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## Find Us Online



## Got a News Item?

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# Physical Activity Is Essential, Not Optional



Physical activity is “a powerful tool for managing weight and preventing serious health problems” like diabetes and certain cancers, according to a [new article on page 18](#) of *PeakLife SA Magazine*.

The article advises on how much physical activity is enough and how people can get more activity on a regular basis, such as:

- Being an active living champion for your family, like walking or biking to school or the store;
- Get out and try something new, like walking trails; and
- Spread the word, like organizing an office health challenge or bringing the need for safer routes to local decision-makers.

The article, written by Laura Esparza, a researcher at the Institute for Health Promotion Research (IHPR) at the UT Health Science Center at San Antonio, the team behind *Salud America!*, also urges people to get involved with the Active Living Council of San Antonio, Texas.

The Active Living Council is a community coalition and Mayor's Fitness Council committee focused on ensuring every local resident has access to safe places and healthy programs for physical activity.

Learn about the group [here](#) or on [Facebook](#), and see [how the group was formed](#).



## Find Out How to Grow a Healthy Change in Your Area

Want to fight Latino childhood obesity, but don't know where to start or how to make a change? Start at Salud America! Growing Healthy Change. The new website is a first-of-its-kind clearinghouse of Latino-focused resources and stories to promote changes – improved access to [active spaces](#) and more [active play](#) for children during and after class – for Latino kids in your neighborhood and across the nation.



Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

**Salud America!** The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The program aims to unite and increase the number of Latino scientists engaged in research on childhood obesity among Latinos to seek environmental and policy solutions to the epidemic. The network is directed by the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio. For more information, visit [www.salud-america.org](http://www.salud-america.org). The *Salud America!* E-newsletter is distributed quarterly to its national membership network.



## Director's Corner

### Letter to members from Dr. Amelie Ramirez

Latino kids currently comprise 23 percent of the U.S. Public school population.

But only 8 percent of their teachers are Latino.

These numbers highlight a “diversity gap” that warrants efforts to help teachers more accurately mirror the students in their classrooms, according to a [report](#) by the Center for American Progress and the National Education Association.

The gap could limit the supply of future effective minority teachers.

For example, minority students have lower college enrollment rates than do white students, and fewer minority students enroll in teacher education programs each year.

This gap extends to the research field, where there aren't enough minority scientists taking a look at minority problems, like Latino childhood obesity.

The new report offers recommendations: developing



New York City Schools Chancellor Carmen Farina speaks with students Carlos Cruz and Lluvia Hernandez (both 12) while visiting J.H.S. 088 Peter Rouget school in Brooklyn for an announcement for the new initiative called “Learning Partners Program” on April 7, 2014 in New York City.

(Photo by Spencer Platt/Getty Images) (2014 Getty Images via Fox News Latino)

targeted recruitment and appropriate support for minority teachers; removing barriers in the educator pipeline that limit or discourage strong teaching candidates; and implementing initiatives to offer clear and meaningful monetary incentives, support, and professional development to ensure that the best and brightest minority students enter into teaching and succeed once in the profession.

The more Latino students can learn from Latino teachers, the better

they accept and relate to their teaching. It can also be a strong motivator for Latino kids to have racial/ethnic role models.

It's a good goal to aim for.

#### **Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H.**

Director, *Salud America!*

Director, Institute for Health Promotion Research  
UT Health Science Center at San Antonio

## News Briefs

### **Join Salud America! Tweetchats**

*Salud America!* is co-hosting and participating in a variety of Tweetchats on various Latino child health and obesity topics on Twitter. To participate in future chats, follow our Twitter handle [@SaludToday](#) and search the hashtag [#GrowingHealthyChange](#).

### **Salud America! Grantee Recognized for Health Efforts**

Dr. Norma Olvera, a researcher at the University of Houston and a former *Salud America!* **grantee**, was honored during Women's History Month for developing a program called Behavior Opportunities Uniting Nutrition Counseling and Exercise (BOUNCE), *The Daily Cougar* [reports](#). The program aims to empower Latino girls and mothers (and also siblings and extended family members) to adopt a healthy lifestyle by incorporating healthy food choices, daily exercise and positive self-esteem in a supportive environment.



Norma Olvera

## Funding

### **Grant Listings**

RWJF, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR), have obesity-related funding opportunities that are seeking applications.

[RWJF](#)

[NIH](#)

[NCCOR](#)

## Salud Heroes

Learn more about Salud Heroes at the [Salud America! Growing Healthy Change website](#)



A Latino boy shows off his work at the Tres Angeles Community Garden in Brownsville, Texas

## Professor Helps Start Community Garden of ‘Health and Hope’

Dr. Belinda Reininger, assistant professor at the UT School of Public Health and head of the Brownsville Farmers’ Market, helped launch the Brownsville Wellness Coalition to promote both physical activity and healthy food choices.



Belinda Reininger

They learned many local farmers were getting close to retiring, and there were few young farmers in line to keep the crops coming.

To teach the community how to grow fresh produce, they decided to push for a community garden – a shared space within a community where neighbors can grow their own fresh fruits and vegetables.

They targeted a tragedy-ridden, city-owned tract of land behind an infamous downtown apartment building, which had sat in limbo for years after a triple homicide involving children took place on the property.

One way to heal and promote togetherness in that area, the coalition thought, was to plant the new community garden in the free space behind the building.



So they worked with the city and, in July 2013, the garden, called Tres Angeles in remembrance of the three children killed in the area, officially opened.

With 26 plots available, families can buy a plot in the garden for \$15 a year.

The money goes to the community garden group, and the members of the community decide how to spend the money collected, be it on new gardening tools, events in the garden, or new plants.

Read the full story [here](#) or watch the [video](#).

**Find resources** to start a change like this in your area.

## Research

Find the latest research and reports in Latino childhood obesity at the [Salud America! Growing Healthy Change website](#)



## Study: TV Again Tied to Poor Sleep in Kids, Especially Latinos and Other Minorities

Kids who spend the most amount of time watching TV have shorter bouts of sleep, which impacts physical and mental health, especially among minority kids, according to a new study.

The study, by Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital for Children, examined the associations of TV viewing and bedroom TV sets with sleep duration from infancy to mid-childhood among 1,864 children – 35% minorities.

From age 6 months to 7 years, kids' average sleep duration decreased from 12.2 to 9.8 hours a day; TV viewing increased from 0.9 hours to 1.6 hours per day, [examiner.com reports](#).

By age 7, 23% of kids had a bedroom TV set.

Bedroom TV was associated with 31 minutes per day less sleep among racial/ethnic minority children.

Elizabeth Cespedes, the study's lead author, told [Fox News](#) it's hard to know why minority children would be more affected by having a TV in the bedroom.

“At all time points, racial and ethnic minority children in our study were sleeping a bit less and watching more television,” Cespedes.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends against watching television for children who are under the age of two and to keep TV time for older children limited to one hour a day.

## Brief

### Bilingual 'Parent Toolkit' Now Tracks Students' Health/Wellness Benchmarks

*NBC News* is debuting a “health and wellness” section of its bilingual Parent Toolkit.

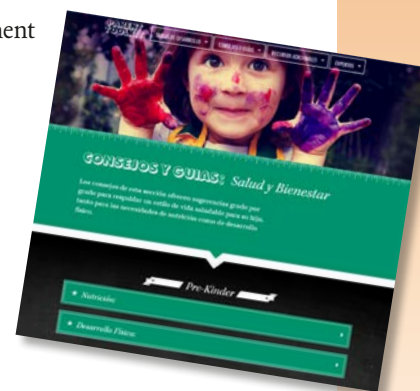
The Parent Toolkit, available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#), is a website and mobile app that helps parents navigate their children's academic development, personal growth, and now health and wellness milestones.

The goals of the toolkit, which is sponsored by Pearson, are to give parents a clear understanding of what is expected of their children at each step in their academic and health journey, and to provide a comprehensive set of tips and tools to help parents engage in and monitor their

children's academic development and health.

The new health and wellness section includes: grade-by-grade recommendations for physical activity, nutrition, and sleep based on national standards; age-appropriate tips for parents to increase exercise, healthy eating, and adequate sleep for their growing children; and printable infographics to guide parents in making healthy choices when reading nutrition labels and grocery shopping.

Visit the site at [ParentToolkit.com](#).



## Making Healthier Communities

Find the latest resources to create healthier communities at the [Salud America! Growing Healthy Change website](#)



### How Healthy Is Your County? Check Out New Rankings on Exercise, Smoking, Poverty, Housing, Obesity



How healthy is your county?

Find out how your county stacks up in child poverty, college attendance, smoking, physical activity, and preventable hospital stays in the new [2014 County Health Rankings](#), an annual report from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

The report examined some new categories this year, according to *USA Today*:

- Almost one out of five U.S. families live in housing with severe problems, such as overcrowding, insufficient cooking and bathing facilities or costs above 50% of family income.
- About 76% of workers drive to work alone, in part because of limited public transit systems and neighborhoods without sidewalks or safe crosswalks. This contributes to obesity and pollution.
- About 30% of commuters drive more than 30 minutes each way to work – mostly in the East. This contributes to traffic accidents and personal stress.
- About 59 people per 100,000 die from an unintentional or intentional injury each year, but in healthy counties, it shrinks to 49 people, and in

about 10% of U.S. counties, it grows to 105 people.

- About 77% of people have access to exercise opportunities, such as a park or recreation center, but in the worst counties, only 19% of people do.

The *USA Today* report on the health rankings also noted positive changes, including a decrease in smoking and preventable hospitalizations.

However, some rankings haven't improved or changed:

- Twice as many teens give birth in the least-healthy counties as do in the healthiest counties.
- The percentage of children living in poverty went down in the 1990s but rose from 18% in 2007 to 23% in 2012. Twice as many children live in poverty in the least-healthy counties as in the healthiest counties.
- 16% of adults were considered obese in 1995, and 28% were in 2010.
- Violent crime has decreased by 50% in the past 20 years but has increased in the past two years.
- The premature death rate – or those who die before they turn 75 – is twice as high in the nation's unhealthiest counties as in its healthiest.

Learn more about the rankings [here](#).

## Video Roundup

Click on the images to see the associated video.

### Video Series about How to Teach Kids to Eat Healthy



**Video 1**



**Video 2**



**Video 3**



**Video 4**



**Video 5**



**Latino Kids Need Salud Heroes.  
Can You Step Up?**



**Latina Mom Helps Quadriplegic  
Friend Complete Triathlon**



**Latino Youth Struggle toward Healthier  
Lifestyles; Hope to Inspire Change**



**Share Your Story of Change**

#### About the E-newsletter

This E-newsletter is produced quarterly by *Salud America!* Please send news items or story ideas to [despres@uthscsa.edu](mailto:despres@uthscsa.edu).

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