# Fuel Up to Play 60

## Background on Childhood Obesity

Fuel Up to Play 60 is designed to help reverse the trend toward increased weight and sedentary lifestyles among America's children. Over the past 30 years, this trend has assumed an epidemic level, with the proportion of U.S. children aged 6 to 11 years growing from 6.5 percent to nearly 19.0 percent, and rates of adolescents aged 12 to 19 years jumping from 5.0 percent to 17.4 percent.[1]

Overweight children are at high risk of remaining overweight as adults. They're more likely to develop Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and other chronic health problems, as well as heart attacks, stroke, cancer and other acute diseases throughout life.[2,3,4] With these risks, it's possible that today's children could become the first American generation with a shorter life expectancy than their parents.[5]

Nutrition plays a major role. Paradoxically, many American children are overfed and undernourished.[6] Most children and adolescents are falling short of current dietary recommendations. In fact, only two percent of school-aged children consume the recommended daily number of servings from all food groups specified by USDA's Dietary Guidelines.[7]

Given these startling statistics, it's critical that meal planning for children emphasize nutrient density – foods that provide substantial vitamins, minerals and other nutrients, yet relatively few calories. Dairy foods such as low-fat and fat-free milk, cheese and yogurt - together provide a unique package of nine essential nutrients – calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, vitamins A, D and B12, riboflavin and niacin (niacin equivalents) – are recommended in the Dietary Guidelines.[8] Whole grains, and fruits and vegetables help make up a nutritious, balanced diet.

Then there's physical activity – 60 minutes a day puts all that nutritious fuel to work to help build strong, healthy bodies. However, a recent national survey conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that nearly 62 percent of children, aged 9-13 years old, do not participate in any organized physical activity during their non-school hours and almost 23 percent do not engage in any free-time physical activity.[9]

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