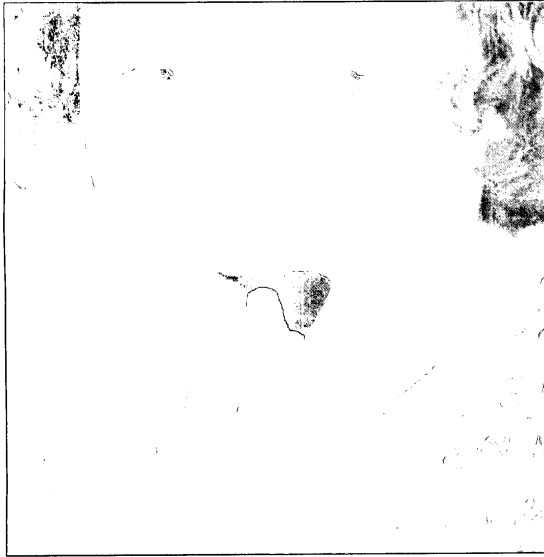


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A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM CHILDREN FIRST FOR OREGON

## Oregon's Health Challenge: Fighting Childhood Obesity



The health of Oregon's children, and the public health of the entire state, is significantly threatened by high rates of obesity among children and youth, according to Children First for Oregon's *County Data Book 2005* released earlier this year.

"Because of the child obesity epidemic, this generation will be the first to be less healthy and have a shorter life expectancy than their parents," said Robin Christian, Children First for Oregon's Executive Director. "We must act now to reverse this alarming trend."

Currently, 1 in 4 Oregon high school students are seriously overweight or at-risk for obesity. Obesity places children at high risk for developing serious and often life-long diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and asthma, as well as mental health and emotional problems.

Children First's recommendations focus on how schools have an important role in fighting this epidemic. Outside of the home, children spend the majority of their time in school, so it is vitally important that schools provide a healthy environment for students. "Research has shown that school programs can effectively promote physical activity and healthy eating, which in turn also helps students learn better," said Angela Hult of Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Oregon, the presenting sponsor of the Data Book. "When children embrace healthy habits, it creates the foundation for a healthy life."

Recommendations to reduce and prevent child obesity from the 2005 Data Book include:

- ◆ Establish state nutritional standards for all food and drink served or sold in schools.
- ◆ Prohibit junk food sales and marketing on school property.
- ◆ Ensure high quality physical education and health education as core curricula in all grades.
- ◆ Increase opportunities for physical activity after school and in the community.
- ◆ Sustain these efforts by coordinating the health related programs often found in schools and partnering with families and communities to offer students extended health-promoting opportunities (called a "coordinated school health" approach).

Children First for Oregon is celebrating fifteen years as a leading voice in child advocacy.

A non-profit, non-partisan organization working to improve the lives of Oregon's children by shaping statewide

public policy, Children First believes that every child deserves to grow up healthy, safe and supported. Join us in turning advocacy into action!

**A gift to Children First will touch every child in Oregon. Help us improve the future of Oregon's kids!**

To learn more about the work of Children First or to request a copy of any of our noteworthy publications, including our *County Data Book 2005*, "Oregon Health Challenge: Fighting Childhood Obesity," visit us online at

[www.childrenfirstfororegon.org](http://www.childrenfirstfororegon.org)

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