

Society for Nutrition Education Strengthening Nutrition Education & Promotion 2009 Child Nutrition Reauthorization

Summary: To improve the health and nutrition status of children and address childhood obesity, mandatory, consistent funding is essential to achieve an integrated and comprehensive nutrition education and promotion program. Team Nutrition Networks (TNN), within and across U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Child Nutrition Programs should be coordinated at the national level within USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), administered at the state level to meet unique state needs, and implemented at the local level based on prioritized community needs.

Promoting and teaching healthy eating is essential to addressing childhood obesity and other diet-related health problems. Congress supported nutrition promotion and education by authorizing USDA's Team Nutrition Network in the 2004 Child Nutrition Reauthorization. Funds have not been appropriated to carry out these provisions.

A consolidated, comprehensive Team Nutrition Network would include funding for:

- (1) Expansion, coordination, and implementation of nutrition education and promotion activities, including providing technical assistance and training for local educators and materials dissemination;
- (2) Grants to local school districts to conduct effective nutrition education and promotion activities and to implement, assess, and enhance local school wellness policies;
- (3) USDA, in coordination with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of Education (DoE), and appropriate nonprofit partners, to develop a national clearinghouse to help local wellness policy committees develop, implement, and assess their local wellness policies;
- (4) A state-based Team Nutrition Network Coordinator in each state;
- (5) USDA Food and Nutrition Service to develop materials and provide technical assistance for use of those materials; and
- (6) Evaluation of Team Nutrition Network materials and program effectiveness, including an examination of the role and impact of a nutrition education specialist.



This approach would:

- Enable the efficient and effective collaboration among schools, childcare centers, other child nutrition settings, and communities in building multidisciplinary, integrated, nutrition and health promoting partnerships.

- Provide financial stability to state agencies to support nutrition education in schools and integrated with USDA nutrition programs.
- Support a strong nutrition education program in every state to provide training and technical assistance, better utilize and disseminate existing materials, coordinate program and curricula implementation and evaluation, and collaborate within the state and with other states.
- Allow each state and local school district to address its own unique nutrition education needs.
- Fund qualified professionals to lead nutrition education and promotion efforts across the state in child nutrition programs including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), the School Breakfast Program (SBP), the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).

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The Society for Nutrition Education (SNE) is composed of nutrition education professionals sharing a vision of healthy people in healthy communities, through the promotion of healthful food choices and lifestyle behaviors at the individual, community, and policy levels. Our members conduct research in education, behavior, and communication; develop and disseminate innovative nutrition education strategies; and communicate information on food, nutrition, and health issues to students, professionals, policy makers, and the public. Publications describing this work can be found in the SNE peer-reviewed *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, the leading research periodical devoted to behavioral nutrition and nutrition education research, and policy.