

CHILDHOOD OBESITY AWARENESS MONTH

GRANTEE TOOLKIT



OVERVIEW

September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month. The goal of the month is to build awareness of the childhood obesity epidemic and to motivate communities, organizations, families and individuals to live healthier lives. From schools and child care providers to organizations and individuals, all members of the community can fight childhood obesity and help the next generation of Oklahomans secure a healthier future.

Below you will find talking points and social media posts you can use to talk about obesity within your local community and even scale it down to have practical calls to action and resources for members of your community. It's important to give community members information around this health observation because it highlights where Oklahoma stands compared to other states. It's also a chance to highlight all the free resources Shape Your Future offers to help Oklahomans make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Impact on Oklahomans

- In Oklahoma alone, **1 in 3 children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese**, according to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). Plus, we have the 7th highest high school obesity rate in the nation.
- Encourage kids to **choose water** over sugary drinks, fill half their plates with **fruits and veggies** and be sure they get **60 minutes of physical activity** every day.

Childhood Obesity is a Major Public Health Problem

- Children with obesity are at **higher risk for having other chronic health conditions** and diseases, such as asthma, sleep apnea, bone and joint problems and type 2 diabetes. They also have more risk factors for heart disease like high blood pressure and high cholesterol than their normal-weight peers.
- Children with obesity can be **bullied and teased more** than their healthy-weight peers. They are also more likely to suffer from social isolation, depression and lower self-esteem.
- Children with obesity are more **likely to have obesity as adults**. This can lead to lifelong physical and **mental health problems**. Adult obesity is associated with a higher risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and many types of cancers.

Shape Your Future will promote this health observation through social media throughout the month of September. If you see our content pop up in your newsfeed, we encourage you to share the posts and tag @ShapeFutureOK, so we get alerted. In turn, we can give you a shout out.

TALKING POINTS

How can you make a difference with this health observation? You can use this month to raise awareness and show people in your community how they can work to make healthy choices for their kids! Here are a few ideas to keep kids and parents/caregivers happy and healthy this month!

1. Focus on Food

- Encourage parents/caregivers to **pack healthy lunches**. Whether kids eat at school or parents pack them a lunch, encourage them to try fruits and veggies. If they're packing a lunch, make sure to tell them to include fruits, veggies and whole grains. An easy way to do this is to sub wheat bread for white bread and opt for a side of fruit or sliced veggies instead of potato chips.
- When at home, parents/caregivers can **swap out junk food and soda** for healthier options like fruit, vegetables with hummus and water.
- An easy way to fill half your plate with vegetables is to build a healthy dinner around them. Sometimes, healthy side dishes become an afterthought. **Starting with vegetables** and then adding grains and proteins makes it simpler.



2. Get Active

- After school, encourage parents/caregivers to find ways to get **active as a family** by being creative at home with a dance party, an after-dinner walk, or visiting local parks and libraries that offer free activities.
- Talk about screen time — **set limits on screen time** and turn it into playtime. Setting limits will help minimize screen time and encourage kids to be active. Kids need to **be active for 60 minutes** each day.



3. Drink Water

- Drinks like soda, sugary coffee drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks and juice boxes are packed with sugar and empty calories. **Choose water instead.** Whether bottled or tap, water is the healthiest option for kids and adults.
- If kids are having a hard time drinking water, encourage parents/caregivers to add in fruits to infuse it. They can **add lemons, limes or strawberries to water** and have the kids help make suggestions too.



TIPS TO GET PARENTS/CAREGIVERS INVOLVED

1. **Host a community event** in a local park to get neighborhood kids playing outside. See if you can co-host it with a local middle or elementary school.
2. Set up meetings with teachers and administrators to **make schools healthier**. Use this health observation as an invitation to go and speak with local entities.
3. Encourage parents/caregivers to **get involved** at their child's school.
"Find out what kinds of health and wellness programs and policies your child's school has in place (*talk about anything local you are working on, this is a chance to highlight your past work*). Schedule a tour of the school, attend events and speak to teachers and administrators. You could even suggest and initiate health-focused events that the school doesn't currently observe, like Take Your Parents to P.E. Day or a Walk or Bike to School Day event."
4. Encourage parents/caregivers and other organizations to create routines that foster **health habits at home**.
"Prepare healthy snacks or meals that fit your schedule. Also, limit screen time to a certain number of hours per week. Keep the limits consistent and encourage your kids to find more active ways to play. Try role modeling by setting limits for yourself, too."
5. Encourage families to **talk to their doctor(s)** about their health.
"Next time your child visits the doctor, discuss with them a plan to improve your child's health. Their doctor can tell you a healthy weight for your child's age and height. Plus, they'll suggest some tips and simple lifestyle changes your child can try to achieve it."



SOCIAL POSTS

Please tag Shape Your Future in all posts. @ShapeFutureOK

1. In Oklahoma, 1 in 3 children ages 10-17 are overweight or obese, according to the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH). The good news? Your family can start to make simple changes to become healthier. Click below to learn all about the **free resources** available to your family.
Link: <https://shapeyourfutureok.com/>
2. Learn how to create healthy habits as a family to fight childhood obesity by using this **Healthy Habits Reward Card**. It's a great way to reward your kids for healthy behaviors and fun for the whole family.
Link: https://shapeyourfutureok.com/individual_pdfs/healthy-habits-reward-card/
3. How can you fight childhood obesity? Help kids get 60 minutes of activity daily. Click below to find **physical activities fit for the whole family**.
Link: <https://shapeyourfutureok.com/get-active/>
4. Encourage healthy habits that last a lifetime this September by filling half your kid's plate with fruits and veggies. Click below to find **healthy and tasty recipes** for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
Link: <https://shapeyourfutureok.com/healthy-recipes/>
5. Drinking water every day can reduce your child's risk for obesity. Water has zero sugar and zero calories. Click below **learn more about the benefits**.
Link: <https://shapeyourfutureok.com/drink-water/>