

# TAP WATER PROMOTION POLICY

## Rationale

### Here are the facts.

- **41% of Contra Costa kids ages 2 to 11 drink one or more sodas each day.** The same is true for 47% of Contra Costa children ages 12-17.
- In Contra Costa County, **nearly 16% of low-income children ages 2 to 5 are obese**, and another **16.3% are overweight**. (All-time high figures!)
- Obese preschoolers are significantly more likely to be obese as adolescents and adults.
- **Sodas are just one type of sugary drink.** High amounts of sugar are also found in juice drinks (even 100% juice), sports drinks, and energy drinks. There is one simple healthy alternative: water.
- **Tap water is healthy for kids.** Water is an essential nutrient. There is evidence that encouraging consumption of water instead of sugary beverages may limit unhealthy weight gain in children and help prevent childhood obesity. Furthermore, drinking fluoridated water may protect children from tooth decay.
- **Tap water spares the environment.** Providing tap water reduces waste and costs associated with bottling water, including environmental costs. In short, switching to tap water is good for our children and for our planet.

### Why Tap Water?

- **Tap water is safe and tested often.** The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) tap water safety regulations are stricter than those of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for bottled water. The perception that bottled water is purer than tap water is largely the due to the bottled water industry's marketing tactics. Yet in Contra Costa, many residents notice inconsistencies in the taste of the water across the different county regions. If there are concerns about the safety of tap water in a particular area, local water districts will test for safety at no charge.
- **Tap water saves money.** Tap water provides no or very low cost, calorie-free hydration. Single-serving bottled water costs thousands of times more than tap water. A 16 ounce bottle of water priced at \$1.25 adds up to about \$10 a gallon, whereas a gallon of tap water costs less than half a penny. That makes bottled water 2,500 times more expensive than tap water. And most bottled water IS tap water. Everyone can save money by drinking water straight from the tap.

## Position Statement

At Contra Costa County's Community Services Bureau, we seek to provide the families we serve with tap water that is safe and easily accessible, as a means of promoting better health and reduced environmental impact. Accordingly, we have adopted a tap water promotion policy that includes the following.

### Provide easily accessible tap water, by:

- Encouraging children to drink tap water throughout the day, in part by modeling this behavior.
- Providing additional sources of water where existing facilities, such as drinking fountains, are insufficient. These may be "water stations" with water pitchers, which may be enhanced as desired by chilling or flavoring the water with fresh fruit. These water stations are set up both indoors and outdoors (in playgrounds, etc.) to maximize accessibility.
- Encouraging staff to have their own reusable cups rather than using disposable ones.
- Providing water at all parent and staff meetings, and prohibiting sugar-sweetened beverages that are no longer served to children at CSB facilities.

### Promote the health benefits of tap water and provide assurances of its quality and safety, by:

- Sharing information (in English and Spanish) with CSB families and staff on the safety and health benefits of drinking tap water.
- Providing CSB families and staff with resources (in English and Spanish) on local water testing and quality.

## Implementation

At all facilities directly operated by CSB, this Tap Water Promotion policy will be implemented whenever children are present.