Children's Hospital of Philadelphia PolicyLab

# A Narrative Review of Public Health Interventions for Childhood Obesity

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Public health interventions that intervene on macrolevel systems hold the promise of reducing childhood obesity at the population level through prevention. The purpose of this review is to highlight some of the recent and best scientific evidence related to public health interventions for the prevention of childhood obesity. We provide a narrative review of scientific evidence for six categories of public health interventions and their impact on childhood obesity: federal nutrition assistance programs, programs implemented in early care and education centers, interventions to support healthy nutrition and physical activity in schools, community-based programs and policies, labeling policies and marketing to children, and taxes on sugar sweetened beverages (SSB). Federal nutrition assistance programs have the strongest evidence to support reduction in childhood obesity and serve populations with the highest prevalence of childhood obesity. Other interventions including SSB taxes, community-wide interventions, and interventions at schools and early care and education centers also show significant improvements in child weight status. Overall public health interventions have strong evidence to support widespread implementation in service of reducing childhood obesity rates at the population level. To effectively address the recalcitrant childhood obesity epidemic, multi-pronged solutions are needed. The current evidence for public health obesity interventions is consistent with the paradigm that recognizes the importance of macrolevel systems influences on childhood obesity: interventions that are most effective intervene at macrolevels.

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