



Childhood Obesity : THE FACTS

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- “By 2010, some have predicted that the root causes of the obesity epidemic—poor nutrition and physical inactivity—will be among the leading underlying causes of preventable deaths in the U.S. And, what makes mounting a successful battle so urgent is that obesity is a problem not just for adults, but for children, as well. If the battle isn't won soon it will be a war that will be with us for generations to come.” (NYS DOH)
- Overweight and obesity are major risk factors for many serious chronic diseases and conditions including: cardiovascular (heart) disease, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, type 2 diabetes, cancer and osteoarthritis.
- Over 40% of Rochester’s children live below the poverty level [2006 American Community Survey]—and 39.3% are overweight or obese. A 2008 prevalence study by the URM found that 16.8% of Rochester’s children ages 2-18 are overweight; 22.5% are obese.
- Costs in Dollars: the obesity crisis in New York State affects 1.1 million young people and costs the state \$242 million in public and private medical expenses (NYS Comptroller’s Office)
- Costs in Dollars: In states that use school attendance to help determine state funding (like NYS), a single-day absence by just one student can cost a school district anywhere from \$ 9 to \$ 20; therefore having a negative impact on a school’s bottom line. (The Finance Project)
- Costs in Academic Achievement: Schools with high percentages of students who did not routinely engage in physical activity or eat well had smaller gains in test scores than other schools. (Action for Healthy Kids)
- Costs in Academic Achievement: Inadequate consumption of key food groups deprives children of essential vitamins, minerals, fats, and proteins that are necessary for optimal cognitive function. For an example, iron deficiency has been linked to shortened attention span, irritability, fatigue, and difficulty with concentration. (Tufts University School of Nutrition)
- Schools contribute to current and life-long health and dietary patterns and are uniquely positioned to model and reinforce healthful eating behaviors in partnership with parents, teachers, and the broader community. (Institute of Medicine)