

Salud America!

The RWJF Research Network to Prevent Obesity Among Latino Children

Volume 6, Issue 1, Fall, 2013

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New Research Highlights Ways to Tackle Latino Childhood Obesity



Healthier School Snacks



Better Food in the Neighborhood



Active Spaces



Active Play



Healthier Marketing



Sugary Drinks

Salud America! has released six new packages of research materials to highlight obesity issues and how to address them among Latino children.

The research packages focus on the following topics:

- [Healthier School Snacks, May 2013](#)
- [Better Food in the Neighborhood, June 2013](#)
- [Active Spaces, July 2013](#)
- [Active Play, July 2013](#)
- [Healthier Marketing, August 2013](#)
- [Sugary Drinks, September 2013](#)

Each package includes a research review with the latest science on a topic, a brief summary of the scientific review, an animated video narrated by Latino children, and an infographic.

Download each package of materials [here](#).

“We believe researchers, decision-makers, community leaders, school officials, parents and youths can use these research materials to learn about the problems related to Latino childhood obesity, and what can be done about them,” said Amelie G. Ramirez, director of *Salud America!*, which is based at the Institute for Health Promotion Research at The UT Health Science Center at San Antonio.



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. The *Salud America!* E-newsletter is distributed quarterly to its national membership network.



Director's Corner

Letter to members from Dr. Amelie Ramirez

Obesity threatens the health of Latino children.

But progress is being made, and there's a good chance you are behind it.

As part of our effort to tackle obesity through our [Salud America! network](#), we're learning fascinating stories of change.

We're seeing Latino individuals and communities join together to open playgrounds after school, help corner stores offer fresh produce, find ways to market healthier snacks, or change school lunch menus across the nation.

We want to help tell those—and your—stories.

If you have a story of healthy community change, *Salud America!* can:

- Interview you
- Write your story into a professional case study
- Possibly film your story

Then we'll promote your story on our national platform to inspire others to improve Latino child health in their areas. You can also use the story in your own networks.



Best part? It's no cost to you!

To see an example of what we can do for you, [read the story](#) or [watch the video](#) we did about folks in Alice, Texas, who teamed up to open some school facilities up to the public for physical activity after school hours.

If you have a story, please [e-mail us!](#)

Amelie G. Ramirez, Dr.P.H.

Director, *Salud America!*

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



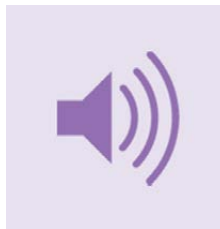
News Briefs

Panel: From the Front Lines in the Fight against Latino Obesity

Salud America! Director Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez joined the “Weight of the Latino Nation” web forum series on Aug. 29, 2013, in which a panel of experts highlighted the latest research on the obesity epidemic and factors impacting Latino communities. Presenters also discussed various program and policy actions being undertaken—or still needed—to tackle the epidemic. The forum was sponsored by The California Endowment, Latino Coalition for a Healthy California, and the Public Health Institute. Listen to the panel [here](#) or read a [blog post](#) about it by MomsRising.

Ramirez Wins Faculty Senate Award

Salud America! Director Dr. Amelie G. Ramirez was given the Faculty Leadership Award by the Faculty Senate at the UT Health Science Center San Antonio on Sept. 11, 2013. Dr. Ramirez “has devoted every fiber in her being three decades of research, community outreach, speaking engagements and training to reducing/eliminating health disparities and promoting the goals of the Health Science Center and its faculty,” said her nominator, IHPR researcher Dr. Alan Holden. At the IHPR, Dr. Ramirez recruited and developed a faculty dedicated to resolving Latino cancer and chronic disease health disparities. She also has designed, developed and implemented more than 100 studies focused on human and organizational communication to help reduce chronic disease and cancer health disparities among Latinos.



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, or compile lists of funding opportunities.

[RWJF](#)

[NIH](#)

[NCCOR](#)

Stepping Up Against Latino Childhood Obesity

Midy Aponte: On a Mission to Increase Hispanic Presence in U.S. National Parks

Editor's Note: This [original story](#) is used with permission from *NBC Latino*.

By Kristina Puga

Midy Aponte has one mission—ensuring that Latinos are an integral part of America's national parks and historic sites. She was appointed as the Founding Executive Director of the [American Latino Heritage Fund of the National Park Foundation](#) in the Fall of 2011.

Established by former Secretary of the Interior, Ken Salazar, the mission of the American Latino Heritage Fund is to assist the National Park Service, and communities across the country, to ensure that our national parks and historic sites preserve, reflect and engage the diverse stories and communities of American Latinos throughout American History and for future generations.

For the past two years, Aponte has been spearheading the Fund's strategic direction and overseen management of programs and development to establish the Fund's national presence.

Speaking about Salazar, Aponte says, "He saw an opportunity to make a change that is going to have a lasting legacy, not only for him, but for all of us."

"I think that when you are in a position of leadership, and you see an opportunity, you take it," she adds.

Where were you born, and raised? Where is your family from?

Both of my parents are from Cuba. I was born in Washington Heights, New York but was raised in Miami, Florida. I now live in Washington, D.C.

With a background in communications and business, what attracted you to the world of national parks?

I was about to enter three years building my business The Sánchez Ricardo Agency, a Hispanic Communications and Digital Media Consultancy in Washington, D.C. I was continuing my career in public relations, when I was approached by a former colleague about joining American Latino Heritage Fund of the National Park Foundation. I first turned it down, because I wanted to continue to build my business...but the mission and the vision and the call to action was way too large, and so I wanted to be a part of it. I felt deeply we needed to do this at the right time and right moment to change the national dialogue — so I went with it full force and haven't looked back. I put a full pause on the agency, and I am focused entirely on the Fund for now.

What is the main reason studies show that only 9 percent of Latinos currently visit national parks?



Midy Aponte

Courtesy of the American Latino Heritage Fund via NBC Latino

What we've heard from our bloggers is that we don't see our history reflected in the parks. I've heard people say that they're too expensive, that you need a special membership, that it's too far away, or camping is not a part of the Latino cultural fabric. We are little by little deconstructing that. Entries are usually \$9 or \$17, and no, you don't have to camp or need a membership. There are hotels and resorts. I think it's just not knowing. It hasn't been part of our experience.

What do you find to be the best method so far to getting more Latinos to go to national parks?

Just informing. We held an [expedition in August](#) where we took nine bloggers to get to know the parks — go on a hike with the park rangers, go for a drive and see the waterfalls and the mountains and the canyons.

I didn't grow up going to parks, but the first time I went to a real national park (besides the Everglades), was the Fall of 2011—Big Bend National Park. Once you visit one, there is a bug that gets inside you, and you want to go back. First you have to get them there, and that's why the expedition was so critical.

I think the Latino community, in general, is very hungry and thirsty for knowledge about our own history. With the increase of Hispanics, they are wanting to revisit that history, and explore it, and understand it. I think it's important for us to know our own stories.

What do you love most about your job?

I think it's the people, the community that's on social media, on the ground, and the encouragement I feel — the love I feel from people wanting to see the Fund grow and succeed. I also love doing research and finding out things like there was a community of Cubans in Philadelphia in the 1700's, also talking to the park rangers, doing work to reach multicultural audiences, and going to visit the parks.

What's the one piece of advice as you rose in your career you will never forget?

Something that was told to me very early on — "If you don't have a seat at the table, bring your own chair." You have to fight for it to be heard and instill change. We're all empowered and equipped to be that voice.

Research

Study: Sugary Drink Consumption on Rise among Hispanic, Black Kids in California

Consumption of soda and other sugary drinks among young children in California is starting to decline overall, according to a new study.

But there's bad news, too.

There was an alarming 8 percent spike in sugary drink consumption among adolescents ages 12-17, and consumption also rose significantly among Latino and African American adolescents.

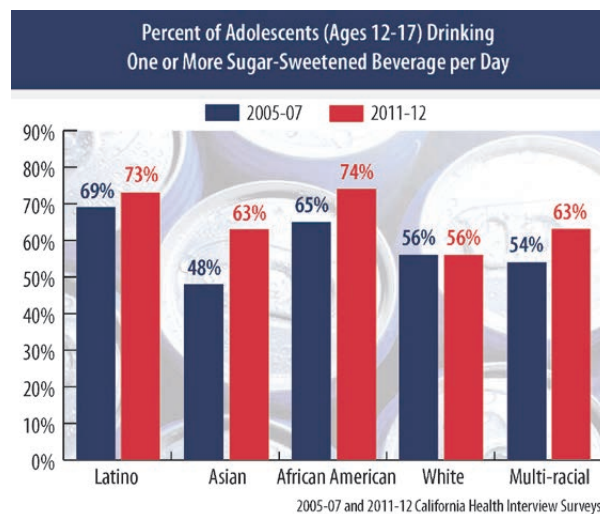
The study, [Still Bubbling Over: California Adolescents Drinking More Soda and Other Sugar-Sweetened Beverages](#), provides

a comprehensive look at youth (ages 2-17) consumption of sugary drinks, charting consumption patterns from 2005-2007 to 2011-2012. The study was produced collaboratively by the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and the California Center for Public Health Advocacy (CCPHA).

Sugary drink consumption decreased by 30 percent among kids ages 2-5 and 26 percent among kids ages 6-11 in California.

But among kids ages 12-17, 65 percent drink sugary beverages daily, an 8 percent climb since 2005-2007.

And major disparities exist between races/ethnicities.



About 74 percent of African American and 73 percent of Latino adolescents drink at least one sugary drink each day, compared to 63 percent of Asians and 56 percent of whites.

Adolescents in all ethnic groups, except whites, consumed more sugary drinks in 2011-12 than in 2005-07.

The report ends with a recommendation: "With nearly 40 percent of California children overweight or obese, it is vital that parents, educators, health professionals, businesses and policymakers work together to identify and implement public policies and other programs and strategies to reduce sugary drink consumption and protect children, especially teens."

10 WAYS TO LIMIT SSBs IN YOUR COMMUNITY



Making Healthier Communities

California District Helps Latino Kids Make Healthier Choices at School

The El Monte City School District in California is educating students on making healthier food and exercise choices.

The district, which has been spotlighted in a [new video](#) by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, designates a lead teacher at each campus as a “wellness champion” who helps teachers include wellness as part of their daily curriculum.

They also made healthier school lunch menus, using more whole grains and lean proteins. They make foods themselves to control sodium levels.

El Monte has about a 69% Latino population.



Resources

Spanish Resources:

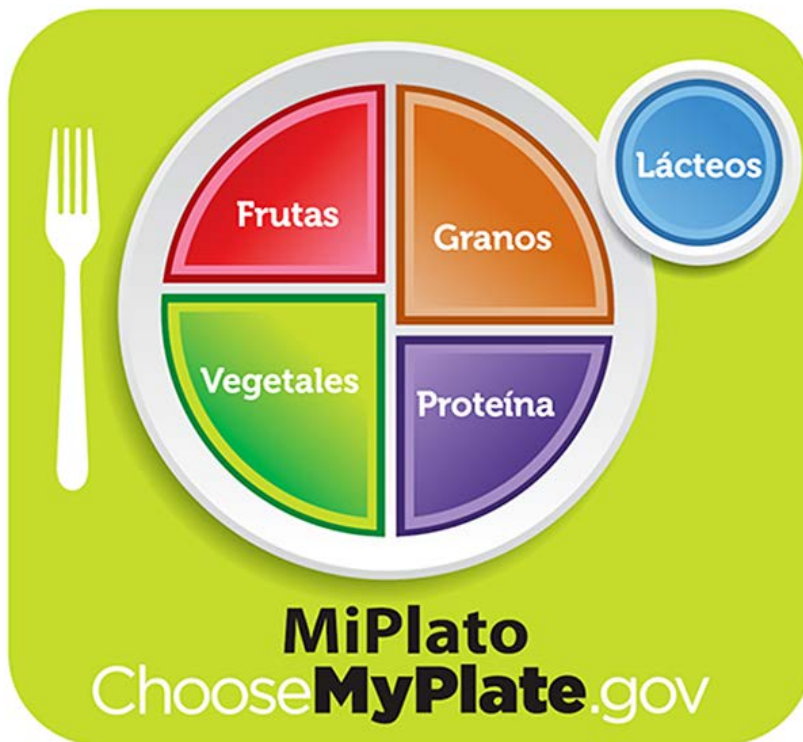
'MiPlato' Food Prep Tips, Recipes, Coloring Pages

To increase awareness about MiPlato, the USDA Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion is launching resources for Spanish-speaking audiences, according to a USDA blog post.

MiPlato is the USDA's icon for the five food groups to remind Spanish-speakers to make healthier choices at each meal.

Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov and click on [En Español](#) to find the latest addition to the [10 Tips Nutrition Education Series](#), *Disfrute Comidas de Varias Culturas* (Enjoy Food from Many Cultures), about how to prepare healthier ethnic/cultural foods.

Educators and health professionals can integrate the *En Español* section of ChooseMyPlate.gov into program and education efforts. The new Spanish-language resources include [general information](#) about weight



management and counting calories to help adults think about their food and beverages choices.

[New recipes](#) are also available in Spanish.

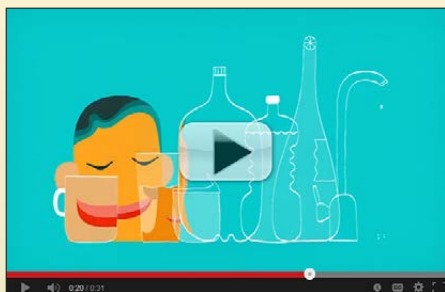
Kids can find [activity sheets](#)

[and coloring pages](#) that promote healthy eating at school and home.

Teachers and parents can invite young people to become MyPlate Champions by sharing the [MyPlate Champions Pledge](#) in Spanish.

Video Roundup

Click on the images to see the associated video.



Campaign: Drink More Water (Spanish)



The Effect of Food Portion Sizes on Health (Spanish)



Preventing Obesity in Latino Kids



Report: Half of Hispanics Kids Will Develop Diabetes



Trainer Helps Teach Healthy Lifestyles to Latino Kids (Spanish)



Examining the Latino Health Paradox



Health Economics 101



Improving Access to Healthy Food in a Latino City

About the E-newsletter

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

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