

Voices for Healthy Kids 2020-2021 Policy Agenda

8/11/20



American Heart Association.



Voices for Healthy Kids strives to make every day healthier for every child. We do this by recognizing and focusing our resources on children, families and communities that systematically face racism and oppression. We aim to support local, tribal and state policy change efforts that will dramatically improve the health of children who are Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian and Alaskan Native or families who have low income.

Voices for Healthy Kids supports these essential focus areas in our advocacy work: 1. Economic Security, 2. Food Security and Healthy Eating and 3. Active Living and Wellness. Although these categories are not mutually exclusive, we have grouped our policies by those that are comprehensive and those that are more focused on one area.

Comprehensive Focus: Some policy approaches touch on all three essential focus areas, Economic Security, Food Security and Healthy Eating, and Active Living and Wellness. These state, tribal and local policy approaches can simultaneously impact multiple influences on overall childhood health.

Early Care and Education Security: Support state, tribal and local efforts to ensure access to early care and education including Head Start, Early Head Start and other high quality, licensed childcare for children from low-income and other under-resourced families. Encourage childcare quality through improved nutrition, physical activity, and screen time standards, and trauma informed care trainings for providers.

Preemption Repeal or Defense: Support efforts to protect health and well-being and build healthy, equitable communities by promoting and defending local government power.

Sugary Drink Tax and Investment: Support the adoption of or significant increases in state, tribal, county, or municipal excise taxes on sugary drinks. The tax design, planning and implementation, including revenue allocation, should be developed through a process driven by communities most burdened by health inequity.

Food Security and Healthy Eating Focus: These state, tribal and local policies increase food security and access to healthy food and beverage, decrease access to unhealthy food and beverages, drive community and industry innovation, making it easier for all children to eat healthy.

SNAP Expansion and Nutrition Incentives: Support state, tribal, and local efforts to enroll more eligible Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients through a variety of strategies, including, but not limited to, reducing barriers to enrollment with improved administrative processes and outreach. Support opportunities to increase the incentive benefit amount to purchase fruits and vegetables. Support incentives and other policies and programs that encourage fruit and vegetable consumption.

School Food Access and Dietary Quality: Support state, tribal, and local efforts to maximize the impact of federal school meal programs, community coordination, and planning to ensure food security for all children. Support expansion of universal free meals or increased participation in Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) prioritizing under-resourced school districts with greatest need. Continue to support strong, evidence-based school nutrition standards for meals and competitive foods to ensure the health and wellbeing for all children.

Healthier Options at Restaurants: Ensure all restaurant meals offered to children meet healthy nutrition standards. Ensure the drink offered with a restaurant children's meal is a healthier option.

Water Access: Ensure no-charge, safe and appealing water is accessible during the school day or extended hours while children are in programming in school buildings. Support opportunities to ensure no-charge, safe and appealing water is accessible in communities, such as through use of beverage tax revenues.

Food Service Guidelines: Support healthier food purchasing policies by government entities where people have a large proportion of their dietary intake from a central venue and where there is the great potential to increase overall demand for more healthy products, drive the reformulation of foods by food manufacturers, and increase the availability of healthier foods to the general public.

Active Living and Wellness Focus: These state, tribal and local policies and funding, as well as influencing the use of federal funding, aim to make neighborhoods more livable and promote wellness by ensuring all people can be active and safe.

Community Physical Activity: Support state, tribal and local financing and policies that increase active transportation, community physical activity opportunities (including but not limited to parks, green spaces, playgrounds), and neighborhood or land preservation.

Physical Activity in Schools: Support state, tribal and local efforts to reach recommended levels of physical activity and promote student physical fitness with physically activity throughout the school day including physical education, before and after school, recess, and classroom physical activity breaks.