



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CATCH® CAN HELP PAVE THE ROAD TO A HEALTHY FUTURE FOR CHILDREN IN CALIFORNIA

Hasbrouck Heights, NJ – Sept. 6, 2007. This Spring, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Jack O’Connell, announced that California schools will receive \$500 million in Arts, Music and Physical Education grants for professional development, equipment and supplies to improve instruction in physical education and the visual and performing arts. O’Connell remarked, “High-quality arts education and improved physical fitness can support academic achievement in all areas of a student’s education. These grants will help provide our schools with resources to implement standards-based instruction in physical education and visual and performing arts.” This increase in funding for physical education comes at a very good time.

According to the California Center for Public Health Advocacy, “The epidemic of overweight children in California continues to grow due to unhealthy diets and a low level of physical activity in our children.” Based on their study in child overweight rates in California’s 10 largest cities in 2004, an average of 30.06% of children in the state’s top cities are currently overweight. The new funding will allow schools to focus on physical education and programs aimed toward preventing childhood obesity and the illnesses related to it.

City	Total Population	Total tested in Grades 5, 7, 9	Overweight (%)
Los Angeles	3,694,820	69,126	36.3
San Diego	1,223,400	38,947	26.4
San Jose	894,943	28,327	27.4
San Francisco	776,733	11,618	24.4
Long Beach	461,522	16,439	29.1
Fresno	427,652	21,572	30.5
Sacramento	407,018	25,095	28.7
Oakland	399,484	8,997	30.7
Santa Ana	337,977	14,943	34.8
Anaheim	328,014	13,330	32.3

California Center for Public Health Advocacy, <http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/growingepidemic.html>

One program that has been noted in the state of California for providing schools with the information and tools needed to fight obesity is Coordinated Approach To Child Health (CATCH®). CATCH® is an evidence based K-5 coordinated school health program that is designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices and prevent tobacco use in elementary school-aged children. The program focuses on classroom curricula, child nutrition services, physical education and family involvement. In addition to educational materials on nutrition and physical activity, the national publisher and distributor of the CATCH® Program resource materials, Flaghouse, Inc., offers training, resources and grant-writing guidance.

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CATCH® began as a research study funded by the National Heart Lung and Blood Institute in 1991 to help elementary schools, children and their families adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Research teams from the University of Texas-Houston, Tulane University, University of Minnesota, and the University of California, participated in what is still the largest and most rigorous school-based health promotion trial ever conducted.

Earlier this year, CATCH® was added to the list of Research-Validated programs featured in the California Healthy Kids Resource Center's (CHKRC) *2007 Health Education Library*. CHKRC is funded by the California Department of Education. It provides a free one-stop information source for high-quality professional development and instructional resources, technical support links, program administration tools and information about laws and policy to meet the needs of school health programs throughout the state of California.

Only a limited number of programs reviewed by CHKRC have demonstrated the level of credible evidence of effectiveness that identifies them as Research-Validated (R-V). Programs are evaluated based on demonstrated reductions in health-risk behaviors and/or increases in health-promoting behaviors, published research in scholarly peer-reviewed journals, and their program materials; which must be complete, available and ready to implement in schools within the state of California.

In addition to being recognized within the state of California, CATCH® was featured this June in the Center for Disease Control's *Public Health Grand Rounds*. Sponsored by the CDC and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health, the *Public Health Grand Rounds* present real-world case studies that highlight the agency's health protection goals. The case-study on CATCH® demonstrated how the program has successfully been implemented in school districts in other states. In addition, the discussion described how schools, federal, state and local health education agencies, legislators, universities and community-based organizations can work together to prevent and reduce chronic disease and improve the health of children and their families. By setting healthy behaviors in place during childhood, we can prevent diseases such as hypertension, Type II diabetes and heart disease in the future.

If you are interested in learning more about CATCH®, visit www.CATCHinfo.org, or contact Kathy Chichester at 800-793-7900, x 7518.

CATCH® (Coordinated Approach To Child Health) is an evidence-based, coordinated school health program designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices and prevent tobacco use in elementary and middle school-aged children. By teaching children that eating healthy and being physically active can be fun, the CATCH Program has proven that healthy habits established in childhood can produce positive and lasting health behavior changes. For more information visit www.CATCHinfo.org.

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