Smart Snacks in School Fundraisers

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 directed the USDA to establish nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students in school during the school day, including foods sold through school fundraisers. The new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will help schools to make the healthy choice the easy choice by offering students more of the foods and beverages we should be encouraging – whole grains, fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, lower-fat dairy – while limiting foods with too much sugar, fat and salt.

USDA understands that fundraisers are time-honored traditions that support local school activities, including class trips, athletic programs and the purchase of school supplies. Under the "Smart Snacks in School" nutrition standards, USDA has sought to balance the needs of schools to conduct occasional fundraisers, while still ensuring that students have access to healthier foods and beverages during the school day.

**Highlights of the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards include:**

- **States set an appropriate number of exempt school-sponsored fundraisers.**
  States are well-positioned to identify the particular needs of their local communities. As such, each state will have the flexibility to set a certain number of fundraisers that can sell foods or beverages that do not meet the nutrition standards.

- **No limits on fundraisers that meet the new standards.**
  In addition, fundraisers that sell non-food items or foods or beverages that meet the new standards are not limited under the nutrition standards. There are many healthy fundraising options available to schools, including selling books, fresh produce, school spirit merchandise or other non-food items during the school day. Your school's local wellness committee may have some great tips on how to raise funds and help students make healthy choices at the same time.

- **Schools decide what can be sold at events outside of school hours.**
  *Smart Snacks in School* only applies to foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day. The nutrition standards do not apply to foods and beverages sold at events held after school, off campus, or on weekends, such as school plays or sporting events.

- **Exceptions for fundraiser foods not intended for consumption in schools.**
  Fundraising activities that take place outside of school, such as cookie dough or frozen pizza sales, are exempt from the nutrition standards. Distribution of order forms and foods not intended for consumption at school may continue.
Healthy Fundraising Tips

USDA's HealthierUS School Challenge encourages schools to limit fundraising activities involving foods and/or beverages. There are many other fun, creative, and lucrative strategies to raise money. Fundraisers that involve physical activity reinforce positive messages to students, families, and the community about the importance of active lifestyles. Healthy fundraising can have a positive effect and strengthen support within the community.

Why Healthy Fundraising?

Students' lifelong eating habits are greatly influenced by the types of foods and beverages available to them. When less nutritious foods are sold, even "for a good cause," students may think that these foods are part of a healthful, balanced diet. When made available during meal periods, these "extra" foods can replace healthier options available at breakfast and lunch. Schools can encourage healthful eating habits and raise needed funds by selling nonfood items. Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

Support the Arts
- Art shows
- Concerts
- Dances
- Plays and musicals
- Talent shows
- Singing telegrams
- Rent-a-band, choir, or music group

Support Physical Activity
- Walk-a-thon, Bike-a-thon
- Jump-rope-a-thon
- 5-mile run/walk or fun run
- Golf, tennis, or other sport tournaments
- Bowling or skate night
- Sports camps or clinics

Support Academics
- Read-a-thon
- Spelling bee
- Science fair
- Workshops or classes
Support Community Activities

- Recycling drive
- Bingo night
- Karaoke competition
- Chess, checkers, or other tournament
- Treasure hunt or scavenger hunt
- Soup dinner, with student-designed hand-painted bowls for purchase
- Garage sale
- Live auction or silent auction
- Carnivals, festivals, craft fairs
- Car wash
- Game night
- Penny drive

Sell Items Other Than Food

- Reusable cloth shopping bags
- Gift wrap, greeting cards, boxes and bags
- Holiday wreaths, ornaments, poinsettias, mistletoe
- Gift certificates or coupon books
- Cookbooks
- T-shirts and sweatshirts
- Books, calendars, coloring books
- Buttons and pins
- Artwork, crafts, jewelry, candles
- Picnic baskets
- First aid/emergency preparedness kits
- School spirit items (decals, bumper stickers, license plate holders)
- Brick, stone, or tile memorials
- Cups and mugs
- Pet treats, toys, and accessories
- Rent a special parking space
- Spirit, seasonal, State, or U.S. flags
- Tickets to sporting or fine arts events
- Stadium cushions
- Plants, flowers (especially for Valentine’s Day or proms), seeds, or student-painted flower pots!
HEALTHY FUNDRAISING

Promoting a Healthy School Environment

Candy, baked goods, salty snacks, soda and other foods with little nutritional value are commonly used for fundraising at school. Schools may make easy money selling these foods, but students pay the price. An environment that constantly provides children with unhealthy foods promotes unhealthy habits that can have lifelong impact. As America faces a national epidemic of overweight children, many schools are turning to healthy fundraising alternatives.

Benefits of Healthy Fundraising

► Healthy Kids Learn Better: Research clearly demonstrates that good nutrition is linked to better behavior and academic performance. To provide the best possible learning environment for children, schools must also provide an environment that supports healthy behaviors.

► Provides Consistent Messages: Fundraising with nonfood items and healthy foods demonstrates a school commitment to promoting healthy behaviors. It supports the classroom lessons students are learning about health, instead of contradicting them.

► Promotes a Healthy School Environment: Students need to receive consistent, reliable health information and ample opportunity to use it. Healthy fundraising alternatives are an important part of providing a healthy school environment. They promote positive lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning.

Consequences of Unhealthy Fundraising

► Compromises Classroom Learning: Selling unhealthy foods contradicts nutrition messages taught in the classroom. Schools are designed to teach and model appropriate skills and behaviors. Nutrition principles taught in the classroom are meaningless if they are contradicted by other activities that promote unhealthy choices, like selling candy. It’s like saying, “You need to eat healthy foods to feel and do your best, but it is more important for us to make money than for you to be healthy and do well.” Classroom learning about nutrition remains strictly theoretical if the school environment regularly promotes unhealthy behaviors.

► Promotes the Wrong Message: Selling unhealthy foods promotes the message that schools care more about making money than student health. Schools would never raise money with anything else that increases student health risks, but food fundraisers are often overlooked. As schools promote healthy lifestyle choices to reduce student health risks and improve learning, school fundraisers must be included.

► Contributes to Poor Health: Foods commonly used as fundraisers (like chocolate, candy, soda and baked goods) provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices. Skyrocketing obesity rates among children are resulting in serious health consequences, such as increased incidence of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure.

Children’s Eating Habits are Poor

Currently, 17 percent of children and adolescents ages 2 to 19 are overweight and 1 in 3 children are overweight or obese.1 Between 1980 and 2004, obesity tripled among children and adolescents.2 Children ages 2 to 18 consume almost 40 percent of their calories from solid fats and added sugars.3 Their diets do not include enough fruits, vegetables, whole grains or lean meats, and are too high in sodium, saturated fat and added sugars.4

Resources


References

IDEAS FOR HEALTHY FUNDRAISING ALTERNATIVES*

Schools can help promote a healthy learning environment by using healthy fundraising alternatives.

**Items You Can Sell**
- Activity theme bags
- Air fresheners
- Bath accessories
- Balloon bouquets
- Batteries
- Books
- Brick/stone/tile memorials
- Buttons, pins
- Candles
- Coffee cups or mugs
- Crafts
- Coupon books (nonfood items)
- Emergency kits for cars
- First aid kits
- Flowers, bulbs, plants
- Foot warmers
- Football seats
- Garden seeds
- Gift baskets (nonfood items)
- Gift certificates (nonfood items)
- Gift items
- Gift wrap, boxes and bags
- Graduation tickets
- Greeting cards
- Hats
- Holiday ornaments
- Holiday wreaths
- House decorations
- Jewelry
- Magazine subscriptions
- Monograms
- Music, CDs, DVDs
- Newspaper space, ads
- Parking spot (preferred location)
- Pet treats/toys/accessories
- Plants
- Phone cards
- Raffle donations (nonfood items)
- Raffle extra graduation tickets
- Raffle front row seats at a special school event
- Rent a special parking space
- Scarves
- School art drawings
- Souvenir cups
- Spirit/seasonal flags
- Stadium pillows
- Stationery
- Student directories
- Stuffed animals
- Valentine flowers
- Yearbook covers
- Yearbook graffiti

**Healthy Foods**
- Fresh fruit
- Frozen bananas
- Fruit and nut baskets
- Fruit and yogurt parfaits
- Fruit smoothies
- Trail mix

**Sell Custom Merchandise**
- Bumper stickers and decals
- Calendars
- Cookbook of healthy recipes made by school
- Flying discs with school logo
- License plates or holders with school logo
- Logo air fresheners
- School spirit gear
- T-shirts/sweatshirts

**Activities Supporting Academics**
- Read-A-Thon
- Science Fair
- Spelling Bee

**Things You Can Do**
- Auction
- Bike-a-thons
- Bowling night/bowl-a-thon
- Car wash (presell tickets as gifts)
- Carnivals/festivals
- Dances (kids, father/daughter, Sadie Hawkins)
- Family/glamour portraits
- Fun runs
- Gift wrapping
- Golf tournament
- Jump-ropo-a-thon
- Magic show
- Raffle (movie passes, theme bags)
- Raffle (teachers do a silly activity)
- Rent-a-teen helper (rake leaves, water gardens, mow lawns, wash dog)
- Recycling cans/bottles/paper
- Singing telegrams
- Skate night/skate-a-thon
- Tag sale, garage sale
- Talent shows
- Tennis/horseshoe competition
- Treasure hunt/scavenger hunt
- Walk-a-thons
- Workshops/classes