RAISE YOUR VOICE.

CHANGE LIVES.
Over the last several generations, this country has changed dramatically. We’ve engineered physical activity out of our daily lives and, to a large extent, removed it from our schools. Unhealthy foods are being sold in larger portion sizes and at lower prices, while at the same time it remains difficult for many families to buy healthy, affordable foods and beverages. In short, we’ve created a culture in which the healthy choice isn’t always the easy choice, and that culture is having an impact on our kids. Currently, more than 23.5 million children and teens — nearly a third of all young people in the United States — are overweight or obese.

The good news is that we’re finally seeing signs of progress in efforts to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic. We know more than ever about what works, and some cities and states that have taken a comprehensive approach to preventing obesity are beginning to see their rates of childhood obesity fall. What we need to do now is work to ensure that all of our nation’s children – no matter where they live – benefit from this progress.

That’s why the American Heart Association and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation have joined forces to launch Voices for Healthy Kids, a national advocacy initiative focused on uniting the movement to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.

Voices for Healthy Kids is the result of a collaboration between two organizations known for serving the public good as agents of positive change.

The American Heart Association has close to nine decades of expertise in cardiovascular disease prevention. Millions of Americans turn to the Association as a trusted source of information about nutrition, physical activity and other health-related subjects. As one of the first organizations to identify obesity as risk factor for heart disease, the American Heart Association has an established history of providing guidance to childhood obesity prevention and treatment efforts.

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is the nation’s largest philanthropy devoted exclusively to health and health care. For more than 40 years, the Foundation has worked with diverse groups and individuals to identify and implement solutions to our nation’s most pressing health challenges. In 2007, the Foundation committed $500 million toward the goal of reversing the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015.
To reverse the epidemic, we must ensure that all children have access to healthy foods and beverages, as well as safe opportunities for physical activity. Creating such changes in every community in the country is a massive task, beyond the reach of individual children and their families.

That’s why we need a platform for advocacy and action at every level — in our schools, neighborhoods, communities and legislatures, as well as in our homes. Voices for Healthy Kids provides that platform.

Voices for Healthy Kids will use strategies that research and practice suggest are likely to have the broadest impact, and will focus those efforts on communities hardest hit by the epidemic.

We are committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice. To making healthy foods and beverages more readily available than unhealthy ones. To promoting physical activity and giving kids better access to play programs and spaces. To restacking the odds in favor of growing up healthy.
HOW DO YOU ATTACK A PROBLEM WITH MANY CAUSES? FROM ALL SIDES.

There is no single solution to childhood obesity. Reversing the epidemic means changing the policies and environments that fuel the epidemic.

By mobilizing multiple teams of experts, each targeting a specific aspect of this campaign, we can address multiple issues at once without diluting our strength or our focus. Voices for Healthy Kids is focused on:

- improving the nutritional quality of snacks and drinks in schools;
- reducing consumption of sugary drinks;
- protecting children from marketing for unhealthy foods and drinks;
- increasing access to affordable healthy foods;
- increasing access to safe spaces for physical activity; and
- Increasing children’s physical activity levels when they are out of school.
Voices for Healthy Kids will not be able to reverse the childhood obesity epidemic without a lot of help. We need diverse partnerships with other national organizations, as well as state and community groups. We need the support of thought-leaders and policymakers at every level. We need the power of media outlets and social networks. We need parents and children who are finding ways to lead healthier lives and want to help others do so, too. We need to augment our funds so we can continue the struggle. We need every volunteer who’s willing to help and to amplify our chorus of voices.
WILL YOURS BE ONE OF THE VOICES FOR HEALTHY KIDS?

Learn more about the childhood obesity epidemic and how you can help us turn it around at voicesforhealthykids.org