



Healthy + Active  
Before 5

## Sample Tap Water Promotion Policy

Please note: This policy is provided as a sample only.  
Please revise and amend to suit the needs of your organization or agency.

### Rationale:

**Water is essential for health.** Families with young children and all community members should have easy access to clean, safe, appealing, free drinking water everywhere they go. Providing tap water to young children can promote health and help prevent early childhood obesity.

**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.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, drinking fluoridated water may protect children from tooth decay.<sup>2,3</sup>

**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.<sup>4</sup> 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.<sup>5</sup>

**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. What's more, most bottled water is tap water. Consumers and organizations can save money by drinking tap water.<sup>6</sup>

**Tap water spares the environment.** Bottled water production and distribution is energy-intensive. Providing tap water reduces waste, cuts costs associated with bottling water, and spares the environment. Supporting child health also means supporting a healthy planet.<sup>7</sup>



## Policy Statement:

<Organization/agency name> strives to provide and advocate for a standard of clean, safe, appealing, free, and easily accessible drinking water for families with young children and all community members.

Therefore, <organization/agency name> will:

### Provide tap water<sup>8</sup>

- Provide a convenient and appealing source of water, both indoors and outdoors, free of charge.
- Consider improving the appeal and taste of tap water by serving it chilled, carbonated, or with fruit.
- Consider using pitchers with built-in water filters or installing faucet-mounted, countertop, or under the counter water filters to improve the taste of tap water.
- In places where children are regularly present, install drinking fountains or water dispensers at appropriate heights.
- If a water dispenser is not conveniently located, provide coolers or pitchers of tap water, reusable cups, and the helping hand of an adult.
- At outdoor events where water dispensers are not available, provide tap water in coolers.
- Encourage children to drink tap water throughout the day.
- Model frequent drinking of tap water.
- At meetings, provide nearby coolers or pitchers of tap water along with reusable cups.

### Spread the word about the safety of tap water

- Share information with employees, clients, and community members on the safety and health of drinking tap water.
- Provide resources to employees and clients on water testing and quality.
- Advocate for the water districts to clearly report water quality data to all community members, including renters and non-English speaking Contra Costans.

### Advocate for wide access to quality tap water

- Advocate for safe and appealing water to be accessible and free in public places, schools, childcare settings, worksites, and businesses.
- Support public policies that promote clean, safe, affordable tap water for all.

**Advocate for improved quality of tap water.** Sometimes, despite regulatory safeguards, there are remaining concerns about water safety and quality. Therefore, <organization/agency name> will work to:

- Empower community members to report when water tastes, looks, or smells substandard.
- Advocate for consistent water quality that meets all state and federal standards for all areas of the county.

*For technical assistance, contact HAB45 Program Associate, Tonya Love at [tonya.love@hab45.org](mailto:tonya.love@hab45.org)  
Healthy & Active Before 5 (HAB45) is a collaborative project to prevent obesity among Contra Costa County children ages 0-5*

## Additional Resources:



### **Food and Water Watch:** [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water)

Food and Water Watch is a consumer advocacy group offering free, comprehensive resources on water quality issues and advocacy. Explore their “Take Back the Tap” resources to jump start your own water quality and tap water promotion advocacy skills. ([www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/take-back-the-tap](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/take-back-the-tap))

### **Water Districts Serving Contra Costa County:**

#### **East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD):** [www.ebmud.com](http://www.ebmud.com)

- **Cities Served:** EBMUD serves 1.3 million people in an area extending from Crockett on the north, southward to San Lorenzo, eastward from San Francisco to Walnut Creek, and south through the San Ramon Valley.
- **Service Area Map:** <http://www.ebmud.com/about/service-area-map>
- **Water Quality Concerns:** If you have concerns or problems regarding water quality (such as taste, odor, appearance, etc. or if you have a water quality emergency) and you are within the EBMUD service area, call EBMUD at 1-866-403-2683.

#### **Contra Costa Water District (CCWD):** [www.ccwater.com](http://www.ccwater.com)

- **Cities Served:** CCWD serves 500,000 people in Central and East Contra Costa County. CCWD sells untreated water to Diablo Water District (Oakley), Antioch, Pittsburg, Golden State Water Company (Bay Point), and Martinez. CCWD also treats water and distributes it to Clayton, Clyde, Concord, Pacheco, Port Costa, and parts of Martinez, Pleasant Hill, Brentwood and Walnut Creek.
- **Service Area Map:** [www.ccwater.com/welcome/servicemap.asp](http://www.ccwater.com/welcome/servicemap.asp)
- **Water Quality Concerns:** If you have concerns or problems regarding water quality (such as taste, odor, appearance, etc. or if you have a water quality emergency) and you are within the CCWD service area, call the CCWD Quality Hotline at (925) 688-8156.

#### **References:**

<sup>1</sup> Wang YC, Ludwig DS, Sonnevile K and Gortmaker SL. “Impact of change in sweetened caloric beverage consumption on energy intake among children and adolescents.” Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine, 163(4):336-343, 2009;

<sup>2</sup> US Department of Health and Human Services. Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General. Rockville, MD: National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, National Institutes of Health. 2000. (No authors given.) McDonagh MS, Whiting PF, Wilson PM, et al. “Systematic review of water fluoridation.” BMJ, 321(7265):855-859, 2000. Wang YC, Ludwig DS, Sonnevile K and Gortmaker SL. “Impact of change in sweetened caloric beverage consumption on energy intake among children and adolescents.” Archives of Pediatric & Adolescent Medicine, 163(4):336-343, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> “Water Access in Schools: Model Wellness Policy Language.” Developed by the National Policy & Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN), and ChangeLab Solutions. Available at: <http://changelabsolutions.org/publications/wellness-policy-water>

<sup>4</sup> Food and Water Watch. Take Back the Tap: Bottled Water Wastes Resources and Money. June, 2013. Available at: <http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/reports/take-back-the-tap-2013/>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ferrera M.A., Lenhart K, and James P. CHOICE (Creating Healthy Opportunities in Child Care Environments). Produced by California Department of Public Health’s Network for a Healthy California in partnership with Contra Costa Child Care Council. 2011.