



how to talk about food and physical activity

MO Project is working to create healthy communities by changing systems that affect two of our most basic needs: food and physical activity. The main way we're doing it is encouraging youth to think about food and physical activity systems.

a. Why does food and physical activity matter?

- 1-Today's kids are overfed and undernourished. We are raising the first generation of children who live sicker and die younger than their parents
- 2- Diet and inactivity are responsible for more than 25 percent of all preventable deaths in the US, second only to smoking.
- 3-All children deserve to grow up in places that support being healthy
- 4- Neighborhoods with sidewalks, quality grocery stores, farmers markets, and parks and recreation centers don't exist in many communities
- 5-Our health is linked to the quality of our food and fitness surroundings. People especially youth need places that support being healthy which is fundamental for communities to thrive.
- 6-Affordable, healthy food and safe and accessible opportunities for physical activity are scarce in many places.
- 7-It is estimated that one in three American born children born in 2000 will develop type 2 diabetes-in real terms this means blindness, amputation, and a slow, premature death.
- 8- Four of the top 10 killers in America today are chronic illness linked to diet: heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, and cancer

b. What is a food system?

- 1-Healthy eating is more than a matter of personal choice. Where you live impacts what foods are available and how much they cost.
- 2-Some communities are designed and built with many healthy food options, while others are called food deserts meaning they do not have access to good food. In many neighborhoods, gas stations, ill-stocked convenience stores, and fast food is the only available food.
- 3-Most fruits and veggies travel nearly 1,500 miles from field to fork-nearly 27 times further than the average distance traveled by locally grown produce.
- 4--In many low-income communities and communities of color, families must travel twice as far to get fresh fruits and vegetables than to get fast food.

5-A food system includes the who, what, where, when, and why of our food travels from farm to fork. This means all the connected steps that go into growing, harvesting, transporting, processing, marketing, retailing, and consuming what we eat.

6- Every community can produce its own food using urban gardens, farmers markets and local farms.

7-Nationally, we can inform policymakers about opportunities to improve the quality of foods in schools through changes to the Federal Child Nutrition Act.

c-the role of physical activity and play:

1-Physical activity and play are strongly connected to our health and learning.

2-Where you live impacts whether or not you have access to safe opportunities to be active and play.

3-The built environment-meaning the places and spaces made or modified by people-can encourage or discourage physical activity.

4-Everything from having PE in schools to whether or not we choose family hikes over family screen time impact our ability to be physically active.

5-Opportunities for physical activity have been designed out of the places we live, learn, work, and play.

6-Many schools lack playgrounds or have eliminated P.E., erasing opportunities for kids to play and be healthy where they spend eight hours a day.

7-Physical education in school helps students develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be physically active both in school and throughout their lives.

8-In many communities, parks, playgrounds, and recreation centers are inaccessible, dilapidated, and dangerous.

9-Fear of crime limits physical activity even more.

10-Building and redesigning neighborhoods with sidewalks, safe streets, and quality parks will invite everyday activity, improving community health and wellbeing.

11-Physical inactivity contributes to at least 300,000 preventable deaths annually-that's akin to losing the population of Pittsburg every year.

12-Research has shown that residents are more physically active when there are sidewalks, bicycle lanes, mixed-use land development, and stronger planning policies.

d-what does it mean to change a system?

1-A system is like a puzzle where many pieces come together to form a bigger picture. If one piece is missing the picture is incomplete. Getting from your home to the grocery store crosses many systems including the transportation system, the food system, land use planning and other systems.

2-Systems change is usually the product of a series of small steps. You need to have a vision, time, a plan, and commitment to the plan to create systems change.

3-Policy and systems change can help create funding that will last for your community that can be used for your programs and services. The more you work together as a group the more you have the support to make changes.

4-In the US, African-Americans and Latinos are more likely to live in polluted neighborhoods where there are higher rates of asthma and other environmentally triggered health problems.