

National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences
**Environmental Solutions to Obesity in
America's Youth**

Listen Up!

**Strategies for Engaging Low-
Income, Communities of
Color in Obesity Prevention
Efforts**

Arnell J. Hinkle, RD, MPH, CHES

Executive Director

California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program

CANFit's Mission

To engage communities and build their capacity to improve the nutrition and physical activity status of low-income African American, Latino, Asian American/Pacific Islander, and American Indian youth 10-14 years old.

Cultural Context of Low-Income Youth of Color

(adapted from MEE Productions)

- The Streets
- School Environment
- Poverty
- Health
- Government (The “System”)
- Family/Community
- Role of Media
- Mainstream Society

CANFit Strategies

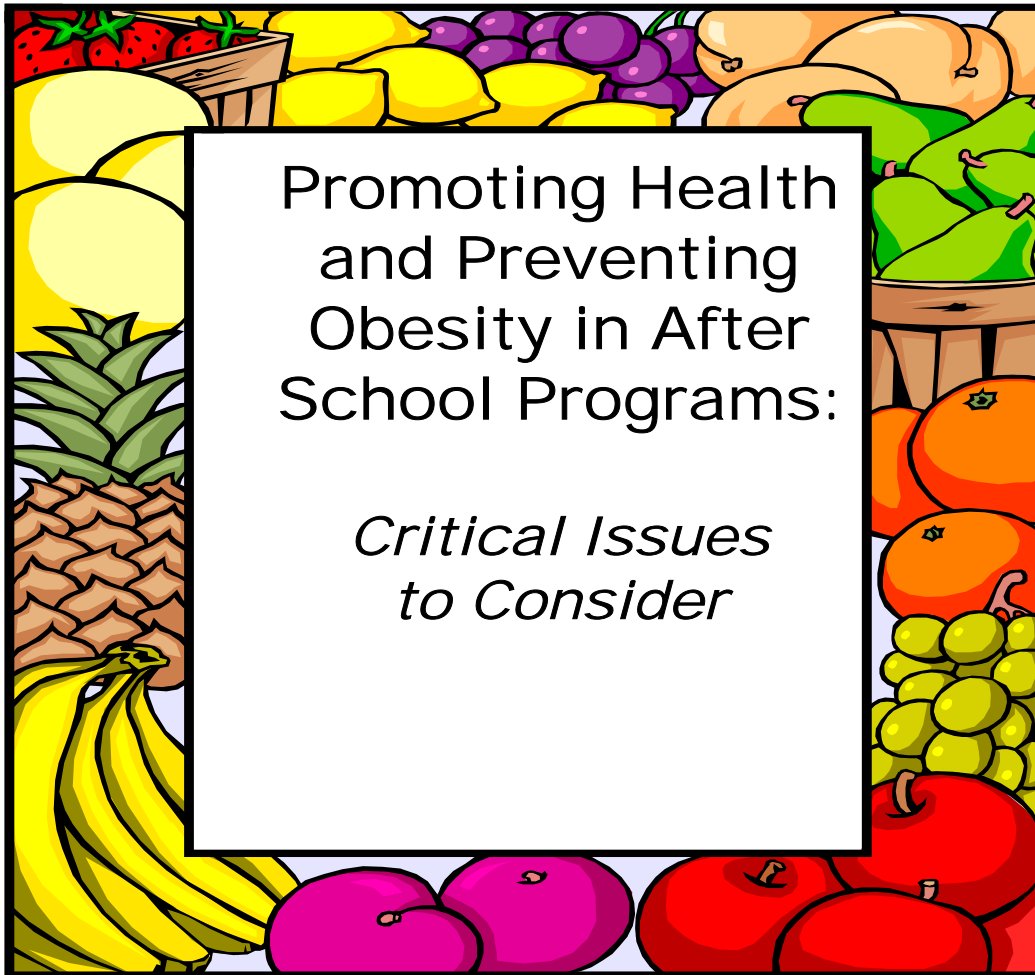
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Scholarship and Awards Programs
- Advocacy for Organizational and Policy Changes
- Ethnic-Specific Community Campaigns

CANFit Accomplishments

- Awarded mini- grants to 62 youth organizations
- Provided academic scholarships to 118 low-income students of color
- Trained over 2000 people in workshops across CA
- Implemented pilot campaigns targeting the Latino community, African American youth, and parents of Asian- American/Pacific Islander American adolescents

Advocacy

- Strategic Alliance for Healthy Food and Activity Environments (founding member)
- State and national advisory groups
- Legislative testimony, presentations and public policy convenings
- Local advocacy
- Briefing Papers:
 - * *Addressing the Obesity Epidemic - Public Policies for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Environments*
 - * *Days of Dialogue: Obesity and Diabetes Prevention in Communities of Color*
 - and.....*



Promoting Health
and Preventing
Obesity in After
School Programs:

*Critical Issues
to Consider*

Working Paper of



Volume 1, Number 3

May 2004

Copyright © California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program 2004

Training and Technical Assistance

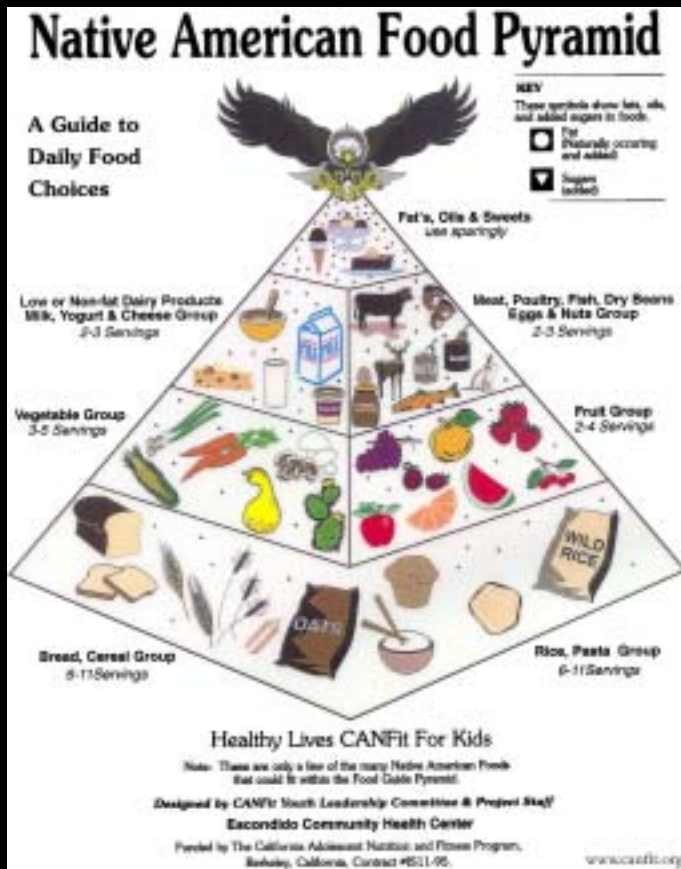
- *Recipes for Success* Workshops
- Resource Materials (English and Spanish) – (CANFit Super Manual, *Recetas para el Exito*, reports, guides, quarterly newsletter, web site)
- Consultation to organizations
- *Preventing Obesity in the Hip Hop Generation* Workshops (June 17 in Washington, DC)

Projects

- Ethnic-specific
- Designed with significant youth input
- Piloted and evaluated
- Resulting in processes, products, materials



Some Examples



- American Indian Surf Camp
- Cambodian Snack Cookbook
- Fast Food Survival Guide
- Quincinera Body Image Video
- Math/Science Lessons

P.H.A.T. = Promoting Healthy Activities Together



- Goal – use hip hop culture to encourage African American youth to make life-long behavior changes
 - Increase water consumption and physical activity
 - Decrease soda/fast food consumption
- Methods – youth created positive messages about nutrition and physical activity
 - Hip hop dance routines
 - Raps
 - Art work
- Results - Video, music CD and guidebook

Strategies

- Identify community, cultural and organizational assets
- Involve youth at every step
- Conduct community and organizational assessments
- Come with resources and leave resources
- Build capacity of organizations, staff, youth, community members

Skill-building

- Consumer Literacy
- Label Reading
- Shopping
- Snack Planning
- Media Literacy
- Cooking
- Taste Testing
- Real Food
- Strength Training
- Flexibility
- Dance
- Life-long Physical Activities
- Non-competitive games and sports
- FUN!

Strategies (continued)

- Cultural appropriateness

youth culture

age

gender

ethnicity

language

- Do no harm!

Realistic Outcomes

- Measuring pre/post BMI over a short intervention period during adolescence results in spurious data
- Health at every size
- Focus on environmental changes in addition to individual changes
- One behavior change at a time
- Don't expect adolescents to never eat fast food!

Sustainability

- Consider it from the start
- Integrate into existing programs
- Train youth and community providers
- Parent and caregiver education
- Work on changing organizational practices
- Advocacy: build a constituency within a community to advocate for healthier environments

For More Information:

- **California Adolescent Nutrition and Fitness Program (CANFit)**

2140 Shattuck Ave., Suite 610

Berkeley, CA 94704

510-644-1533

510-644-1535 (fax)

www.canfit.org or info@canfit.org