

New \$1.5M Partnership Tackles Childhood Obesity

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To bring down childhood obesity rates, the National Latino Children's Institute (NLCI) and the YMCA of the USA have entered a three-year, \$1.5 million partnership with Kraft Foods, according to a Kraft Foods [statement](#).

Over the past eight years, Kraft Foods has invested more than \$6 million in Salsa, Sabor y Salud, a program to educate Latino families about healthy eating and bring down obesity rates among children. The eight-week curriculum run at YMCAs is a bilingual program created for and by Latinos. It teaches how to use family celebrations as an opportunity to create healthier recipes and increase physical activity.

According to the American Medical Association, almost 40 percent of Latino children between ages 2 to 19 are overweight or obese, compared with only 31.7 percent of all children. Furthermore, more Latino kids between ages of 2 to 11 are obese, compared with their peers.

"Latino children are at greater risk for childhood obesity," said Rhonda Jordan, president of global health and wellness at Kraft Foods. "Through our partnership with NLCI and the Y, we'll be able to get even more Latino families involved...and help them lead healthier lives."

The program was developed in 2002 by NLCI, the only national organization that concentrates solely on young Latinos, to bring down sky-rocketing obesity rates and plummeting activity levels. The expanded partnership will kick off January 2011 at Ys in Illinois, Texas, Denver, California, New York, Florida and Massachusetts and will expand to 130 Ys across the nation by 2012.

So far, the program seems to be working. According to a University of Illinois survey, 93 percent of participants said they were eating more nutritious meals after finishing the entire program. Plus, the curriculum received the President's Circle Award for Nutrition Education from the American Dietetic Association.

The announcement of the partnership also coincides with Hispanic Heritage Month and National Childhood Obesity Awareness month.

"Childhood obesity among Latinos is an issue that demands ongoing attention, education and advocacy," said Sylvia Melendez-Klinger, registered dietician and Latino health expert. "The

program offers healthier food choices compatible with the lifestyle and cuisine of Latino families while bringing families together for fun physical activity.”

For more information about Salsa, Sabor y Salud, click [here](#).

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<http://beta.docker.tusaludmag.com/article/Kraft-Childhood-Obesity-19167-6342>