

Helping Kids to Health is a Powerpoint slide show that was developed as a collaborative effort between various professional groups and health care providers in Iowa. Childhood and adolescent obesity is a top public health issue. Registered dietitians, along with their colleagues Registered Dental Hygienists, can take a proactive stand in educating their community to environmental issues contributing to obesity, designing local strategies to address these issues, and mobilizing interested individuals and community based groups to support changes to facilitate healthier families.

The content of **Helping Kids to Health** has three main objectives: To understand and describe (1) three examples of health problems related to poor nutritional intake that can be prevented (2) how the school environment impacts health and nutrition (3) policy changes that can impact health of students. The presentation includes 48 slides with notes that will give individual enough information to facilitate a discussion in a larger group.

The slide show presentation is one tool that can start people talking in towns and cities across Iowa. It is available to any member of the Iowa Dietetic Association for use in their local community. Simply go to the Iowa Dietetic Association WEB page <http://www.eatrightiowa.org/index.html> and open the presentation. A CD-ROM with the slide show is also available through each Dietetic District. A packet of reference materials has been sent to each District president; additionally WEB addresses are noted at the end of the presentation for additional references. Continuing Professional Education prior approval for registered dietitians not yet enrolled in Professional Portfolio has been submitted.

This is a great opportunity for a registered dietitian to make contact with other health professionals in their community to strengthen existing partnerships, or to develop new ones! For example, a registered dietitian and dental hygienist could offer this program to local public health department or parent teacher organization. From this discussion, a dialogue about the strengths and challenges presented in their local schools can be specifically and sensibly addressed. Groups that might be interested in this program include county public health department staff, dental health professionals, school food service staff, school administration, school board members, nursing associations, parent-teacher organizations, early child development staff, physical education staff, school personnel, county empowerment boards, etc. Informally talking to other interested people can easily lead to a scheduled presentation on community groups' agendas.

Helping Kids to Health can also be used as a CPE program for the local dietetic districts – a good way for each district to brainstorm how to best use the materials. An evaluation form is included at the end of the slide show (on the notes page). It is requested that the facilitator complete the form and return it either by email or regular mail to track the usage of the slide show and as an avenue for member feedback.