

Healthy Fundraising

Promoting a Healthy School Environment



Candy, baked goods, soda and other foods with little nutritional value are commonly used for fundraising at school. Schools may make easy money selling these foods, but students pay the price. An environment that constantly provides children with sweets promotes unhealthy habits that can have lifelong impact. As we face a national epidemic of overweight children, many schools are turning to healthy fundraising alternatives.

Benefits of Healthy Fundraising

Healthy Kids Learn Better: Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.

Provides Consistent Messages: Fundraising with healthy foods and non-food items demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them.

Promotes a Healthy School Environment: Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Finding healthy alternatives to fund-raising is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.

Almost 20 percent of children are overweight, a threefold increase from the 1970's. Poor eating habits and a sedentary lifestyle are just behind smoking as the leading cause of deaths per year in the United States, and the number of deaths related to poor diet and physical inactivity is increasing.



Consequences of Unhealthy Fundraising

Compromises Classroom Learning: Selling unhealthy food items contradicts nutrition messages taught in the classroom. Schools are designed to teach and model appropriate skills and behaviors. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by other activities that promote unhealthy choices, like selling candy and other sweets. It's like saying, "You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but it is more important for us to make money than for you to be healthy and do well." Classroom learning about nutrition remains strictly theoretical if the school environment regularly promotes unhealthy behaviors.

Promotes the Wrong Message: Selling unhealthy foods provides a message that schools care more about making money than student health. We would never think of raising money with anything else that increases student health risks, but food fundraisers are often overlooked. As schools promote healthy lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning, school fundraisers must be included.

Contributes to Poor Health: Foods commonly used as fundraisers (like chocolate, candy, soda and baked goods) provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices. Skyrocketing obesity rates among children are resulting in serious health consequences, such as increased incidence of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

References

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- Mokdad, A. H., Marks, J. S., Stroup, D. F., Gerberding, J. L. (2004). Actual causes of death in the United States, 2000. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 291(10), 1238-1246.
- Ogden, C. L., Carroll, M. D., Kit, B. K., & Flegal, K. M. (2014). Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States, 2011-2012. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, 311(8), 806-814.

What Schools Can Do

Ideas for Healthy Fundraising Alternatives

Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using healthy fundraising alternatives.

Items You Can Sell

- Activity theme bags
- Air fresheners
- Bath accessories
- Balloon bouquets
- Batteries
- Books, calendars
- Brick/stone/tile memorials
- Bumper stickers & decals
- Buttons, pins
- Candles
- Christmas trees
- Coffee cups, mugs
- Cookbooks
- Crafts
- Coupon books
- Customized stickers
- Emergency kits for cars
- First aid kits
- Flowers and bulbs
- Foot warmers
- Football seats
- Garage sale
- Giant coloring books
- Gift baskets
- Gift certificates
- Gift items
- Gift wrap, boxes and bags
- Graduation tickets
- Greeting cards



Items You Can Sell, continued

- Hats
- Holiday ornaments
- Holiday wreaths
- House decorations
- Jewelry
- Lunch box auctions
- Magazine subscriptions
- Megaphones
- Monograms
- Music, CDs
- Newspaper space, ads
- Parking spot (preferred location)
- Pet treats/toys/accessories
- Plants
- Pocket calendars
- Pre-paid phone cards
- Raffle donations
- Raffle extra graduation tickets
- Raffle front row seats at a special school event
- Rent a special parking space
- Scarves
- School art drawings
- School Frisbees
- School spirit gear
- Scratch off cards
- Sell/rent wishes
- Souvenir cups
- Spirit/seasonal flags

Items You Can Sell, continued

- Stadium pillows
- Stationery
- Stuffed animals
- Temporary/henna tattoos
- T-shirts, sweatshirts
- Tupperware
- Valentine flowers
- Yearbook covers
- Yearbook graffiti



Healthy Foods

- Frozen bananas
- Fruit and nut baskets
- Fruit and yogurt parfaits
- Fruit smoothies
- Lunch box auctions
- Trail mix

Sell Custom Merchandise

- Bumper stickers/decals
- Calendars
- Cookbook made by school
- Logo air fresheners
- Scratch off cards
- T-shirts/sweatshirts

Items Supporting Academics

- Read-A-Thon
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee

Adapted from: Creative Financing and Fundraising. California Project Lean, California Department of Health Services, 2002.

Additional Resources

- Clearinghouse for Fundraising Information:* <http://www.fundraising.com/>
- Creative Financing and Fundraising.* California Project Lean, California Department of Health Services, 2002. <http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/Departments/PublicHealth/newspublications/other%20publications/other.shtml>
- Guide to Healthy School Stores.* Alabama Department of Public Health Nutrition & Physical Activity Unit, 2004. <http://actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/toolsforteam/recom/N&PA%2035%20-%20school%20store.pdf>
- Healthy Finances: How Schools Are Making Nutrition Changes That Make Financial Sense.* Action for Healthy Kids, 2003. http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/filelib/facts_and_findings/healthy%20foods,%20healthy%20finances.pdf
- Healthy Fundraising:* <http://www.healthy-fundraising.org/index.htm>
- Healthy Fundraising & Vending Options.* Produce for Better Health Foundation. <http://www.5aday.com/html/educators/options.php>
- Non-Food Ways to Raise Funds and Reward a Job Well Done.* Texas Department of Agriculture, 2004. http://www.squaremeals.org/vgn/tda/files/2348/3614_1034_NonFoodRewards.pdf
- Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable.* Center for Science in the Public Interest, 2007. <http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf>

Adapted with permission from Healthy Fundraisers, Connecticut State Department of Education, May 2005 (Revised June 2009).

<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Resources>