

A Letter from National PTA

Since 1946, when National PTA played a major role in enacting the National School Lunch Act, the issue of children's nutrition and wellness has remained a major concern for us. We are once again in the middle of an exciting time where we have the opportunity to make a big impact on a problem that has become a national epidemic.

In 2003 a resolution entitled "The Importance of Physical Education in Our Schools" was passed at the National PTA Convention, followed in 2004 with the passing of the resolution "Nutritional Eating Requirements in Our Schools to Combat Childhood Obesity." PTA's National Council of States, which includes representatives from all levels of the organization and from all states, saw these as critical issues for families and schools. Carla Niño, then president of California State PTA, was asked to chair a special task force that would determine how we would address child and family health. This notebook is the result of the work.

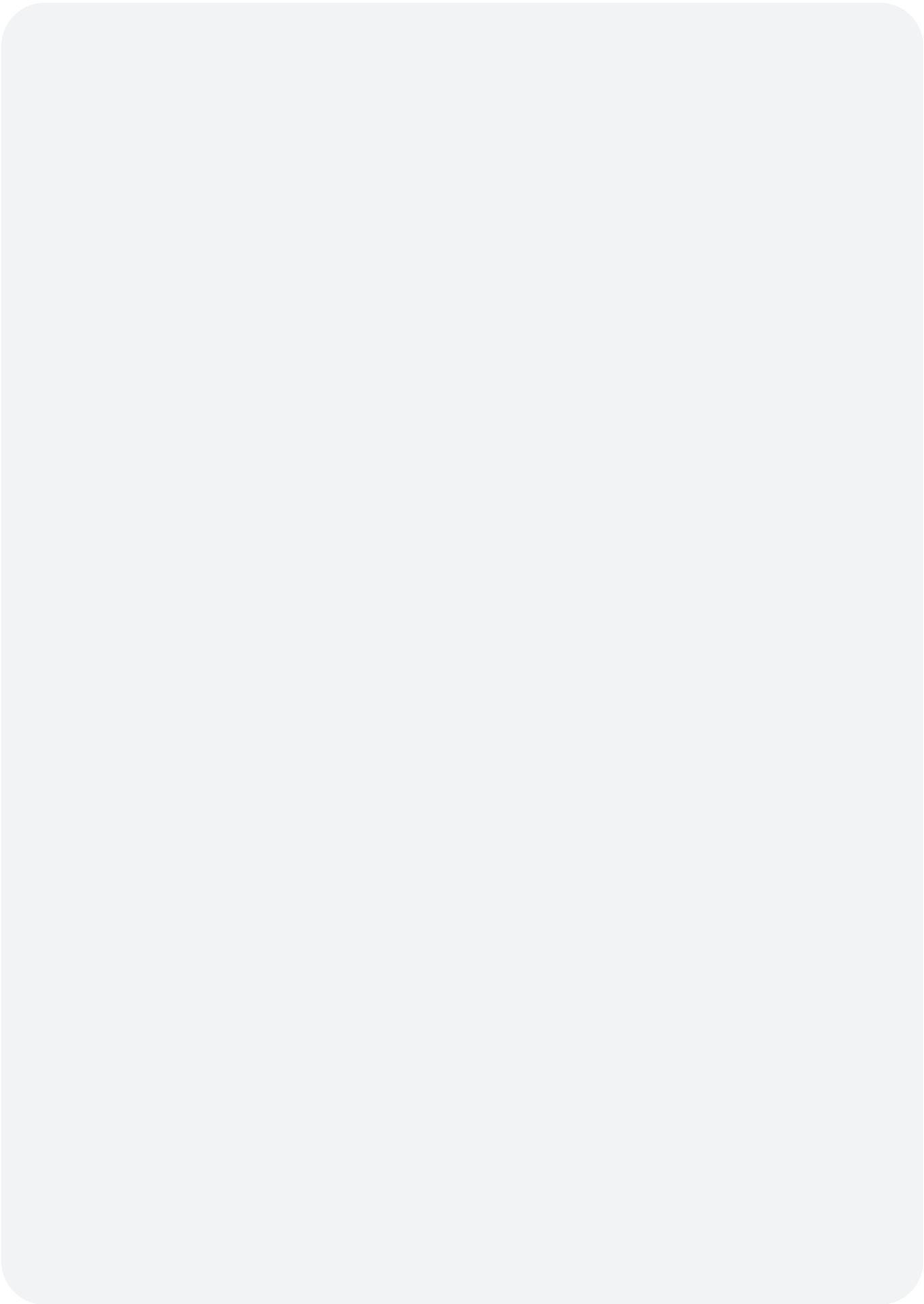
National PTA, along with its partner, Parents' Action for Children, has created this collection of resources for local PTA units to use as they make improvements in their schools and homes to foster healthier lifestyles for families. The first three sections provide educational resources and reproducible handouts that we encourage you to give to your members and school community. The last sections will help you go a step further. They provide suggestions and tips for how your unit can make significant changes in your school and community.

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 contains a requirement for all schools that receive federal funding for their school lunch programs to create a Local School Wellness Policy. These policies must be in place by the 2006–2007 school year. School wellness committees will be responsible for creating these policies and must involve parents, teachers, and other school personnel in establishing the policy that will dictate how the school will promote and maintain healthy behaviors among students.

The timing could not be better. We hope you will use the tools in this notebook as a foundation of your unit's activities as you get involved in your school's wellness committee. But don't stop there. This is a living notebook to be customized and continually added to as you hold events and find information specific to your school and community. Much like the establishment of the school lunch program, all PTA units now have the tools they need to get involved in the creation and activities of their school's wellness committee, which promises to become a ground-breaking addition to the school environment.



Anna Weselak
National PTA President, 2005–2007



A Letter from Parents' Action for Children


Every day there is a new story in the news media about childhood obesity. It is one of the most serious health problems for our nation's children. As parents, we know that there is plenty we can do at home to prevent childhood obesity: we can be positive role models, provide healthy food for our families, and incorporate fitness into our lifestyles.

But this isn't just about what we do at home: there is a complex mix of factors (economic, social and cultural) that contribute to the childhood obesity problem in this country. As parents we need the support of our children's schools and our communities, as well as our policymakers, to reverse this national trend.

How do we get the support that we need? Parents need to stay informed, and speak up with our concerns and opinions. We know what's best for our children, so our voices are needed in the movement to improve nutrition and increase opportunities for physical activity in schools.

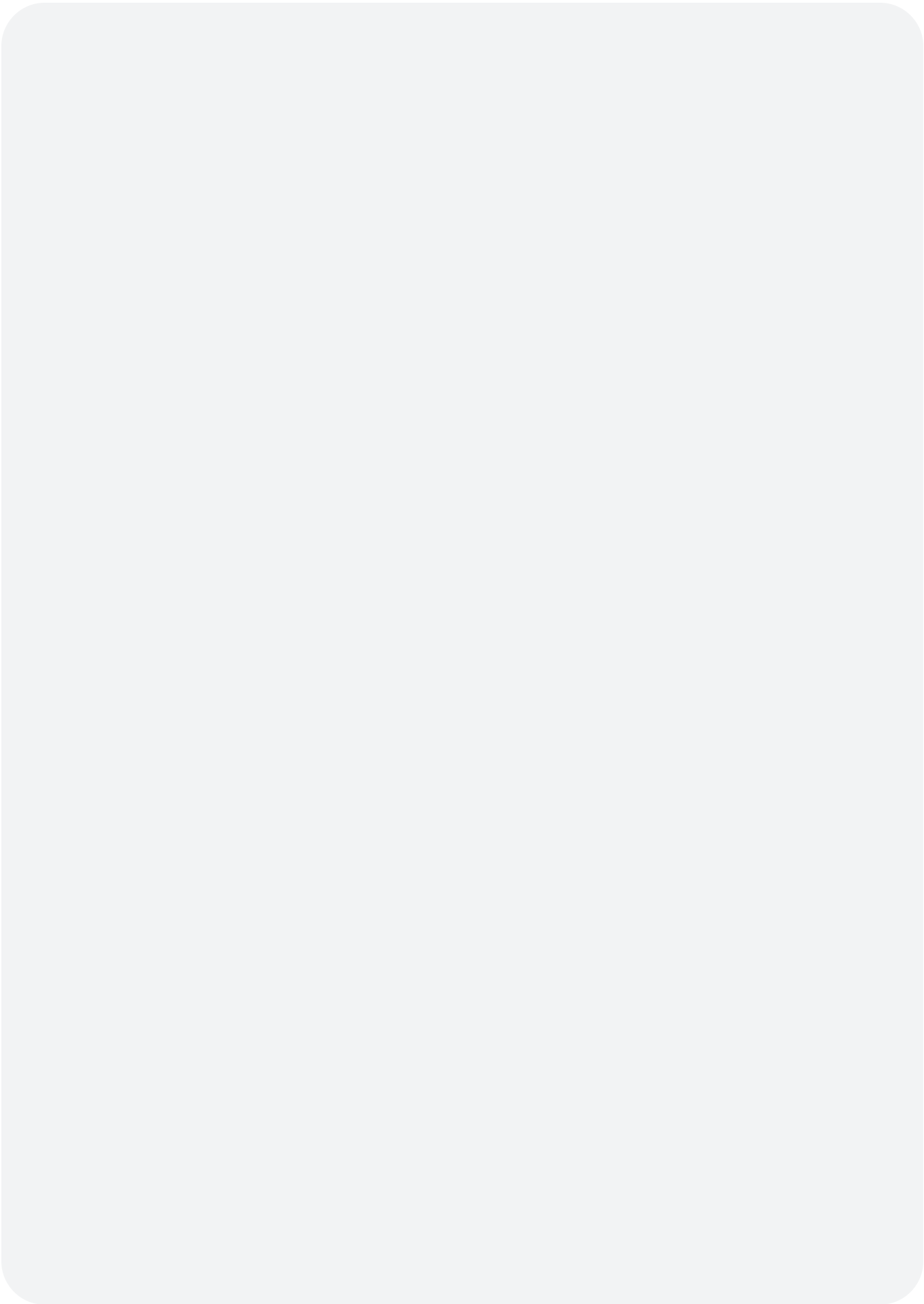
I applaud the PTA's long history as a leader in supporting and encouraging parental involvement. It takes a lot to reach diverse groups of parents, all of whom are busy with the daily challenges of parenting, but as we all know, this is critically important work. An informed, involved group of parents can lead the way to positive changes in our schools, communities, and our nation.

Parents' Action for Children is working with National PTA to build on the PTA's record of serving parents. Parents' Action for Children is a nonprofit, national organization that is building a national network of parents to be advocates for children. We are developing creative new ways of engaging parents in efforts to improve the education, health, and overall well-being of our children. To learn more, we invite you to visit us at www.parentsaction.org. We look forward to working with you to make a difference for all children.



Norman Rosenberg

Parents' Action for Children President and CEO



Acknowledgements

The majority of the contents of the Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School Notebook were written by Dr. Renu Mansukhani of Parents' Action for Children, in collaboration with Whitney Meagher, Tina Dove and Melissa Ganley of National PTA, and Sharon Huang of Parents' Action for Children.

We are grateful to the following groups and individuals who contributed to the development of this notebook.

Alicia Moag-Stahlberg and Mary Haley
Action for Healthy Kids

Carla Niño
California State PTA

Margo Wootan and Joy Johanson
Center for Science in the Public Interest

Lynn Parker and Shireen Cama
Food Research and Action Center

Cathy Liverman
Institute of Medicine of The National Academies

Paula Kun
National Association for Sport and Physical Education

Special thanks to the following Parents' Action for Children volunteers and interns who donated their time to this project:

William Giasi, M.D.
Children's National Medical Center

Maria Prince, M.D. and Maryam Tabrizi, MS, CHES
Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Rachel Flipse and Carrie Schenk
George Washington University

Thank you also to the members of National PTA's Special Childhood Obesity Committee:

Carla Niño
Committee Chair California State PTA

Colleen Corsi
Executive Director New York State AHPERD, Inc.

Carolyn Dennis
Health Promotion Coordinator Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky

Fern Gale Estrow
Nutrition Consultant Educator and Speaker

Veronica Hayes
Registered Dietician

Christine Munchak
President Pennsylvania PTA

Lucy Ranus
President Arizona PTA

Jennifer Robertson
Manager & Evaluation Specialist California Project LEAN, Public Health Institute

Jacquelyn G. Sowers
*National Consultant
Health Promotion and Education
Sowers Associates*

Kathy Talley
*NET Coordinator
Office of Nutrition
West Virginia Department
of Education*

Richard Weil
*Exercise Physiologist & Director
St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital*

Graphic Design: [studio e2]

Table of Contents

How to Use the <i>Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School Notebook</i>	1
01. Childhood Obesity:	
Essential Facts for Parents and Schools	3
Reality Check: Facts on Childhood Obesity in the United States	5
<i>Handouts for Parents</i>	7
○ <i>A Joint Effort: Parents and Schools Can Work Together to Prevent Childhood Obesity</i>	9
Gold Standard Goals from the Institute of Medicine: Selections from <i>Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance</i> ..	11
○ <i>Parents Can Play a Role in Preventing Childhood Obesity</i>	13
○ <i>Schools Can Play a Role in Preventing Childhood Obesity</i>	15
02. Food and Nutrition	17
Fact Sheet: The State of Nutrition in Schools Today	19
Improving Student Nutrition:10 Things PTAs Can Do	21
Healthy Fundraisers for PTAs	23
Local PTA Action Stories: Food and Nutrition	25
<i>Handouts for Parents</i>	29
○ <i>The New Food Pyramid and How It Applies to Children</i>	31
○ <i>How Much of Each Food Group Should My Child Eat Daily?</i>	33
○ <i>Healthy Eating Tips for Your Family</i>	37
○ <i>What to Pack: Lunchbox Ideas</i>	39
○ <i>Eating Out with Your Kids: Finding the Healthier Options</i>	41
○ <i>What's the Big Deal About Breakfast?</i>	43

03. Physical Activity	45
Fact Sheet: The Need for Physical Education and Physical Activity in Our Schools	47
Improving Opportunities for Physical Activity at School: 10 Things PTAs Can Do.....	49
What Constitutes a Quality Physical Education Program?	51
Local PTA Action Stories: Physical Activity	53
<i>Handouts for Parents</i>	57
○ <i>Improving Opportunities for Physical Activity at School: 10 Things Parents Can Do.</i>	59
○ <i>15 Ideas for Family Fitness</i>	61
 04. Grassroots Advocacy:	
Organizing Your Local Unit to Make Change	63
School Wellness: A New Opportunity for PTAs to Promote Health in Schools	65
Grassroots Advocacy: Organizing Your Local Unit to Make Change	69
Local PTA Action Stories: Grassroots Advocacy	71
<i>Handouts for Parents</i>	75
○ <i>School Wellness: A New Opportunity for Parents</i>	77
 05. PTA Fact-Finding Project:	
How Healthy Is Your School?	79
 06. Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School:	
PTA Meeting and Event Ideas	89
 07. Resources on Children’s Nutrition and Wellness	93



How to Use

The Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School Notebook

Given that 15 percent of the nation's children over the age of 6 are considered obese¹ and given that poor diet, even in non-overweight children, can affect brain development and performance in school,² we must make children's nutrition and wellness a top priority. *The time for action is now.*

National PTA is excited to provide your PTA with this collection of resources. There is so much in the media these days about childhood obesity—our goal is to cut through the clutter and provide clear, concise information and user-friendly tools that local PTAs can use as they develop plans to improve student nutrition and wellness.

continued on back

Note: Some aspects of a broader conception of “wellness” are not addressed in this notebook. We encourage local PTAs, parents and schools to work together to address all components of school health, including mental health services and school health services. This notebook also does not address certain important related areas, such as counseling services for those with eating disorders; food safety policies; and policies to reduce weight-related bullying.

This notebook is organized into seven sections. The first three sections provide information for PTAs on the following topics: childhood obesity, food and nutrition, and physical activity. Use these materials to familiarize yourselves with the issues, to learn the roles that PTAs and schools can play, and to develop plans for improvement. In each section you will find parent handouts that you can photocopy and distribute to parents in your school to increase their awareness of these important issues and to offer them easy tips they can use at home.

Section Four, Grassroots Advocacy, focuses on how PTAs have a new opportunity to get involved in the development of school wellness policies and accomplish broad changes in school environments. This section includes a basic primer on grassroots advocacy as well as a handout for parents about the importance of getting involved in the development of school wellness policies.

In Section Five you will find a survey tool, called the PTA Fact-Finding Project, that you can use to get a quick sense of how your school is doing in terms of student nutrition and wellness, and to pinpoint the areas in which there is room for improvement.

In Section Six we offer ideas and tools for you to use in planning PTA meetings or events on the subject of nutrition and wellness. Included in your Back to School Kit, you will find an accompanying DVD from National PTA’s partner, Parents’ Action for Children, that was designed specifically to engage parents on this subject. We encourage you to use this DVD as a tool to jumpstart a discussion about nutrition and wellness at a PTA meeting or event.

The last section of this notebook contains a list of Web-based resources you can turn to for additional information on all the topics covered in the notebook.

This notebook is intended to be a living document to be customized by you for your school community. Tear out the pages of this notebook and place them in a three-ring binder. This will make it easy to add materials and resources. For example:

- As your unit successfully holds healthy fundraisers and events, turn a section of this notebook into a manual for use by future PTA leaders at your school.
- Save copies of articles from your PTA newsletter and clippings from local papers to be used later as a resource.
- Collect recipes and other ideas to be used when planning events at your school.

We hope that your *Healthy Lifestyles at Home and School Notebook* will become as unique as your PTA and a permanent fixture in your PTA library. For additional articles, fact sheets and handouts, visit www.pta.org and www.parentsaction.org.

1 Institute of Medicine. 2005. *Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press.

2 California Project LEAN: *Successful Students Through Healthy Food Policies: Healthy Food Policy Resource Guide*. Available: <http://www.californiaprojectlean.org>