The State of Children’s Nutrition in the US

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What is the state of children's nutrition in the US?

- In four words.....
  We Can Do Better
Today’s child nutrition focus

Breastfeeding rates and childhood overweight and obesity rates

- Where are we?
- Why does it matter?
- What can states do about it?
Breastfeeding
Breastfeeding recommendations

- Breastfeed exclusively for about 6 months, continue with complementary foods for 1 year or longer
Breastfeeding rates

- Infants ever breastfed: 83.9%
- Infants breastfed exclusively through 6 months: 25.8%
- Infants breastfed at 1 year: 35%
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Target</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed exclusively through 6 months of age.</td>
<td>24.9%</td>
<td>42.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase the proportion of infants who are breastfed at 1 year.</td>
<td>35.9%</td>
<td>54.1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Healthy People 2030 Breastfeeding Objectives**
Why is breastfeeding important for the infant?

- Development of infant's immune system
- Nutrients for growth and development
- Not breastfed infants have higher rates of:
  - ear, gut and respiratory infections
  - child obesity
  - leukemia
  - inflammatory bowel disease
  - SIDS
Why is breastfeeding important for the mother?

- Stored energy accumulated during pregnancy is used
- Not breastfeeding mothers have higher rates of:
  - ovarian cancer
  - diabetes
  - hypertension
  - heart attack
Figure 1. National score and state score ranges for Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) subdomains, 2018.
Figure 2. Institutional Management subdomain scores for Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition and Care (mPINC) by state, mPINC 2018.

Note: Data are not reported for District of Columbia, Guam, American Samoa, Northern Mariana Islands, or the US Virgin Islands because of a small sample.
State policy options to reduce breastfeeding barriers

- Parental leave policies
- Licensure of lactation consultants
- Workplace accommodations for breastfeeding
- Protecting mother’s right to breastfeed in public
- Exempting breastfeeding mothers from jury duty
- Exempting breastfeeding products from state tax
- Supporting mothers in school or incarcerated mothers
- Providing human milk banking
Examples of state policies promoting breastfeeding

- All fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have laws that specifically allow women to breastfeeding in any public or private location.
- Five states require hospitals to allow rooming-in during postpartum stay
  - Arkansas, California, Georgia, New Jersey, New York
- Among the 45 states who collect state sales taxes, some have implemented sales and use tax exemptions for breast pumps and supplies:
  - Louisiana, Maryland, Minneapolis, and New Jersey.
Overweight and Obesity
Childhood Overweight and Obesity
2-19 year old children in the US

1971-1974

- Overweight
- Obesity
- Severe Obesity
- Non Overweight

2017-2018

- Overweight
- Obesity
- Severe Obesity
- Non Overweight
Childhood Obesity
2-19 year olds by race and Hispanic origin

2011-2012

2017-2018

Non-Hispanic White
Non-Hispanic Black
Non-Hispanic Asian
Hispanic
Mexican American
Childhood Obesity
2-19 year olds by Socioeconomic Status

Highest Income
Lowest child obesity (10.9%)

Lowest Income
Highest child obesity (19.9%)
Longitudinal Trends in Body Mass Index Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Persons Aged 2–19 Years — United States, 2018–2020

Samantha J. Lange, MPH¹; Lyudmyla Kompaniyects, PhD¹; David S. Freedman, PhD¹; Emily M. Kraus, PhD²; Renee Porter, DNP³; Heidi M. Blanck, PhD¹; Alyson B. Goodman, MD¹
What are some causes of excess weight gain in childhood?

- Genetics
- Behavioral factors
- Medical problems
- Environmental factors
Figure 1-4
Adherence of the U.S. Population to the *Dietary Guidelines* Across Life Stages, as Measured by Average Total Healthy Eating Index-2015 Scores

NOTE: HEI-2015 total scores are out of 100 possible points. A score of 100 indicates that recommendations on average were met or exceeded. A higher total score indicates a higher quality diet.

Data Source: Analysis of What We Eat in America, NHANES 2015-2016, ages 2 and older, day 1 dietary intake data, weighted.
State policy options to improve children’s nutrition

- Early Childhood Education
  - Breastfeeding
  - Physical activity defined
  - Water availability
  - Healthy eating
  - Nutrition standards
  - Screen time
State policy options to improve children’s nutrition

- School Age Children
  - Physical education time requirement
- Elementary, middle and high Schools
- Safe Routes to School
- Farm-to-School Programs
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