

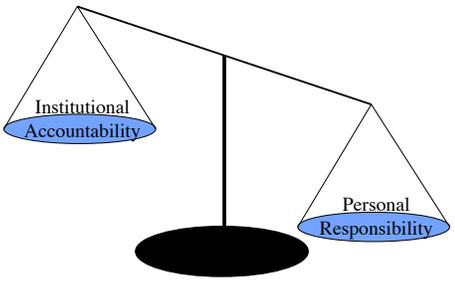
Berkeley Media Studies Group

Why Childhood Obesity?

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The Need to Reframe



Just a few cues...

CHILDREN OR ADULTS?



...might surprise you

CHILDREN OR ADULTS?



Limits of the high risk approach

Table 4 Incidence of Down's syndrome according to maternal age⁷

| Maternal age (years) | Risk of Down's syndrome per 1000 births | Total births in age group (as % of all ages) | % of total Down's syndrome occurring in age group |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| <30 | 0.7 | 78 | 51 |
| 30-34 | 1.3 | 16 | 20 |
| 35-39 | 3.7 | 5 | 16 |
| 40-44 | 13.1 | 0.95 | 11 |
| ≥45 | 34.6 | 0.05 | 2 |
| All ages | 1.5 | 100 | 100 |

From Rose, Geoffrey, Sick Individuals and Sick Populations
International Journal of Epidemiology 2001;30:427-432.



Expanding the Frame

- Effects can be different at different ages, but the sources of the problem are the same.
- Adults matter because they choose for children.
- Changing environments will effect prevention on a population level.



Parents don't control context

- Decisions about where public transportation is built
- Whether the local market carries fresh fruits and vegetables
- If the playground will be left open after school hours
- Which cereal Kellogg's puts Shrek on



Protect Children & Adults

- Car seats, but not seat belts?
- Menu labels only on children's meals?
- Smokefree bars only before 9 PM?
- Building codes just for schools?



Children Depend on Adults

To protect children, change
the world they live in.

Changing the world will
protect everyone.



Issue: To protect children, change the world they live in.

Recommendation: Evaluate policy proposals to be sure they will improve the conditions that give rise to and sustain disease in children and adults.

Rationale: Research is clear: environments affect health. Policies that focus on individual behavior alone are doomed to fail because behavior happens in a context. Public health lessons from tobacco, alcohol, firearms, and auto crashes show that when we improve the environment we improve population health. Successful policies will improve settings and circumstances where children and adults live so they support healthy eating and active living.

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Issue: Considering children in isolation from adults.

Recommendation: Enact policies that create health-promoting environments for children and adults.

Rationale: Education policy could segment audience by age, but policy focused on improving health environments, such as improving the built environment and ensuring fresh food access, will reap health benefits for all. Children depend on adults for food and activity, so what adults know and do matters. Separate strategies, like efforts to reduce exposure to marketing where children are the majority of the audience, miss their mark, since far more children watch American Idol than watch SpongeBob SquarePants.

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