



# A Guide for writing a Local Wellness Policy for an Elementary School using the CATCH Program

Implementation of the CATCH Coordinated School Health Program and its four integrated components of child nutrition services, physical education and activity, classroom education and parental involvement assist the Elementary schools in our district in fulfilling the requirements of the new federal law section 204 of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 in establishing a local school wellness policy. The following sample policy outlines how the CATCH program and resources meet the goals as stated in the federal law.

## 1. Goals for Nutrition Education

Nutrition education strategies for elementary aged children are communicated via "red light, green light" type theory where foods are categorized as either GO (foods with minimal to no amount of fat -fruits, vegetables, whole grains etc), SLOW (foods prepared or containing a small amount of fat such as muffins or 2% milk) or WHOA (foods containing high amounts of fat such as fried chicken or doughnuts). Various activities across and extending outside of the school disseminate this same consistent message.

- **In the Cafeteria** - Labeling of foods on the cafeteria line as well as educational posters about nutrition are displayed in the cafeteria to help turn the eating environment into a learning environment. By labeling the foods in the food line children are able to continue the learning process by identifying healthy foods and then applying nutrition principles in making more informed decisions about the foods they choose to consume.
- **In the Classroom and beyond** - The goal of the CATCH Classroom lesson is to improve and optimize health and was created using social learning theory to assist children on not just understanding health knowledge but also to provide skills to practice making better food and physical activity choices. The CATCH lessons contain many activities such as making healthy snacks, reading food

labels, and teaching children about good nutrition using the *CATCH Go For Health* series featuring workbooks and entertaining videos with characters such as "Dynamite Diet" and "Flash Fitness". The classroom lessons extend into the children's homes with "Home Team" homework assignments designed to include the family in nutrition education.

- **In PE** - *GO, SLOW, and WHOA Eat Smart Games* are included in the *CATCH PE Activity Box* to again convey and reinforce a consistent message about healthy foods and nutrition education to the children.

## **2. Goals for Physical Activity**

The primary focus of *CATCH PE* is for schools to provide quality physical education in which students engage in maximum amounts of enjoyable MVPA (moderate to vigorous physical activity) during class time. *CATCH* activities provide appropriate and effective class management and instructional methods. Implementation of *CATCH PE* helps us accomplish the following objectives:

- Have students involved in moderate to vigorous physical activity for 50% of class time.
- Provide many opportunities for children to participate and practice skills.
- Provide activities that are fun and enjoyable.
- Encourage students to become more physically active outside of school.

## **3. Goals for school based activities designed to promote student wellness**

Using the *CATCH* model, we plan to implement several school based activities to not only promote student wellness, but also to help incorporate the community and families in our school's efforts to achieve a healthier school environment. Examples are:

- A biannual health fair or family fun night event where children and their parents can attend and participate in physical activity and games together, taste samples of healthy snacks made by the Child Nutrition Services department and speak with health professionals in the community on various topics.
- "Fitness Fridays" where we allow students and teachers to wear wind suits to school and promote physical activity.
- Cafeteria tours and taste tests - to promote and teach children healthy food preparation techniques and participate in menu development.

## **4. Nutrition guidelines selected by the LEA for all foods available on each school campus during the school day with objectives for promoting health and reducing childhood obesity**

Our school follows the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy which guides the effort in reducing childhood obesity by stating specific guidelines on availability and sale of FMNV, Competitive foods, as well as portion size limitations on certain items.

In addition to following the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy, our district further strives to reduce the fat, saturated fat, and sodium content of our school meals by utilizing the Eat Smart Guide book which helps lead healthier menu planning, food purchasing, and food preparation techniques.

**5. Assurances that guidelines for reimbursable school meals are not less restrictive than federal guidelines.**

We strictly adhere to the federal guidelines for school meals of <30% total calories from fat, <10% saturated fat, 1/3 of the RDA for specific nutrients provided for the National School Lunch and  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the RDA for specific nutrients provided for the School Breakfast. School meals also align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

**6. Establishes a plan for measuring implementation of the policy - with 1 or more persons responsible for ensuring the school meets the policy.**

We plan to use some of the evaluation instruments listed on the CATCH website ([www.CATCHTexas.org](http://www.CATCHTexas.org)) to assist us with evaluating our health program. We will also use the "How Do We Know It's Working" handout that we received during the CATCH training to assist us in this evaluation.

**7. Must include involvement of parents, students, representatives of school food authority, school board, school administrators, and the public in formation of the policy. Schools can utilize existing school health councils or form a new one.**

We plan to utilize our existing School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and to invite other health professionals such as the Child Nutrition Director to be a member of this committee.