

This week's issue:

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDHOOD OBESITY?



Questions for Classroom Discussion:

- What are the two primary ways to control problems like obesity and diabetes?
- Obesity and diabetes are multidimensional problems. What might be some other causes?
- Are snack choices restricted at your school?
- Besides adding more fruits and vegetables, what healthy choices could the school lunch program provide?

It's lunchtime and sixth-grader Oscar Villanova visits the vending machine. He pays for an orange juice and some cheese sticks, but he really wanted soda and chips. His school, Mildred Avenue, only sells school lunch and healthy snacks.

Seventh-grader Leticia Brown has been told by her doctor that she needs to lose weight. Her doctor says exercise will help her control her weight but at school she only gets physical education once a week.

Many children suffer from health conditions that are caused or made worse by their lifestyles. Childhood **obesity** has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents in the past 30 years. Rates of childhood diabetes have also risen. These conditions can put children at risk for heart disease and other major killers later in life.

These health issues are **multidimensional** problems with many different causes. Eating meals out, watching lots of TV, and not being active after school can cause too much weight gain. But there are many things children can do to improve their health. Doctors say the **primary** focus for children should be eating healthy food and getting exercise every day.

Schools are getting involved in solving the problem. Some, like Mildred Avenue, **restrict** the snacks students can buy. Others are offering more gym classes to **emphasize** the importance of exercise. Some schools even send home health notices warning parents that their child may be overweight. These schools believe parents should be acting more responsibly by restricting children's diets. Many parents get angry, arguing that schools should limit their focus to teaching. They believe that they have primary responsibility for their children's health.

Who is responsible for children's health? Should schools be involved? When do young people become responsible for their own health decisions?

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILDHOOD OBESITY?



obesity | primary | emphasize | restrict | multidimensional

USE THE FOCUS WORDS

obesity (*noun*) state of being extremely overweight

➡ **Sample Sentence:** One way to help solve the **obesity** problem in the U.S. is to require all restaurants to list the calories on menu items.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Should companies that sell junk food be required to give money to fight **obesity**?

primary (*adjective*) most important; most influential

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Doctors say the **primary** focus for children should be eating healthy food and getting exercise every day.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What is the **primary** quality you look for in a good friend?

emphasize (*verb*) to show the importance of

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Other schools are offering more gym classes to **emphasize** the importance of exercise.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** What could your school do to **emphasize** the importance of a healthy diet? Explain.

restrict (*verb*) to keep within limits

➡ **Sample Sentence:** Some schools, like Mildred Avenue, **restrict** the snacks students can buy.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Do you think that schools should **restrict** the kind of food that is brought in for celebrations and activities?

multidimensional (*adjective*) having many different sides or characteristics

➡ **Sample Sentence:** These health issues are **multidimensional** problems with many different causes.

🗣️ **Turn and Talk:** Is cheating in school a **multidimensional** problem? Explain.