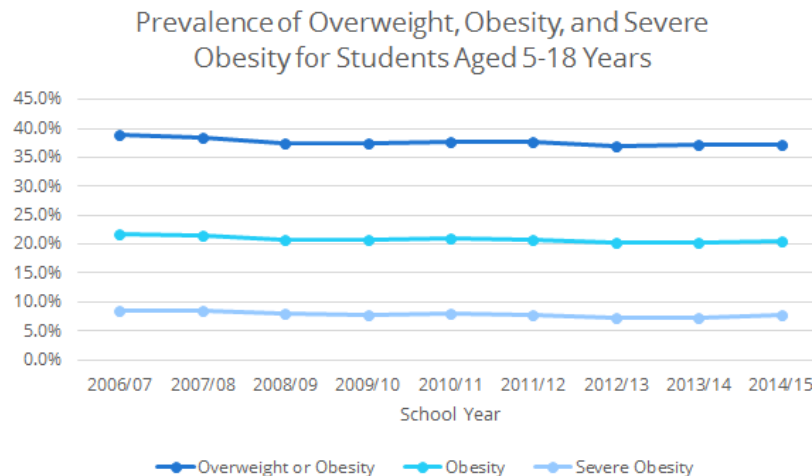




## Obesity among School-Aged Children in Philadelphia, 2006–2015

Childhood obesity increases short-term and long-term risk for poor physical and mental health.<sup>1</sup> Children who are obese are five times as likely to obese as adults, increasing their risk for heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and various types of cancer.<sup>2</sup> The CDC estimates that more than one third of children born in the year 2000 and half of African American and Latino children born that year will develop diabetes by 2050, largely due to increased obesity rates.<sup>3</sup> This issue of CHART examines trends in obesity among children enrolled in the School District of Philadelphia.

### Childhood Obesity has Slightly Declined since 2006 but Continues to Affect 1 in 5 Children



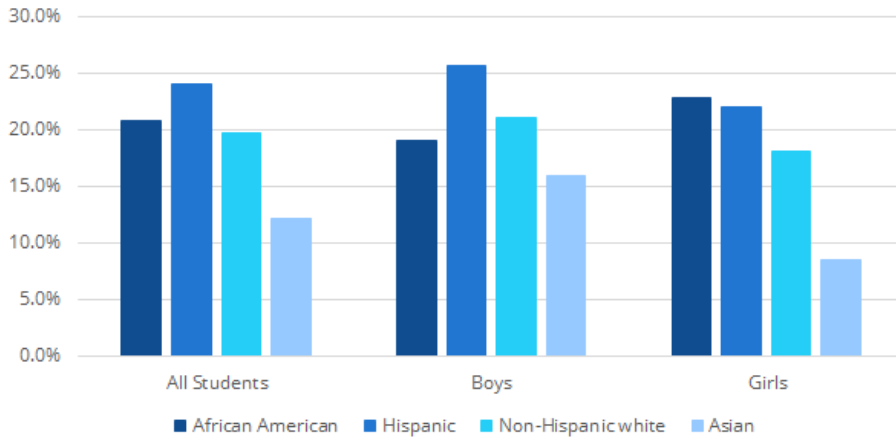
- Approximately 1 in 5 children have obesity.
- The prevalence of childhood obesity has slowly declined from 21.7% in 2006/2007, but has remained relatively stable in recent years, similar to national trends.<sup>4</sup>
- Similarly, the percent of children who are overweight or obese\* declined from 38.8% in 2006/2007, and has remained relatively stable in recent years.

\* Obesity is defined as a BMI at or above the sex-specific 95th percentile on the CDC BMI-for-age growth chart. Severe obesity is defined as a BMI at or above 120% of the sex-specific 95th percentile on the same scale.<sup>4</sup> Overweight is defined as at or above the 85th to less than the 95th percentile BMI for age.<sup>5</sup>

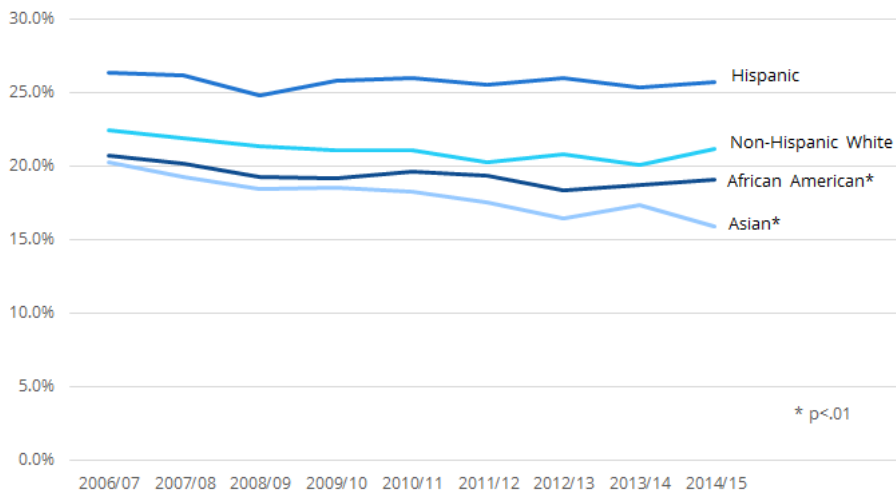
(Source: School District of Philadelphia)

# Childhood Obesity is Highest among Hispanic Boys and African American and Hispanic Girls

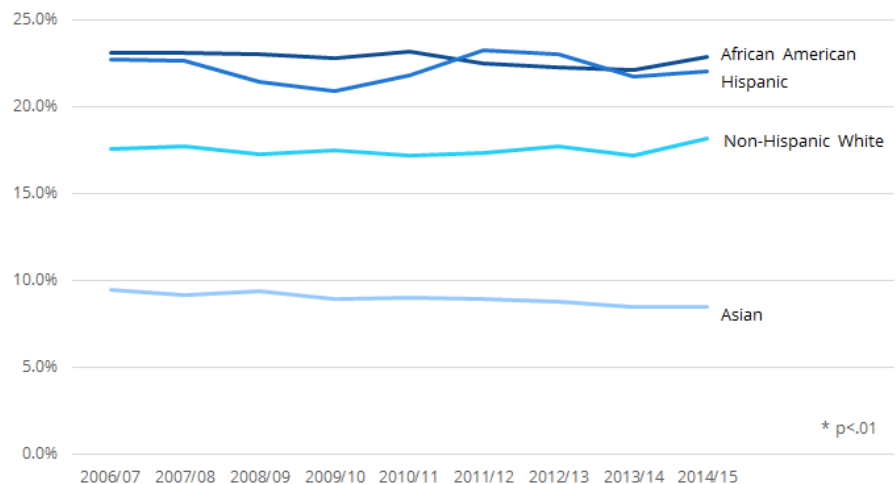
Prevalence of Obesity by Race and Sex for Students Aged 5-18 Years



Boys



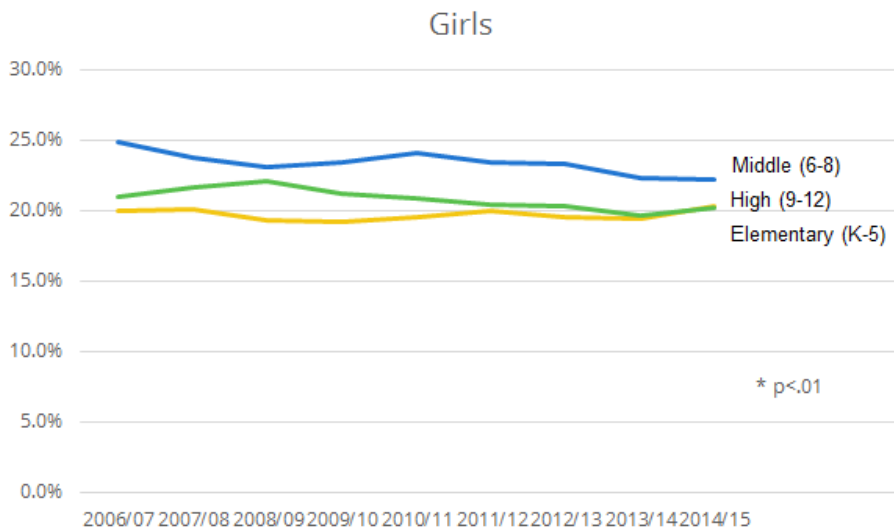
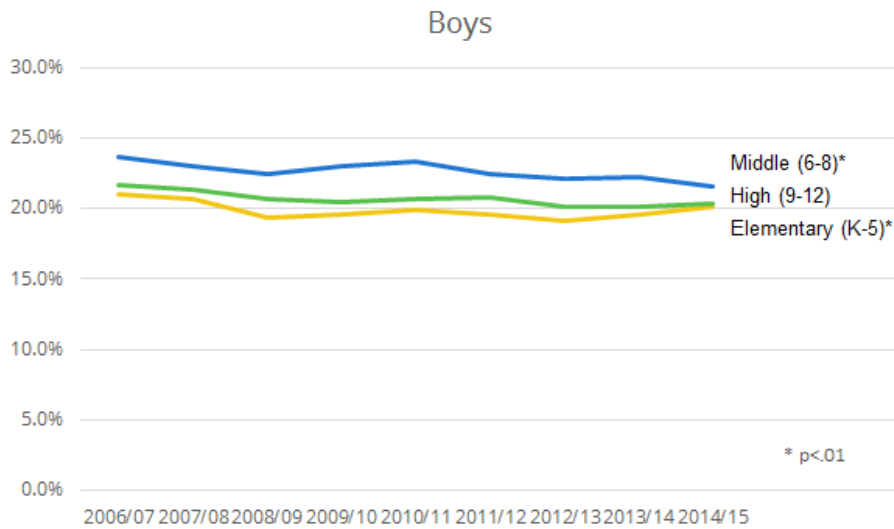
Girls



- Among boys, obesity is highest among Hispanics. Obesity rates among African American and Asian boys have declined since 2006, but have remained stable in recent years.
- Among girls, obesity is highest among African Americans and Hispanics—over two times the rate of Asians. Obesity rates have remained stable among girls of all races.

(Source: School District of Philadelphia)

## Childhood Obesity has Declined among Younger Boys since 2006



- Since 2006, obesity has declined among elementary and middle school boys. Similarly, obesity has declined among middle and high school girls, but this trend was not statistically significant.

(Source: School District of Philadelphia)

## References

- 1) Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017). Childhood obesity facts. Retrieved June 15, 2017, from <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>.
- 2) Simmonds, M., Llewellyn, A., Owen, C. G., & Woolacott, N. (2016). Predicting adult obesity from childhood obesity: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Obesity reviews*, 17(2):95-107.
- 3) Gregg, E. W., Zhuo, X., Cheng, Y. J., Albright, A. L., Narayan, K. V., & Thompson, T. J. (2014). Trends in lifetime risk and years of life lost due to diabetes in the USA, 1985–2011: a modelling study. *The Lancet Diabetes & endocrinology*, 2(11):867-874.
- 4) Ogden, C. L., Carroll, M. D., Lawman, H. G., Fryar, C. D., Kruszon-Moran, D., Kit, B. K., & Flegal, K. M. (2016). Trends in obesity prevalence among children and adolescents in the United States, 1988-1994 through 2013-2014. *JAMA*, 315(21):2292-2299.
- 5) Barlow SE and the Expert Committee. Expert committee recommendations regarding the prevention, assessment, and treatment of child and adolescent overweight and obesity: summary report. *Pediatrics* 2007;120 Supplement December 2007:S164—S192).

## What Can Be Done

### The Department of Public Health is:

- Partnering with The Food Trust to increase the availability and affordability of healthy food through our Healthy Corner Store network, Farmers' Markets in low income neighborhoods, and the Philly Food Buck program.
- Partnering with Community Schools to increase physical activity opportunities for students, increase water consumption, and increase access to healthy food options both within the schools and in the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Working to improve nutrition and physical activity and to decrease screen time in early childcare settings.
- Implementing comprehensive nutrition standards in all city-funded foodservice programs, including summer and afterschool programs, youth correctional facilities and shelters.
- Promoting physical activity through the [Philly Powered media campaign](#).

### Health providers can:

- Encourage and support pregnant women and new mothers to breastfeed their infants until at least 1 year.
- Help patients and families meet nutrition and physical activity recommendations for children (see below).

### People can:

- Help children follow recommendations for nutrition and physical activity, including:
  - Avoid sweetened drinks including sodas, sweetened teas, sports drinks, and fruit drinks.
  - Avoid juice before age 1 and limit it to 4 ounces per day for ages 1-5 and 4-6 ounces daily for older children.
  - Avoid screen time for children under age 2 and limit it to 60 minutes per day of high-quality programs that are co-viewed with parents for 2-5 year olds.
  - For children ages 6 and older, limit the time spent using media.
  - Engage in physical activity 60 minutes per day and reduce sedentary behavior.
- Teach healthy eating and physical activity habits with what you do, not just what you say:
  - Save sweetened drinks for an occasional treat and keep them out of your home the rest of the time.
  - Fill half of your plate and half of your child's plate with fruits and/or vegetables.
  - Drink water.
- Prepare food at home instead of eating take-out or restaurant food. Learn about [quick and inexpensive healthy shopping and recipe ideas](#).
- Find nutrition and physical activity ideas and programs to help [make healthy foods more affordable](#).
- Make sure your child gets enough sleep.
- Turn the TV off during meals and remove them from bedrooms.
- Be active with your kids: go for a walk, play in a local park, or explore [Philadelphia's parks and rec centers](#).

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Suggested citation: Philadelphia Department of Public Health. Obesity among School-Aged Children in Philadelphia, 2006—2015. *CHART* 2017;2(8):1-4.



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