

SLOWING DOWN FAST FOOD:

A policy guide for healthier kids and families

Why Fast Food?

- With 2010 revenues of more than **\$180 billion**, the fast-food industry is a powerful force in our economy. Corporations such as McDonald's, Yum! Brands (owner of Taco Bell, KFC and Pizza Hut), Burger King and Wendy's engage in business practices that undermine the health and well-being of communities.
- The prevalence of fast food has limited our ability to take control of our food system and make healthier choices.

Why Local Policy?

- There are numerous policy tools at our disposal that can help reduce the negative impact of fast food in our communities. **While things may seem hopeless in Congress these days, local action provides many feasible and effective solutions.**
- The Institute of Medicine, National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention—among other agencies—are recognizing that we need a much broader approach to solving the epidemic of diet-related disease. Parents, schools and health professionals alone cannot solve this problem; policymakers and the food industry must step up to the plate.
- **You have a role to play in ensuring a healthy food environment, preventing diet-related disease and increasing access to nutritious food for the sake of generations to come.**



Desert View High School in Tucson, Arizona is one of many schools across the U.S. where McDonald's and other fast-food outlets serve food high in fat, sugar and salt in the school cafeteria.

What Policy Options Does The Report Discuss?

The report examines **four main strategies** to reduce the harmful influence of fast-food corporations and their impact on children's health.

1. **ADVANCE SCHOOL POLICIES** to make healthier food more available in schools and reduce the availability and promotion of unhealthy foods like fast food, soda and candy.

FACT: Across the U.S., about 20 percent of public schools have opened their cafeteria doors to sell branded fast food.

2. **RESTRICT AREAS WHERE FAST FOOD CORPORATIONS CAN OPERATE** through use of zoning and other actions to remove fast food from parks, hospitals, government buildings and the areas around schools.

FACT: Twenty-four diverse cities across the U.S. have effectively enacted zoning, reducing fast food prevalence and shifting the built environment locally to promote prevention.

"If people don't have better choices ... they are going to take what's there. To say that these restaurants are not part of the problem would be foolish."

JAN PERRY, CITY COUNCILWOMAN, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

(continued on back page)

3. LIMIT KID-TARGETED MARKETING of unhealthy products to children, such as toy giveaways and use of kid-friendly characters.

As Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's put it, **"If you have \$1 to spend on marketing, spend it on kids, because they bring Mom and Dad."**

FACT: Because kids lack the judgment of adults and are potential life-long customers, fast-food marketers particularly target children, through the Internet, public sponsorships and toy giveaways.

FACT: Each year, fast-food corporations spend more than a half billion dollars advertising fast-food meals to children.



Schools such as St. Paul Public Schools have implemented policies offering children more healthful meal options that follow nutritional standards set at the federal level.

4. REDUCE PUBLIC SUBSIDIES for fast-food corporations by ending economic development incentives to fast-food outlets or by ending tax breaks for fast-food corporations. Corporations that do get subsidies should be required to offer healthier products.

Additionally, "Slowing Down Fast Food" Provides Analysis of...

- How the fast-food industry operates.
- How the fast-food industry uses political and charitable contributions to increase its profits and influence.
- How McDonald's co-opts the health community to deflect criticism, including by siting stores in hospitals.
- Additional policy options, including calorie or warning labels in fast-food outlets, counter-advertising campaigns and taxing of unhealthy foods.

"There is no defensible policy rationale for subsidizing fast-food restaurants ... The dollars lost on fast food restaurants could be used to address looming budget shortfalls or to support healthy initiatives, such as financing over 700 families in the Community Supported Agriculture program."

SCOTT STRINGER, MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT, NEW YORK, NEW YORK

"Slowing Down Fast Food" also includes an **ACTION GUIDE** offering specific, practical guidance for putting these ideas into motion in your community. It also includes additional resources from the numerous other organizations engaged in protecting our communities' health from unscrupulous fast-food corporations.

Policymakers, city planners, public health officials, parents, health professionals and concerned community residents have the power to make these policies a reality and to foster a healthier future for our nation's children.

To launch a policy initiative locally, for more information and to download a full copy of the report, go to StopCorporateAbuse.org and click "Resources" or contact:

CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITY INTERNATIONAL
10 MILK STREET
BOSTON, MA 02108
(617) 695-2525 INFO@STOPCORPORATEABUSE.ORG
WWW.STOPCORPORATEABUSE.ORG

