



Healthy + Active Before 5

Pledge the Practice. Pass the Policy.

In Contra Costa County, **twenty four (24) government agencies, schools and non-profits serving young children have passed new healthy policies**, which decrease the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, promote healthy foods, support breastfeeding and encourage movement and play.

Healthy & Active Before 5 (HAB45) has provided technical assistance and two rounds of policy “mini-grants” to motivate and troubleshoot these new healthy policies.

Creating and implementing organizational policies does two things: 1) changes real-world food environments for children in Contra Costa and 2) provides **important momentum and credibility** for broader political and social change.

Healthy & Active Before 5

Healthy & Active Before 5 (HAB45) is a grant-funded collaborative project in Contra Costa County. Our goal is to prevent obesity in kids age 0-5, by building partnerships and environments for healthy eating and active play.

Please visit our website & blog at hab45.org.

Lasting change: “Pass the Policy”

We believe our *Healthy & Active Before 5* (HAB45) Leadership Council partner **agencies are important mentors and role models for children and families**. We also believe we have the greatest opportunities for change among those things most easily within our reach — our own agencies’ organizational practices. We challenged our partners to adopt 1-4 healthy HAB45 policies, or create one of their own.

We like new organizational policies, because a policy represents a shared formal agreement among agencies and staff. Usually, new policies are discussed at

staff meetings and then go to decision-making bodies like management teams or boards of directors for approval. We believe policies like these can lead to sustainable environmental and organizational change.

Some of our new policies:

- No Juice or Soda Policy @ *Monument Crisis Center*.
- Contra Costa Health Services 100% healthy vending policy.
- Two (2) new healthy policies adopted at *Weigh of Life* in Richmond. (Healthy Beverages & Healthy Foods)
- Breastfeeding Accommodation policy at *Community Violence Solutions*.
- Nutrition policies (2) at the *Delta First 5 Center* and *Bay Point First 5 Center*, both requiring new healthy foods and beverages.
- A healthy food & beverage policy at the *Center for Human Development*. Sweetened beverages are no longer a reimbursable expense!
- Healthy Beverage Policy at *Martinez Adult Education*. Parents are no longer permitted to provide soda, punch or fruit juice for children's daily snacks.
- *John Muir Health's Ambulatory Women's & Children's Services* has a new policy and now only healthy foods and beverages at its reception snack stand.
- *Pogo Park* passed a Movement & Play Policy, which also includes designated space to accommodate breastfeeding.
- *Building Blocks for Kids* crafted a nutrition policy for their Preschool Enrichment Program.
- *Office of Contra Costa County Supervisor John Gioia* (Mr. Gioia was the first of the C. Costa Board members to pass a healthy food policy.)
- *Contra Costa Health Plan* passed a new Food & Beverage policy to support healthy eating at staff meetings and fundraising.

All of our partners' policies are available at hab45.org. Many more healthy policies are still "in the works," representing a deepening commitment to local obesity prevention.

Daily habits: "Pledge the Practice"

Passing formal organizational policies isn't the only way to change environments. We recognized that some environmental change can be quickly achieved through individual action. For instance, you and a colleague could

purchase/serve 100% healthy foods and beverages at each meeting you host at your agency. Voila! Healthy change can be that quick!

Policies appeal to us because they are sustainable workplace agreements...

changing our daily habits is the true goal, and it might not matter if that happens before or after an organizational policy change.

SUCCESS. To date, HAB45 has drafted 4 model polices: 1) No sugar-sweetened beverages or juice; 2) Breastfeeding accommodation; 3) Healthy Foods and Beverage; and a 4) Movement & Play Policy. *Healthy & Active Before 5* has given 15 policy “mini-grants” (incentive awards) to HAB45 partner agencies, which create new healthy organizational policies. Given on a first-come, first-served basis, **the \$500 awards help to create a sense of urgency and effectively troubleshoot many barriers to policy implementation.**

Not all of our HAB45 partner agencies are "health" agencies, but through their involvement in our HAB45 Leadership Council meetings and Community Summit they come to understand the impacts of childhood obesity and its important community health risks. Obesity might not be their problem to fix, but it soon becomes their job to help.

Our technical assistance efforts remain “assertive” and “proactive.” HAB45 staff (repeatedly) phone/email and even invite ourselves over for in-person meetings. During these difficult economic times, many of our partners have downsized their staff and programming; it’s often hard to keep childhood obesity prevention a priority. We promote our *Pledge the Practice. Pass the Policy* challenge by emphasizing: 1) the importance of the work, 2) the limited availability of incentives and, 3) the success achieved by other local agencies.

Remember...

- Organizational change can be grassroots or “top down.”
- Small changes can amount to something much bigger over time.
- You can make a difference at your workplace ...all on your own. Right now.