



# What Kentuckians Think about Childhood Obesity

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Results From the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati



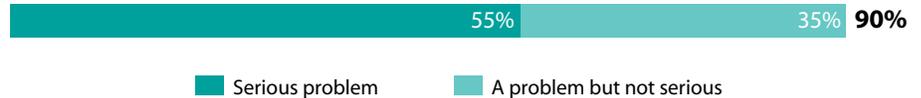
Children with a high body weight are more likely to be overweight as adults, and are at an increased risk of health problems such as heart disease and diabetes.

In Kentucky, 37% of children ages 10–17 are overweight or obese, compared to 32% of children ages 10–17 across the nation.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky has the second highest rate of childhood overweight and obesity in the U.S.

Do Kentucky’s adults think childhood obesity is a problem in their state? To find out, the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati included questions on the 2009 *Kentucky Health Issues Poll* about childhood obesity and one strategy—physical activity in school—to address it.

<sup>1</sup> *Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative. 2007 National Survey of Children’s Health, Data Resource Center for Child and Adolescent Health website. Retrieved 12/3/09 from www.nschdata.org. Children with a body mass index (BMI) between the 85th and 95th percentiles were classified as overweight; those with a BMI at or above the 95th percentile were classified as obese. For more information on the methodology, please visit ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\_Statistics/NCHS/slits/nsch07/2\_Methodology\_Report/NSCH\_Design\_and\_Operations\_052109.pdf.*

**Some people say childhood obesity is a problem in Kentucky, while others do not. Would you say childhood obesity is a serious problem, a problem but not serious, or not a problem?** (Graph presents only those who said it was a serious problem or a problem but not serious.)



**Do you favor or oppose requiring schools to provide 30 minutes a day of physical activity or physical education to students?** (Graph presents only those who said they strongly favor or somewhat favor this.)



## 9 in 10 Kentuckians Think Childhood Obesity Is a Problem

Almost all adults in Kentucky reported that they thought childhood obesity was a problem in the state. The majority of Kentucky adults (55%) thought that childhood obesity was a serious problem. Another 35% thought that childhood obesity was a problem in the state, but that it was not serious.

## 9 in 10 Kentuckians Strongly Favor Physical Activity Requirements for Schools

One strategy to address childhood obesity is to increase children’s physical activity. Since children spend a lot of their time in school, schools can be one place to

increase that activity. However, a recent survey indicated that 7 in 10 Kentucky high school students (69%) do not attend physical education classes.<sup>2</sup>

Almost 9 in 10 Kentucky adults (87%) strongly favored requiring schools to provide 30 minutes of physical activity or physical education to students each day. Another 1 in 10 (9%) somewhat favored this requirement. Support for a physical activity requirement in schools was equally high among all subgroups surveyed.

<sup>2</sup> *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Data. Retrieved 12/3/09 from www.cdc.gov/yrbss.*

These findings unless otherwise noted are from the 2009 Kentucky Health Issues Poll, funded by the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky and The Health Foundation of Greater Cincinnati. The Kentucky Health Issues Poll was conducted October 8–November 6, 2009, by the Institute for Policy Research at the University of Cincinnati. A random sample of 1,669 adults from throughout Kentucky was interviewed by telephone. This included 1,464 landline interviews and 205 cell phone interviews with people who did not have a landline telephone. In 95 of 100 cases, the statewide estimates will be accurate to ±2.4%. In addition to sampling error, there are other sources of variation inherent in public opinion studies, such as non-response, question wording, or context effects that can introduce error or bias. For more information about the Kentucky Health Issues Poll, please visit [www.healthy-ky.org](http://www.healthy-ky.org) or [www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html](http://www.healthfoundation.org/khip.html).