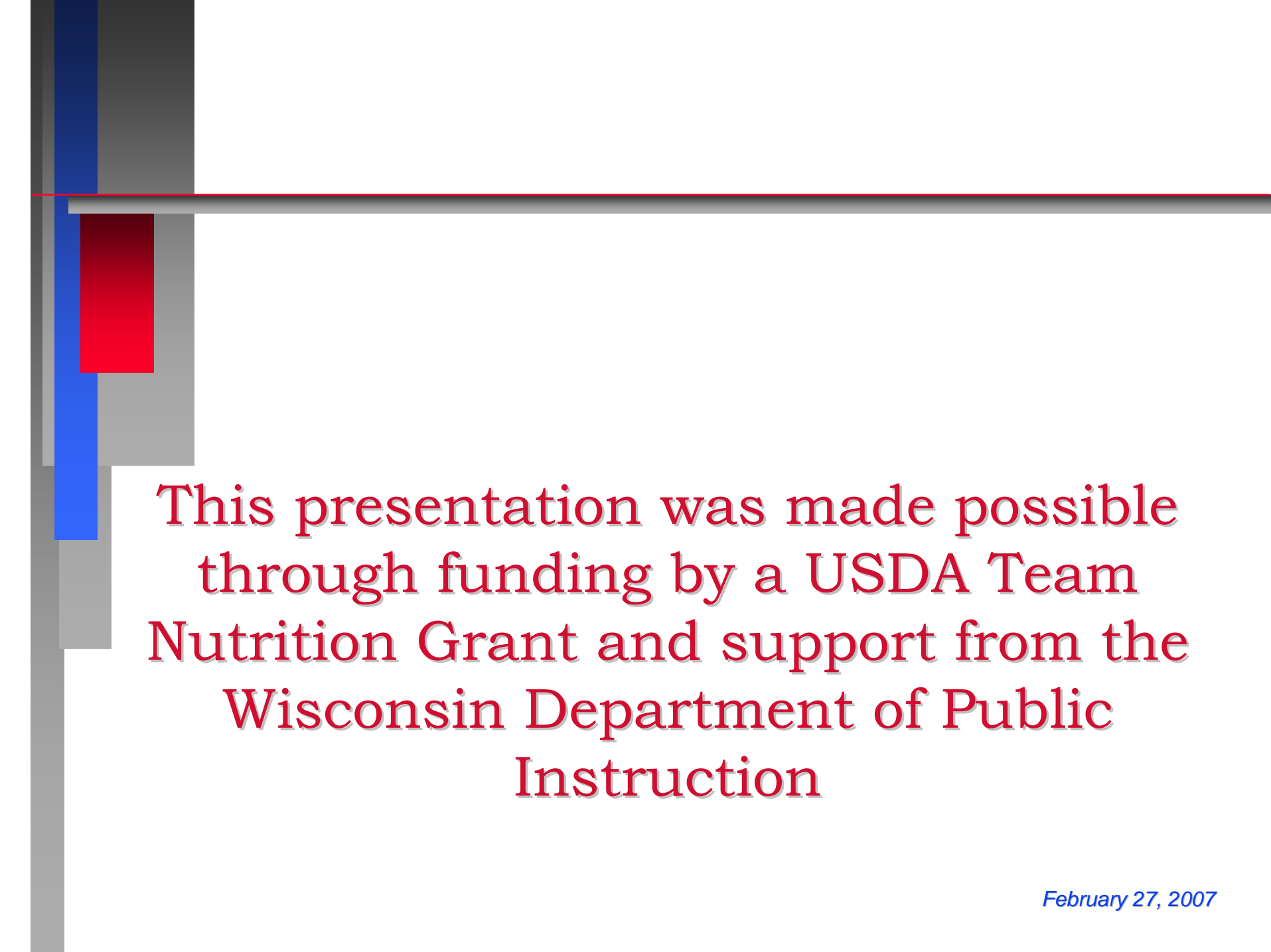




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# Raising Support and Reaching Out— Working with Parents and the Community

*February 27, 2007*



This presentation was made possible  
through funding by a USDA Team  
Nutrition Grant and support from the  
Wisconsin Department of Public  
Instruction

*February 27, 2007*

# Family & Community Engagement:

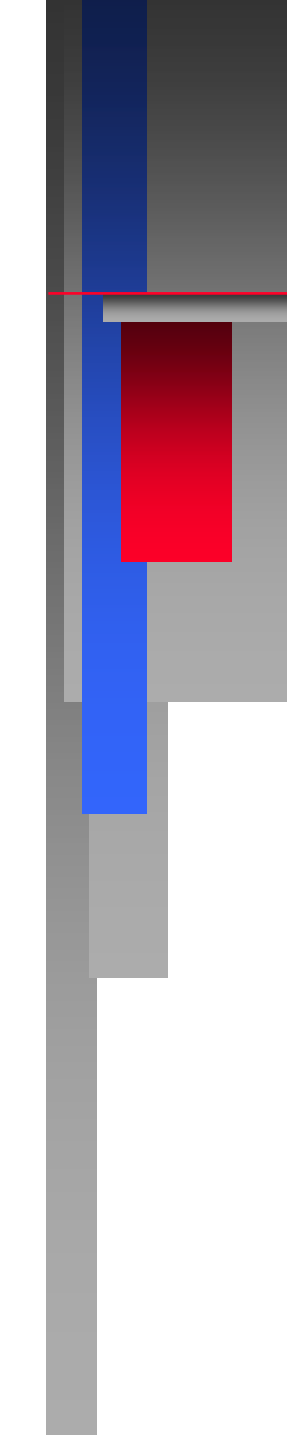
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Parents/families take an active role in nurturing and educating their children, and are connected to the school and community in meaningful ways...

# Family & Community Engagement

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Community members understand the primary goals of the school/district and work with school staff to plan and implement school wellness policies



Data overwhelmingly indicate that parents want the benefits that Wellness Policies can deliver for children's health and learning. A recent national survey of parents by PTA indicates that only 1 in 5 parents are likely to be involved in developing and implementing their child's school wellness policy; however, a strong majority of parents (65%) said a school nutrition/physical activity policy is important to them.

[http://www.pta.org/ne\\_press\\_release\\_detail\\_1155159621109.html](http://www.pta.org/ne_press_release_detail_1155159621109.html)

*February 27, 2007*



# Action for Healthy Kids: Tapping into the Power of Parents

Sarah Titzer,  
Program Manager



**Action for Healthy Kids®**



*February 27, 2007*

# Agenda

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- **Why Parents?**
  - The Knowledge Gap
- **From Involvement to Engagement**
- **How to Engage Parents**
- **Success Stories from the Field**
- **Resources for Action**

# Why Parents?

- **2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act (i.e. Wellness Policy Mandate)**
- **Multiple stakeholders are required for sustainable implementation**
- **Strong Advocates that can have a tremendous impact *when the right tools are provided***
- **Parents are poised to absorb information and implement changes in different environments-school and home**

# The Knowledge Gap

- **In July 2005 a nationally representative sample of parents of non-home schooled children in grades K-12 was recruited for an online survey**
- **Parents were asked to rate their child's school on various wellness practices in the areas of both nutrition and physical activity**
- **The goal of the survey was to:**
  - Understand parents beliefs of wellness practices in their child's own school
  - Gauge parents knowledge of the Federal Mandate for wellness policies
  - Identify wellness practices parents would like to see included in schools

# Gap Between Beliefs, Desires and Reality

## Belief and Desire

- **Parents think schools are providing nutrition education to all students and would like this to be part of the core curriculum two days each week**

## Reality

- **Typical school curriculum includes only 5 hours a year devoted to nutrition education – and not in all grades**

# Gap Between Beliefs, Desires and Reality

## Belief and Desire

- 70% of parents want less exposure to high calorie, low nutrient foods at school; 50% felt child's school was doing good job in this area

## Reality

- 9 out of 10 schools allow students to purchase high calorie, low nutrient foods during the school day



# Gap Between Beliefs, Desires and Reality

## Belief and Desire

- Parents would like lunch period to be an average of 36 minutes

## Reality

- Once child is seated, only 23 minutes to eat lunch and twenty percent of schools give less than 20 minutes

# Gap Between Beliefs, Desires and Reality



## Belief and Desire

- 77% of parents want daily physical education; the majority think their child's school is doing a good job in this area; parents want 48 minutes each day

## Reality

- Only 6% - 8% of schools provide daily physical education

# Survey Results Yield Important Findings

- **Parents need better information about current practices in child's school**
- **A significant gap exists between parents' beliefs, their desire for wellness practices, and what is actually occurring in school**
- **Parents are not aware of the federal mandate for Local Wellness Policies in schools**
- **Parents are clear about the type of wellness practices they would like required by schools**

# Survey Results Yield Important Findings

- **The survey findings make it clear that national efforts must be undertaken which both encourage and support parental involvement with schools are Wellness Policies are implemented and evaluated**
- **The challenge is two-fold: bridge the knowledge gap between parents beliefs and school practices AND assist them in creating environments that support action and change at home *and* school**
- **YOU are in the position to lay the groundwork for sustainable and systemic change in all of a child's environments by engaging and empowering parents**

# Engagement vs. Involvement

## Engagement

- Engagement is initiated by the parents.
- Parents see themselves as the primary educator of their child(ren).
- Parents provide significant educative experiences outside the school environment.
- Parents set the standards by which a child's success is measured.
- Parents believe their direct interaction with their child's education improves the school.
- Teachers are seen as professionals who facilitate education.

## Involvement

- Involvement is often initiated by teacher or school
- Parents see teachers as the primary educators of their child(ren)
- Teacher/School provide the significant experiences within the school environment.
- School systems set the standards by which a child's performance is measured.
- Parents are encouraged to interact with the school to improve the child's education.
- Teachers are seen as professionals who provide education

# From Involvement to Engagement

- **Capture the involved parents and motivate them to be engaged parents**
- **Engaged parents will work to make sustainable changes to the home environment as well as the school environment**
- **Arm parents with the tools, resources, and knowledge they need to be an educated voice for change**
- **Give parents “permission” to implement recommendations: they are a voice of authority in school districts**

# From Involvement to Engagement

- **Provide opportunities for joint planning and dialogue which promotes active participation in decision making for action by all involved**
- **Position parents as idea generators and initiative leaders**
- **Include the surrounding community in quest to incorporate “hard to reach” parents**
- **Parent to parent mentoring**
- **Don’t underestimate power of handholding and support**

# How to Engage with Parents

- **Education and Training is key- be prepared to educate the early adopters...i.e. “the choir”**
- **Provide an incentive**
- **Focus on a parents role as child’s first and best teacher**
- **Do not preach to parents**
- **Encourage parents to be “problem-solvers”**
- **Promote an environment of shared responsibility and mutual respect**
- **Give parents ways to contribute to solutions that fit within their lifestyle and existing obligations**
- **Recognize and reward every level of participation**

# Tips from an Engaged Parent

- **Join an organization**
- **Know your subject matter**
- **Tell everyone you meet what you are doing**
- **Don't waste your time on those that "don't get it"**
- **Don't be afraid to make people mad**
- **This isn't about YOU its about your kids**

*“The world is by people who show up”*

*-Carey Dabney, Texas Parent*

# Making Your Intervention Successful

- **Work with and leverage existing resources**
- **Partner with existing organizations**
- **Handpick intervention sites to expedite and streamline a project**
- **Be certain not to duplicate, or compete with, concurrent efforts by other, similar organizations**
- **Provide constant and consistent support and assistance throughout the project**

# Successful Interventions

- **Virginia Action for Healthy Kids: Parent-led Wellness Teams**
- **Montana Action for Healthy Kids: Parent-led projects to promote healthier school environments**
- **Pennsylvania Action for Healthy Kids: Parent Outreach Initiative**
- **Kentucky Action for Healthy Kids: Bringing the resources to parents**

# Community involvement?

- **Parents are key components of the school community and their local community**
- **Lend support to parents as they bring the message to their workplaces, organizations and groups**
- **Involve community groups in wellness activities**
- **Ask community leaders to get involved in wellness activities**
- **Make it easy to learn more about the wellness policy and activities**

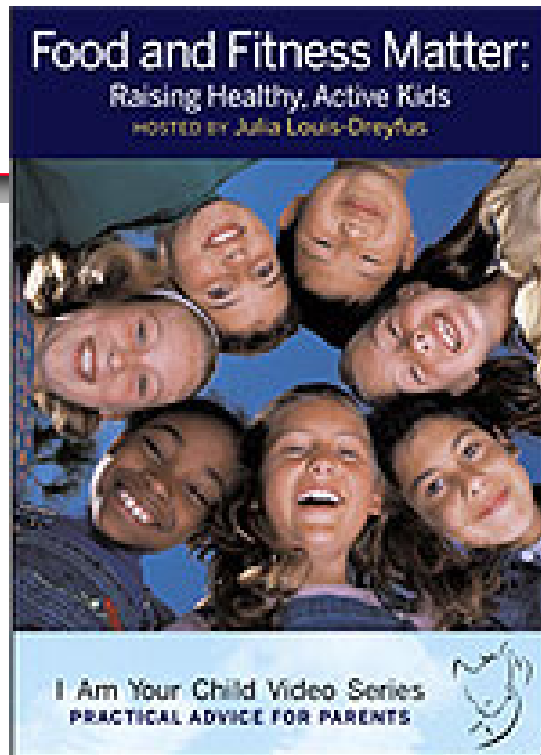
# Questions?

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- **Phones will be unmuted for questions.**
- **Please keep background discussions and noise to a minimum so all can clearly hear the questions.**

# Resources for Action

- **Action for Healthy Kids Website:**  
[www.ActionForHealthyKids.org](http://www.ActionForHealthyKids.org)
- [http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/pdf/parent%20survey%20100605%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/pdf/parent%20survey%20100605%20(2).pdf)
- [http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/pdf/Parents%20FR\\_823FINAL.pdf](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/pdf/Parents%20FR_823FINAL.pdf)
- [http://www.frac.org/pdf/parent\\_outreach.pdf](http://www.frac.org/pdf/parent_outreach.pdf)
- [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final\\_Parent\\_Involvement\\_Fact\\_Sheet\\_14732\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf)



[http://store.parentsactionstore.org/pr  
ostores/servlet/Detail?no=647](http://store.parentsactionstore.org/pr<br/>ostores/servlet/Detail?no=647)

# Upcoming WisLine Webs

**March 27, 2007**

**Teaching by example...How school staff can influence student wellness choices**

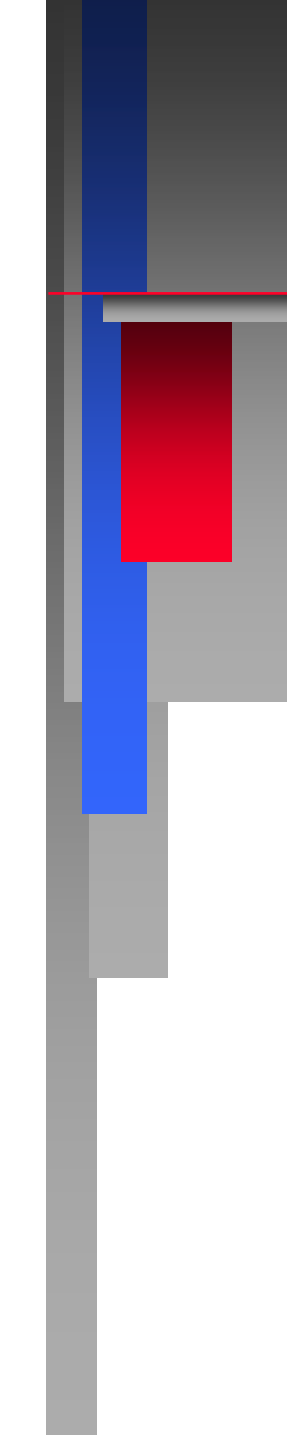
**April 24, 2007**

**Where no wellness policy has gone before -Taking your wellness policy into the future**

**All sessions are 3:00 –4:00 PM**

**Register at <http://www.uwex.edu/ics/wlwreg/wlwwelcome.cfmand> select Family Living as the sponsoring organization.**

*Funded by Team Nutrition/USDA and Funded by Team Nutrition/USDA and Wisconsin DPI Wisconsin DPI*



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# Thank you for attending.

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