

In New Zealand society today obesity is an ever growing issue. (1) "For New Zealand children aged 2-4 years in 2006/7, one in five were overweight (20.9%). A further one in twelve were obese (8.3%), and the health of three in ten children (29.2%) is at risk because of excessive weight. Many schools make easy money selling foods high sugar/salt/fat foods in our nation's schools but the students are paying the harsh price. An environment that continuously provides children with unhealthy food is reinforcing an unhealthy eating habit which triggers the start of a life time of penalties.

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(2)"Surveys of school canteens generally find that energy-dense and nutrient-poor foods like pies, sausage rolls, chips and crisps, cakes and donuts, and sweet drinks are common in school canteens. Fewer than half of all schools have fruit on the menu and if healthier options were available, they are more expensive." So what is a canteen? A canteen is a store that many schools in New Zealand have these days, parents give their children money for morning tea and lunch because they are busy; they are there for the fundraising purposes; you are almost guaranteed to get a decent profit from these canteens. Personally I think that having canteens at a school is acceptable but I think there needs to be more thought put into how often these need to be open and that there is maybe we need to consider a balance with the products that are available for children or parents to buy at these canteens. It's not rocket science to come to a conclusion that most children in today's society would pick the food that has a high sugar and salt content compared to the healthy options that may be available, it appeals more to them, the taste and appearance is always going to win when picking which food to consume, selling these 'unhealthy foods' are obviously easier to sell therefore making it easier for canteen to gain a profit from these foods, it makes everything much easier. If they were to attempt to sell healthy foods it would be much harder for them to gain a profit as for starters investing in healthy foods are most probably going to be more expensive than buying sausages, bread, and sauce for the good old New Zealand sausage sizzle that never fails to sell. (4) "Fewer than half of all schools had fruit on the menu and if healthier options were available, they were more expensive. Given these limited choices, children and adolescents who buy food from school canteens are prevented from making healthy choices." Schools will always look for the easiest ways to gain income so that they can give back to the school community and ensure that children have the resources they need for educational purposes. (3)"Approximately 50% of the nation's children buy lunches at school, so what children eat at school has a real impact on their overall diet. Selling unhealthy food at schools also normalizes it, and sends a message to children that eating a staple diet of unhealthy junk food is ok." Also I feel that schools are in fact sending today's children a very mixed message with healthy living/eating. They want our children to adopt the '5+ a day' and regular exercise but in return for them learning this routine they are rewarding the children with sweet rewards usually high in sugar and fat. But then there also are the canteens so convenient and full of foods that are appealing to children, sugar, fat and salt loaded. Children are getting mixed messages, it's not teaching them right from wrong, it sounds like mostly it's probably teaching them wrong because obesity seems to be the issue that is affecting many children.

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(5)'Children's exposure to marketing occurs in numerous ways including television, Internet, within the school environment, product placement, sponsorship, and sales promotions.' The media has a huge influence on children's eating habits and child obesity. These days as children would come home from school and most probably watch TV and during this period of when cartoons are on there will be fast food chains advertisements on, none of them

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promoting healthy foods but unhealthy foods. (5)"Television is probably the most common medium of exposure to marketing of unhealthy food, with two out of three children watching two or more hours of television per day." These food companies are also managing to slip their way into school environments, they see children as easy targets to promote their product to. These children don't yet understand the effects of these foods on them; all they know is that it sure beats that sandwich mum made for lunch. These companies have an assortment of ways of publicizing their product such as selling their foods at the school canteen, sponsoring sports teams and events. McDonalds is a good example of this they sell toys with their meals this makes it more appealing to the children and also they usually come as a collection as once as they get one they need the whole set, this puts pressure on the parents as they might give in to a child's tantrums to wanting McDonalds not only because it tastes better but because of the toy. They are also one of the biggest sponsorship companies in New Zealand sports teams (6)" McDonald's New Zealand is a long-term sponsor of junior sport in New Zealand, ...Our support helps more than 750,000 Kiwi kids get out there and active playing sport each weekend. With both junior soccer and touch rugby," I feel they are giving mixed messages they want to school teams and sponsor weekend sport and get kids out there to be active but they are also promoting their brand. Another example of their advertising in sport is the annual McDonalds Rugby tournament that my brother plays in every year, he plays a whole week of strong rugby and then at the end he is congratulated with a voucher for free food at McDonald's.

We have already come to the conclusion that selling these types of unhealthy foods are always more popular when you are trying to raise funds. The lack of government funding, is making schools turn to other ways to help raise money to benefit their kids. And the result of this is usually more towards the sale of unhealthy foods through, sausage sizzles, canteens, and the good old kiwi Cadbury chocolate box sales. "As part of the government's policy of letting schools self-regulate, I have decided to remove the clause which says schools can only sell healthy foods." Education Minister, Anne Tolley. This yet again has made the school turn back to fundraising with junk food to get profits for their schools because of underfunding from the government, where the government could have raised their funding for schools to remove the need to use junk food as a way of finding legitimate funding for their schools.

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(References 1 to 6 were listed.)