

Do school based food and nutrition policies improve diet and reduce obesity?

[Jaime PC](#), [Lock K](#).

Department of Nutrition, School of Public Health, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

OBJECTIVE: To review the effectiveness of school food and nutrition policies world wide in improving the school food environment, student's dietary intake, and decreasing overweight and obesity. **METHODS:** Systematic review of published and unpublished literature up to November 2007 of three categories of nutrition policy; nutrition guidelines, regulation of food and/or beverage availability, and price interventions applied in preschools, primary and secondary schools. **RESULTS:** 18 studies met the inclusion criteria. Most evidence of effectiveness was found for the impact of both nutrition guidelines and price interventions on intake and availability of food and drinks, with less conclusive research on product regulation. Despite the introduction of school food policies worldwide few large scale or national policies have been evaluated, and all included studies were from the USA and Europe.

CONCLUSION: Some current school policies have been effective in improving the food environment and dietary intake in schools, but there is little evaluation of their impact on BMI. As schools have been proposed worldwide as a major setting for tackling childhood obesity it is essential that future policy evaluations measure the long term effectiveness of a range of school food policies in tackling both dietary intake and overweight and obesity.