



**Business Sector and  
Industry Practices**

**5**

## Business Sector and Industry Practices



### Nationwide and in Chicago

One-quarter of a working adult’s life is spent in the workplace. Places of employment are vitally important settings for sharing information and resources with parents and caregivers that will help them create healthy environments in the home for children. Worksites can also reinforce healthful practices of employees themselves, enabling them to be good role models of healthy living for their children. There is strong evidence that changes in the worksite food environment can positively influence employee diet, health, and BMI.<sup>(1) (2) (3) (4)</sup> For example, by providing healthier foods and beverages in company cafeterias and meetings and stocking them in company vending machines – while also limiting the availability of less healthy products – employers can measurably improve the healthfulness of employee consumption. These practices also have protective benefits for children: a child is three times more likely to be obese if one parent is overweight or obese, and 13 to 15 times more likely if both parents are overweight or obese.<sup>(5)</sup>

Industries directly involved in producing food or beverages have an even greater opportunity – and responsibility – to manufacture and market healthful products for children. However, some manufacturers are reluctant to shift their product portfolios to include a greater proportion of items that meet nutritional guidelines. For example, a review of 3,039

A child is

**3x**

more likely to be obese if one parent is overweight or obese, and

**13-15**

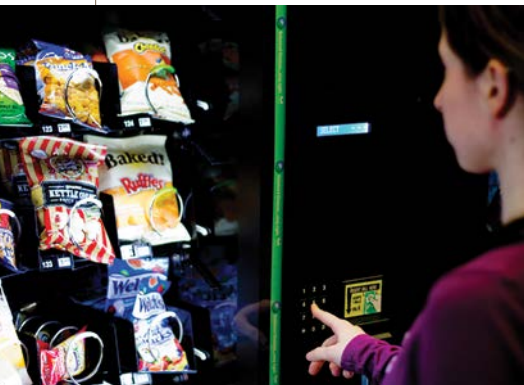
times more likely if both parents are overweight or obese.

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children’s meal combinations in fast food chain restaurants found that only 12 of them (less than 1%) met nutrition standards for preschoolers.<sup>(6)</sup> The food and beverage industry spends about \$2 billion per year marketing to children, and almost all (98%) food advertisements viewed by children are for products high in fat, sugar, or sodium.<sup>(7) (8)</sup> Cereal manufacturers employ “adver-gaming” and child-friendly websites as well as more traditional print, radio, and television advertising to market their least nutritious cereals, while investing few or no dollars in similar vehicles for advertising their healthiest products.<sup>(9)</sup> This advertising has a very real and negative impact on children: the National Academies of Science found a causal relationship between television advertising and the food and beverage choices, purchase requests, and short-term consumption practices of children ages two through 11.<sup>(10)</sup> Also, sugar-sweetened beverages are the single largest source of added sugar and calories in the American diet.<sup>(11)</sup>

**Current Strategies/Progress to Date**

Workplaces across the city are implementing strategies to keep Chicago’s workforce healthy. The city’s third-largest employer, the City of Chicago, is implementing an employee wellness initiative that includes strategies for healthy weight. Vanguard Health Chicago, with more than 6,000 employees (including one location in the City of Chicago), is eliminating sugar-sweetened beverages from its facilities. The Chicago Park District has set strong nutritional standards for food sold in vending machines, which affects employees as well as patrons. Also, on November 15, 2012, Mayor Rahm Emanuel submitted an ordinance to City Council to enter into a healthy vending contract for all city buildings.



Worksites have long been implementing strategies to promote employee wellness through incentives, educational programming, and other initiatives. Less available, however, are programs that focus on the health of employees’ children. CLOCC will soon be offering a 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Workplace Toolkit, based on its public education message, to support employers who are ready to help employees create healthful home environments for their families. (See **Health Promotion and Public Education** section)

**Recommendations for the Next Decade**

**Goal 1: Implement activities in the workplace that support childhood obesity prevention.**

**Objective 1-1:** Encourage companies to provide programs and services to improve the health and wellness of the children of their employees.

- **Strategy a:** Offer workplace training/education/coaching for employees with children to help them create healthy families.
- **Strategy b:** Provide health and wellness benefits to employees with children including education, support, and incentives for developing healthier lifestyles.

- Objective 1-2:** Support employees to serve as role models of healthy eating and physical activity for children.
- **Strategy a:** Ensure that all workplace vending options contain exclusively healthy food and beverage options.
  - **Strategy b:** Provide healthy food and beverages in employee cafeterias and dining rooms.
  - **Strategy c:** Provide healthy food and beverages at all meetings and events.
  - **Strategy d:** Provide workplace athletic facilities or financial support for employee use of external athletic facilities and classes.

- Objective 1-3:** Support healthy eating and physical activity for the children of employees.
- **Strategy a:** Offer healthy foods and beverages at all events where employees' children are present (e.g., company vacations and/or business trips, parties, picnics).
  - **Strategy b:** Make workplace athletic facilities available to employees' children after work/on weekends and/or provide financial support to children of employees for external athletic facilities and classes.
  - **Strategy c:** Provide incentives for employees to support their children's physical activities.
    - **Tactic:** Provide options to take time off for coaching children's school or recreational sports teams, travel to children's athletic events, or participate in other opportunities that support children's physical activity.
    - **Tactic:** Provide discounts and incentives through insurance plans for children's participation in physical activities.
  - **Strategy d:** Provide physical activity options for all ages and physical abilities as part of planned recreation at all company events and outings.



**Goal 2: Align business activities and funding in the community with childhood obesity prevention.**

- Objective 2-1:** Invest in and support childhood obesity prevention organizations.
- **Strategy a:** Create opportunities for employees to volunteer with organizations that promote healthy lifestyles for children.
  - **Strategy b:** Focus corporate giving/social responsibility activities toward organizations that support healthy lifestyles, physical activity, healthy food access, and/or safe community activity environments for children.

- Objective 2-2:** Invest in and support access to safe opportunities for physical activity in communities. (See **Physical Activity and the Built Environment** section)
- **Strategy a:** Provide community access to worksite exercise spaces after work hours.



- **Strategy b:** Provide financial and other resources to communities to build physical activity spaces (e.g., parks, playgrounds, pedestrian and bicyclist-friendly sidewalks and streets).

**Objective 2-3:** Invest in and support access to healthy food in communities. (See **Food and Beverage Access** section)

- **Strategy a:** Provide financial and/or volunteer support to healthy food and beverage retail establishments (including corner stores, farmers’ markets, mobile produce vendors).
- **Strategy b:** Provide financial and/or volunteer support to emergency food distribution programs that set effective healthy food and beverage policy.
- **Strategy c:** Invest in the development of technologies that support improved access to and purchasing of healthy food.
- **Strategy d:** Support local healthy food and beverage production by purchasing locally produced healthy food and beverages for workplace food and beverage needs.



**Goal 3: Align company products and services with childhood obesity prevention.**

**Objective 3-1:** Improve the nutritional content of food and beverage products.

- **Strategy a:** Align nutritional content of foods and beverages with *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.
- **Strategy b:** Participate in federal, state, or local programs to transition industry regulations and products to meet *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

**Objective 3-2:** Increase the sale of healthy food and beverage options.

- **Strategy a:** Market only healthy food and beverage products to children under age 18 in all mediums.
- **Strategy b:** Increase marketing of healthy products in popular media, social media, and at points where consumers make purchasing decisions to increase demand.
- **Strategy c:** Structure product pricing to offer healthy products at prices that are similar to or lower than those of less healthy options.

**Objective 3-3:** Develop and implement business strategies and approaches to supporting physical activity.

- **Strategy a:** Create new products and/or services that support and facilitate physical activity.
- **Strategy b:** Expand the development of games and toys marketed to children under 18 that increase physical activity (e.g., exer-gaming).

**Objective 3-4:** Increase the availability of goods and services that promote physical activity.

- **Strategy a:** Increase the marketing of active lifestyle products and services to children under age 18.

- **Strategy b:** Expand availability of safety equipment (e.g., bicycle helmets, protective footwear, and clothing) to children in communities experiencing disparities in obesity and physical activity, especially if such equipment is required by law or institutional policy.

**Goal 4: Support activities that reduce or eliminate marketing of unhealthy products to children under 18 years of age.**

**Objective 4-1:** Standardize and monitor compliance with policies established to govern food marketed to children under 18.

- **Strategy a:** Identify industry practices in the State of Illinois and City of Chicago related to foods marketed to children and identify opportunities to align these practices with obesity prevention approaches through state and local authority (e.g., action by the Illinois Attorney General, policies established by state and local authorities).
- **Strategy b:** Enforce the elimination of marketing of unhealthy foods at any time on school property, school sponsored or affiliated events, or in school materials including websites, social media, publications, and childcare environments.
  - **Tactic:** Eliminate the use of company logos, characters, and mascots associated with unhealthy food products.
  - **Tactic:** Remove food and beverage company logos from the outside of all vending machines.

**Objective 4-2:** Support the establishment and implementation of approaches to inform consumers of nutritional composition of foods and beverages sold and served in Chicago.

- **Strategy a:** Monitor and ensure the implementation of new menu labeling regulations established under the Affordable Care Act.
- **Strategy b:** Support local innovation to improve menu labeling practices as allowable by local, state, and federal law.



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