



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

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Dear Connecticut Legislators,

I am writing to provide information on SB 48 in the Children's Committee, AAC Nutrition Standards for Child Care Settings. This legislation aligns with the Institute of Medicine recommendations for healthy eating by prohibiting any beverage with artificial sweeteners or natural added sweeteners to be given to children in childcare settings. Children under the age of 8 months would not be provided any juice. Children over the age of 8 months would have juice limited to no more than 6 ounces per day. All milk provided to children over age 2 will have a fat content of 1% or less unless otherwise prescribed by the child's physician. This legislation would make water available and easily accessible to children throughout the day. Connecticut YMCA's are already ahead of the curve with full implementation of Y-USA Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Standards for the more than 13,000 children we serve in our day care, camps and afterschool programs.

Empty calories from sugar sweetened beverages contribute to approximately 22% of a child's total daily caloric intake (Reedy and Smith, 2010) On average children ages 2-18 years of age consume 171 empty calories per day from sugar sweetened beverages such as soda and fruit drinks combined (NHANES, 2005-2006). These 10 teaspoons of daily sugar intake contributes to weight gain. In CT 1 in 8 preschoolers is obese and 5x more likely to become an obese adult (CDC, MMRW, August 9, 2013 / 62(31); 629-634).

I came to work for the Regional YMCA in 2009 at the height of the childhood obesity community discussions in Danbury, CT. As a result, the Regional YMCA serves 300 elementary age children in a program called Students Can Run and Move (S.C.R.A.M.). This is an afterschool program operating in four Title 1 schools providing physical activity and healthy nutrition daily after-school. We are slowly improving health behaviors and BMI of the children we serve. What I learned in Danbury is that nearly 32% of children who enter Kindergarten are already overweight or obese. Obesity is more of a norm among low income minority students. If 1 in 3 students are already overweight or obese upon entering Kindergarten, we need to start sooner with policy change and parent education. This SB 48 legislation can help to inform parents about the health consequences of consuming too much sugar and reinforce that low-fat milk is recommended for children over the ages of 2 years (AAP).

171 calories from sweetened beverages is equivalent to 10 teaspoons of sugar daily.

Maureen Farrell 2/26/14

