School Nutrition Environment and Services

Audio Descriptive Text

Title: Chapter 2. Healthy School Environments; School Nutrition Environment and Services. Graphic of a wheel depicting student access to healthy foods and beverages at school. The outer wheel depicts Food and Beverage Marketing; Healthy Eating Learning Opportunities; Staff Role Modeling. The inner wheel depicts Vending Machines; A La Carte Foods; In-School Fundraisers; School Meals; Access to Drinking Water; Classroom Celebrations, Events, & Rewards; and School Stores & Snack Bars. Graphic of recommendation to offer and promote healthy food and beverage options in all areas of the school with percentages of the reality in schools: 74% of schools sell soft drinks to students; 22% of schools allow soft drink companies to advertise soft drinks on vending machines; only 6% of schools sell fruits and vegetables in vending machines, school stores, or snack bars; over ½ of schools sell baked good not low in fat, such as cookies, for school fundraisers; less than ½ of schools prohibit or actively discourage staff from using food or food coupons as a reward for good behavior or good academic performance. Image of Active Child icon.

Video Summary

- The school nutrition environment refers to the foods and beverages that are available to students throughout the school day.

- The goal is to ensure that students have access to healthy food choices and messages that reinforce these choices.

- Schools should provide opportunities for students to learn about healthy eating through nutrition education classes and other programs.

Audio Script

School nutrition environment refers to the foods and beverages that are available to students throughout the school day, as well as information and messages about food and nutrition that students encounter on school grounds. A *healthy* school nutrition environment provides students with access to nutritious and appealing foods and beverages, consistent messages about healthy eating, and opportunities to learn about and practice making smart nutrition choices.

The CDC and other national organizations recommend that schools:

- Provide quality school meal programs;

- Ensure that students have only appealing, healthy food and beverage choices offered outside of the school meal program;

- Use fundraising activities and student rewards that support health; and

- Market and promote healthy foods and beverages.

The goal is to ensure that students have access to healthy food choices and messages that reinforce these choices during the school day.

The CDC recommends that schools promote access to and participation in school meals, including the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Schools should ensure that these meals meet or exceed federal nutrition standards.

Schools should also ensure that food and beverages sold outside of the school meal programs meet or exceed the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. These standards are for foods and beverages sold through vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, and snack bars, these items are sometimes referred to as "competitive foods" because they can compete with participation in the school meal programs.

Although the Smart Snacks standards do not address foods and beverages served for student rewards or school celebrations, some states, school districts, and schools have established additional nutrition standards for these items. The CDC recommends that schools encourage healthy options be made available for school parties, celebrations, and other events.

CDC encourages schools to provide students with access to drinking water throughout the day, in addition to having water made available during school meal periods.

Schools should provide opportunities for students to learn about healthy eating through nutrition education classes and other programs including school gardens and farm to school activities. Schools can ensure that students receive consistent messages about healthy eating by only marketing and promoting healthy foods and beverages.