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American Academy of Pediatrics

“Childhood Obesity: Beginning the Dialogue on Reversing the Epidemic”

March 4, 2010

Childhood obesity is generally recognized as one of the most pressing pediatric medical issues of this generation. No single factor responsible for obesity; obesity is the end result of a complex interplay of different issues. Experience is teaching us that obesity is a multi-factorial problem that requires an equally sophisticated and comprehensive solution.

Childhood obesity continues to be a leading public health concern, as these children are more likely to be obese as adults and are therefore at a higher risk for a range of health problems throughout their lives. Overweight and obesity and their associated health problems also have a significant economic impact on the U.S. health care system. Significant disparities in childhood obesity rates exist among races, sexes, income levels, and geographic areas.

While the challenges are significant, the good news is that we can help children with overweight and obesity, and we are learning more every day about the most effective ways of doing so.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) provides a range of resources to pediatricians to help them care for their patients. These include websites, comprehensive guidelines for well child care, clinical guidance and tools for treatment, books and publications, and continuing medical education.

The AAP has also undertaken a range of projects to explore both clinical and community-based models for reducing childhood obesity. The AAP has forged partnerships with numerous organizations and both given and received grants for innovative efforts related to childhood obesity. Furthermore, the AAP has assisted in the development of and/or endorsed efforts such as the First Lady’s *Let’s Move!* initiative and the 5-2-1-0 campaign. The AAP is engaged in a multitude of efforts to effect policy changes at the federal, state, and local levels that will help reverse the tide of childhood obesity.