Wisconsin Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program

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Safe Routes
TO SCHOOL

History of SRTS

- 1970s: many child pedestrian fatalities in Denmark led to first SRTS
- 1997: SRTS reaches the US in the Bronx
- 2005: Congress signs into law a federally funded SRTS Program.

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Purpose of SRTS

- 3 purposes:
  - to enable and encourage children, including those with disabilities, to walk and bicycle to school
  - to make bicycling and walking to school a safer and more appealing transportation alternative, thereby encouraging a healthy and active lifestyle from an early age; and,
  - to facilitate the planning, development and implementation of projects and activities that will improve safety and reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution in the vicinity of schools.

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Objectives of Statewide Program

- Enable participation on a variety of levels
- Make the program accessible to diverse participants
- Promote comprehensive SRTS programs and activities
- Maximize impact on the funds

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Why SRTS?

- Safer Routes
- Healthier Children
- Cleaner Environment
- Other Desired Outcomes

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Safer Routes

- Poorly maintained sidewalks
- Congested streets

- Lack of traffic calming devices

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Healthier Children

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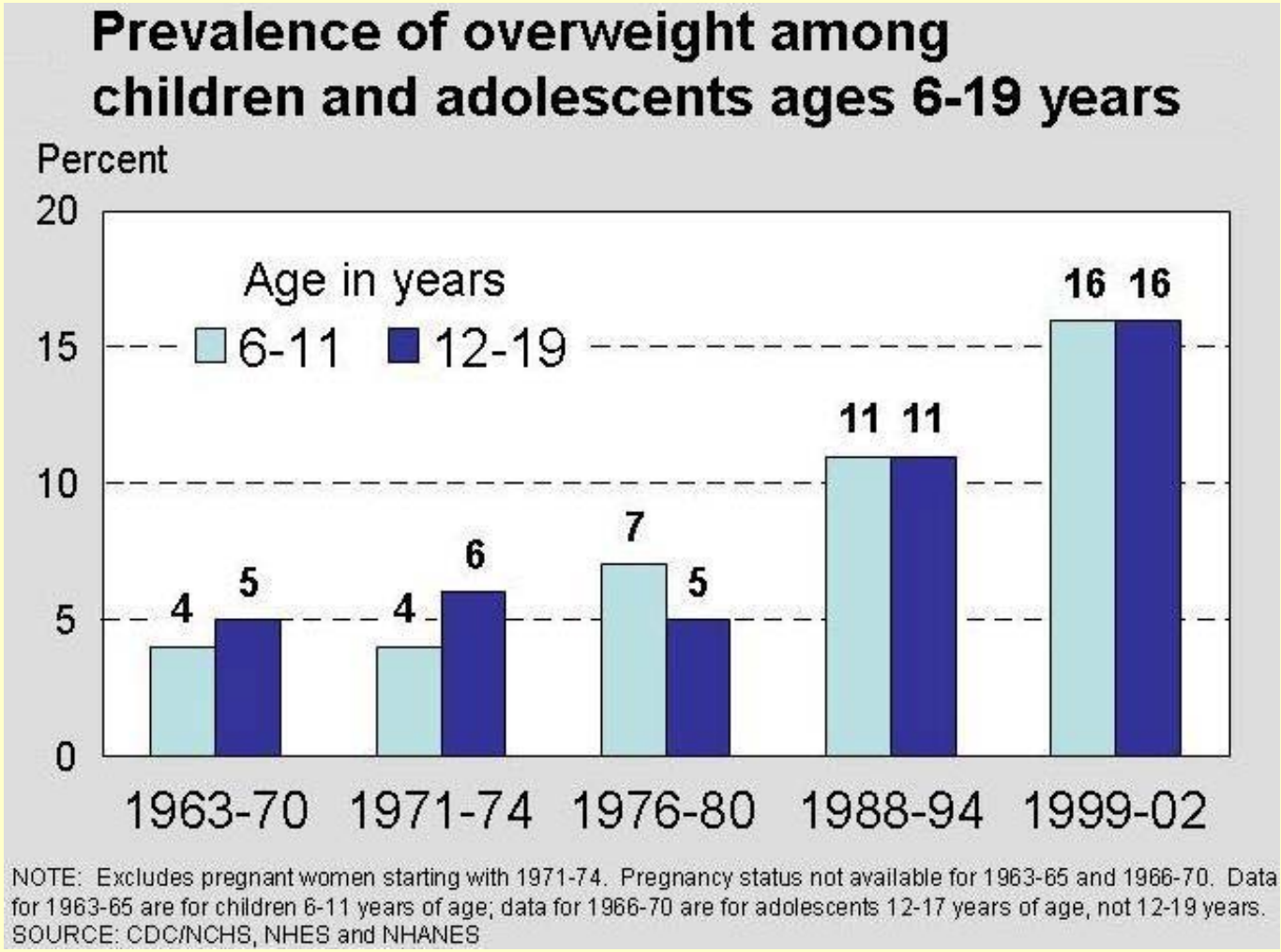
Overweight Children



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Overweight children have an increased risk of:

- Type 2 diabetes
- Low self esteem
- Aggravating existing asthma
- Sleep apnea
- Decreased physical functioning
- Many other negative physical and emotional effects

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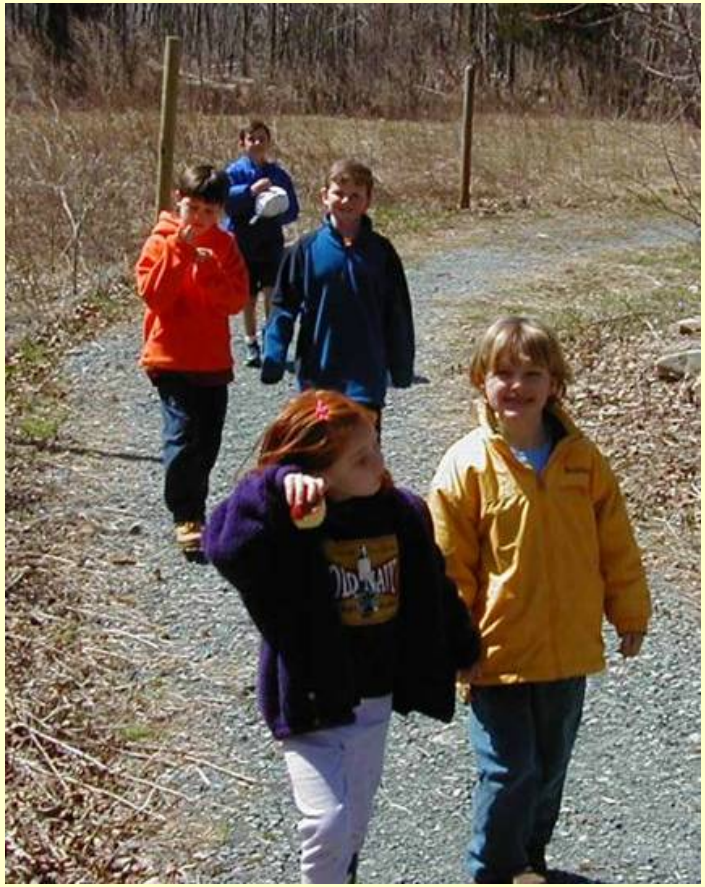
Healthier Children

- AHA recommends that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.



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Cleaner Environment

- Less cars=less pollutants=cleaner environment=fewer health problems

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Other Desired Outcomes

- Decreased traffic congestion
- Reduced fuel consumption
- Increased community involvement
- Increased bike and pedestrian safety

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Other reasons why kids aren't walking and biking to school

- Long distance 62%
- Traffic danger 30%
- Adverse weather 19%
- Fear of crime danger 12%

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Long Distance

- Students who live within 1 mile:
  - 1969: 87%
  - 2001: 63%

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Traffic Danger

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Adverse weather

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Fear of crime

- Perceptions and Realities
- Some low probability events provoke the greatest fears
- Communities are finding ways to safeguard against these fears

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How do we approach this?

- 5 E's
  - Engineering
  - Encouragement
  - Education
  - Enforcement
  - Evaluation

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Engineering

- Traffic calming and speed reduction improvements
- Pedestrian and bicycle crossing improvements
- On-street bicycle facilities
- Secure bicycle parking facilities

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Encouragement

- Increasing popularity of walking
- Emphasizes fun of walking and biking

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Education

- Walkers
- Bikers
- Drivers
- Children
- Parents

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Enforcement

- Improving driver behavior
- Increasing awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians

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Evaluation
Sustaining a Program

- Collecting data will help communities:
  - Understand attitudes and behaviors
  - Make adjustments
  - Show improvements

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