one in three young people—are obese or overweight. In New Jersey, the obesity rate among lower-income children younger than age 5 is 18 percent, which is the highest nationwide. Obesity and its related health problems have a significant economic impact on the state's health care system. In 2003, New Jersey spent about \$2.3 billion on medical expenses for obesity-related health conditions, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and asthma.

#### REVERSING THE EPIDEMIC

The New Jersey Partnership for Healthy Kids focuses on communities facing the greatest needs. These are the places where families most often don't have access to healthy options, like safe places to be physically active and stores that sell affordable healthy food. Community coalitions in each city are leading efforts to change public policies and create healthier environments. This work supports the Foundation's six policy priorities for improving nutrition and increasing opportunities for physical activity – both of which are critical to reversing the childhood obesity epidemic:

- Ensure that all foods and beverages served and sold in schools meet or exceed the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Increase access to high-quality, affordable foods through new or improved grocery stores and healthier corner stores and bodegas.
- Increase the time, intensity and duration of physical activity during the school day and in out-of-school programs.
- Increase physical activity by improving the built environment in communities.
- Use pricing strategies—both incentives and disincentives—to promote the purchase of healthier foods.
- Reduce youth exposure to unhealthy food marketing through regulation, policy and effective industry self-regulation.



#### CONTACT US

Everyone has a role to play in helping to prevent childhood obesity—community organizations, schools, government, parents, media, and the food and beverage industry. To become a partner or learn more, call 609-278-9622.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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