

THE HEALTH IMPACT PYRAMID

Helping children and families achieve healthy weight



Counseling & Education

One-on-one counseling or educational programs encouraging people to eat healthy & be physically active.

Clinical Interventions

Ongoing clinical interventions such as treatment for high blood pressure, high cholesterol, & diabetes.

Long Lasting Protective Interventions

One-time or periodic interventions such as immunizations, regular health screenings, & breastfeeding support.

Changing the Context

making the healthy choice easier

Population-level interventions such as trans fat-free regulations, healthy food vending policies, work place policies, and community gardens to increase access to healthier food.

Social Determinants of Health

such as poverty, inequality, high school graduation rates, housing, and access to and availability of healthy food

Interventions such as early childhood education, public transportation, home improvement loans and grants, earned income tax credits, water fluoridation, & healthy food availability.

Why we focus on changing the context:

The Health Impact Pyramid demonstrates the spectrum of interventions that can be applied to health priorities such as helping children grow up at a healthy weight.

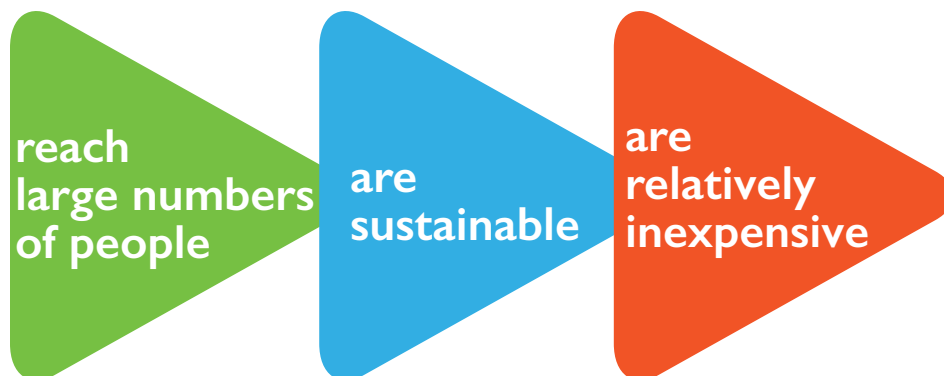
The bottom tier of this pyramid encompasses the factors that most greatly affect population health—the root factors of health such as poverty, housing, and education.

The next tier of the pyramid is where public health programs such as the Georgia SNAP-Ed program focus most of their efforts. Aside from addressing social determinants (i.e. poverty, high school graduation rates, housing, and inequality), a focus on programs that change systems, policies, and environments promises the greatest impact on population health.

While individual interventions may have their place, public funds are best focused on interventions that have a greater impact. Interventions such as serving healthy foods in schools, strengthening school breakfast and lunch programs, establishing policies for recess and physical education, and creating “Safe Routes to Schools” so that students can walk, bike, or ski to school will have a significant, long term effects on students.

Public health approaches to helping kids grow up at a healthy weight should focus their work on interventions that will have the greatest impact on obesity.

Policy, systems, and environmental change are effective because they:



Choose activities that will have the most impact and are ongoing, foundational, policy level, long term, and sustaining:

Ongoing ✓ <i>Example: Buying reusable plastic pitchers for the lunchroom for serving water</i>	One time ✗ <i>Example: Drink-a-thon to encourage employees water consumption instead of sugary drinks for a week</i>
Foundational ✓ <i>Example: Establishing a community garden to increase access to fresh, healthy food.</i>	Additive or one-off events ✗ <i>Example: Bringing in a one-time speaker to talk about the importance of good nutrition</i>
Policy level ✓ <i>Example: Passing a school wellness policy that requires PE for all students at nationally recommended levels</i>	Individual level ✗ <i>Example: One-on-one counseling for weight management issues</i>
Long term ✓ <i>Example: Replacing unhealthy food in cafeterias and vending machines with healthier or non-food options</i>	Short term ✗ <i>Example: Having a smoothie day to encourage eating fresh fruit</i>
Sustaining ✓ <i>Example: Improving school nutrition through a combination of policy and education.</i>	Non-sustaining ✗ <i>Example: Using non-evidence based nutrition education</i>
 Choose this	 Not this