



## Report of Focus Groups Conducted June 2011

*Richmond, CA      June 16, 2011*

*Concord, CA      June 21, 2011*

*Pittsburg, CA      June 23, 2011*



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## Overview

This report presents input for the social marketing campaign development for First 5 Contra Costa and Healthy and Active Before 5. Input was obtained from seven English-speaking focus group participants on June 16, 2011, seven Spanish-speaking focus group participants on June 21, 2011, and nine English-speaking focus group participants on June 23, 2011. Tonya Love of Healthy and Active Before 5 moderated the two English-speaking focus groups, and Norma Martínez-Rubin of Evaluation Focused moderated the Spanish-speaking focus group.

The focus group participants were asked about benefits, barriers and campaign recommendations for reducing sugary drink consumption, increasing physical activity and lengthening the breastfeeding period. At the end of each focus group, participants were asked to rank the three focus areas. The findings of the focus groups are summarized below.

## Input on Focus Area #1: Drinking Less Sugary Drinks

*\*Answers in bold were the most repeated*

### 1. Why parents think children are drinking sugary drinks:

- **Sugary drinks are cheaper and more affordable than the healthier drinks (don't immediately think of water as an alternative)**
- **Like the taste**
- **Convenience (it takes time to prepare healthier drinks)**
- **Children drink what their parents drink**
- Availability
- **Lack of knowledge about effects of sugary drinks**
- **Advertising**
- Water isn't safe
- Keep children from crying
- Fast food restaurants include sugary drinks as part of their children's menu

### 2. Reasons parents want their children to drink less sugary drinks:

- **Risk of developing diabetes**
- **Not healthy, obesity**
- What difference will it really make?
- **Hyperactivity**
- **Bad for teeth**

- Stress and tension
- Sugar is addictive

### 3. Challenges parents face when trying to reduce sugary drink consumption:

- **Advertising on TV and on products in stores**
- **Children beg for it**
- Children don't like the taste of "white" milk or water
- **Parents themselves drink soda**
- Children don't like change and don't want to try new things
- It takes time and effort
- **The other parent and other family members aren't supportive**
- Children want what their friends are drinking

### 4. Ways parents have been successful:

- Tell children it's not in the budget
- Distract their attention while grocery shopping
- Make it seem like what we have is better than what other people have
- Make healthy drink options more appealing (colored cup or adding fruit slices)
- Lead by example
- Eliminate choices
- **Explaining that sugary drinks are unhealthy and will make them fat**
- Hiding sugary drinks from children's view at home
- Being in agreement with partner/spouse about what children will be served
- Not drinking sugary drinks in front of children

### 5. What would encourage and support parents in reducing sugary drink consumption:

- WIC stamps for fruit and bottled water
- Offer bottled water at more places
- Tips and ideas for reducing sugary drink consumption
- Move products so kids riding in carts can't see them
- Make healthier drinks cheaper
- Change prices
- Don't allow day care to serve juice
- **Education about effect of sugary drinks**
- **Classes**
- More time with the doctor at doctor visits
- Start with prenatal visits and early childhood
- Teach children as well as their parents

- Preschool: parent night, bulletin board displays and classes
- Mandatory health classes at Headstart

## Input on Focus Area #2: Increasing Physical Activity

*\*Answers in bold were the most repeated*

### 1. What parents see as the benefits of physical activity:

- **Maintain a healthy weight**
- **Builds self-esteem**
- Socialization
- Independence
- Parents get time to themselves
- **Good for mental and physical well-being**
- **It's a way to have fun and part of being a child**
- **Strong bones and muscle development**
- **Develop good habits for life**
- **Stimulates mind (learning and development)**
- Teaches discipline
- Tires children out
- **Positive outlet**
- Opportunity to be creative
- Fresh air
- Better than video games and TV
- Builds immunity

### 2. Challenges parents face:

- **Safety of parks, playgrounds and neighborhoods**
- **Finances (fees for classes, activities and organized sports)**
- **Transportation**
- Don't know what activities, classes and teams are available
- **Work schedule and limited time**
- Support from others
- Asthma
- Other family members aren't active (role models)
- Live in an apartment and there is nowhere to play
- No other children to play with

- Adults fear of deportation keeps them and their children from spending time outside in public places

### 3. Ways parents have been successful in getting their child(ren) to be physically active:

- Made it part of our routine since the beginning
- Make it a priority
- Organize play groups
- First 5 free play
- Organized sports with set dates and times
- Grants and scholarships for classes
- Computer and video games that get children moving (Wii)
- Dancing around the house
- Setting a good example by being active yourself
- Going to the park

### 4. What would encourage and support parents in increasing physical activity:

- Need more support from family
- **Scholarships for programs and sports**
- Tip/idea sheets (playing inside is not a viable option)
- Learn about free activities
- **Sliding scale for class, activity and facility fees based on income and lower prices**
- Ideas for places to buy cheap play equipment (yard sales)
- Meet up with other parents and do activities together
- Free trial period for organized sports or free activities so young children can try things out
- Clean up parks (dog poop and adults loitering)
- More activity at day care and preschool
- Fewer immigration raids

## Input on Focus Area #3: Extending the Length of Breastfeeding

*\*Answers in bold were the most repeated*

### 1. What parents see as the benefits of breastfeeding:

- **Healthy for the baby**
- **Bonding**
- Milk is natural
- **Way for mom to lose weight**
- **Children don't get sick as much**

- Free
- Brain development
- Convenience
- Avoid ear infections
- Breastfed babies look healthier
- Breastfed babies smell better

## 2. Challenges parents face:

- **Painful**
- It's a big time commitment, especially if you need to nurse in a public place
- **Unexpected changes to mother's body**
- **Difficult**
- Baby wasn't getting enough milk
- Hard once home from the hospital
- **Going back to work and no place to pump**
- Lack of support from other family members

## 3. Ways parents have been successful with breastfeeding:

- Vitamins to increase amount of breast milk
- **Education about how to do it and importance (classes)**
- Lactation consultants (home visits and phone calls)
- Renting pump from WIC
- WIC doesn't offer formula for the first month

## 4. What would encourage and support more new mothers to continue breastfeeding:

- **Classes (WIC, First 5 and health insurance companies)**
- **Support at the workplace**
- **Support from baby's father and other family members**
- **Lactation consultant to come for a home visit or someone you can call if you have trouble**
- **Education – how to do it, benefits (for both moms and dads)**
- Fliers – demos and tips
- Make it easy to access support (Facebook)
- How to get milk back (supplements and food)
- Learning how to pump breast milk
- Removing the social stigma

## Prioritizing

### 1. The health topic parents would like more information about for their families:

1. Physical Activity
2. Soda
3. Breastfeeding

### 2. The health topic parents think would make the biggest change in their families:

1. Physical Activity
2. Soda
3. Breastfeeding

### 3. The health topic parents think would make the biggest change in their community:

1. Physical Activity
2. Soda
3. Breastfeeding

### 4. The health topic parents think would have the most support from other parents:

1. Physical Activity
2. Soda
3. Breastfeeding

## Closing Comments From the Groups

- As a sponsor, First 5 could be the mediator in coordinating the support of parents who are available to help other parents with specific needs
- Provide children at day care and preschool with more information on how to be healthy
- Playgrounds and parks have to be safe
- More funding for young children to be more physically activity
- We need more support and resources for all three topics
- Need more financial support
- Add games and play equipment at public parks
- Provide swimming, soccer and basketball programs for children
- Give classes on children's nutrition
- Give classes to teach parents how to feed their children (i.e. age-appropriate eating)