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[Health & Medicine](#), [Obesity](#)



Chris Goodman Essay Assignment #2: Explanatory Synthesis Explanatory Synthesis of Childhood Obesity Childhood obesity is a major problem in the United States. There are multiple reasons for this problem including the child's school system, the access to technology in young children and the child's genes. It is sometimes inevitable for a child to be obese due to their genes. There are some precautions being made to help this problem. Some might work but others might fail. Childhood obesity is a major problem and needs to be fixed because it causes major health issues for the child in the future. Childhood obesity has been a problem in the United States for quite some time now. Childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and tripled in adolescents in the past 30 years (CDC 2). Overweight is defined as having excess body weight for a particular height from fat, muscle, bone, water, or a combination of these factors. Obesity is defined as having excess body fat. (CDC 6) This is becoming a major problem and it is only getting worse. In 2010, more than one-third of children and adolescents were overweight or obese. (CDC 1) These statistics are more than shocking to me. This is the reason why we have so many health issues in adults in the United States. Children and adolescents who are obese are likely to be obese as adults and are therefore more likely to have adult health problems such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis. (CDC 3) There are many different reasons for this problem. One reason is that schools are still offering high sugared and unhealthy foods to the students. About 55 million school-aged children attend some type of school in the United States. Almost all of these students eat snacks and meals at their school. More than half of the schools offer sugar drinks and

very unhealthy foods for the children. They have access to these foods through out the entire day from vending machines, school canteens, fundraising events, school parties, and sporting events. (CDC 1) If children grow up eating the unhealthy foods that their school provides for them, they will think it is always appropriate to eat these unhealthy foods. Not to mention it can cause major health issues in the future. Not only do schools offer unhealthy foods for children, but most do not offer the required amount of physical activity. Most adolescents fall short of the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendation of at least one hour of aerobic activity every day. Only 18% of students in high school met that recommendation in 2007. All schools need to require some sort of a physical activity class. In 2009 only 33% took daily physical education classes. (CDC 2) Needless to say, schools play a very crucial role in the problem of childhood obesity. Physical Activity in schools could be a huge key in helping fix this problem. One other major factor is children have access to technology at a young age. This is one of the main factors for why childhood obesity is increasing at such a rapid rate. As technological advances increase, so does childhood obesity. Children ages 8-18 spend an average of 7.5 hours a day using entertainment media. This includes television, computers, video games, cell phones, and movies. Of those 7.5 hours, about 4.5 hours is strictly dedicated to watching television. Eighty-six percent of children ages 8-18 have a computer in their home, 31 percent have a computer in their bedroom, and 20 percent of them have internet access in their bedroom. (Gensheimer 9). The time spent using electronic devices takes away from time that children could be doing physical activity. This

leads to increased food intake through snacking in front of the television and also influences them to make unhealthy food choices through watching many of the food advertisements. (CDC 2) If children are having more entertainment in the comfort of their home then why would they want to do anything else? This is a major problem and needs to be fixed. One reason that can not be fixed is that the child has genes to naturally be overweight. This factor is inevitable but can still be treated somewhat by good eating habits and physical activity. The risk of becoming obese is higher in children that have obese parents or are from a family of obese people. These children are genetically inclined to put on much more weight. The children with these genes end up storing the fat more easily than other children. There is not much that these children can do about the genes they possess, but there are strategies that can be used so that this obesity does not get out of control. (childobesityinfo 3) There are many strategies that can be taken to reduce this problem. Studies show that parents are usually their kid's most important role model. Kids who see parents having healthy foods and being physically active are more likely to do the same. Seventy-eight percent of parents believe that physical education or recess should not be reduced or replaced with academic classes. Around 30 percent of parents said that they are either "somewhat" or "very" concerned about their children's weight. (childobesityinfo 2) One key way that could possibly help lower these horrendous statistics is changing the school system to better keep the children in shape and not overweight. Most schools still offer very unhealthy food choices. If we change the food that the schools serve and enforce more physical activity at school it could make a huge difference. Thirty-five

percent of parents rated their children's school programs for teaching good patterns of eating and physical activity to prevent obesity as " poor, " " non-existent, " or " don't know. " (childobesityinfo 3) The CDC has synthesized research related to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools, culminating in nine guidelines. These guidelines were informed and reviewed by The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, and the Healthy People 2020. These guidelines now serve as the foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies. Childhood obesity is a major problem and needs to be fixed because it causes major health issues for the child in the future. There are many reasons to why childhood obesity is such a major problem in the United States including the school system, technology, and genetics. Schools and parental guidance play a major role in helping with this problem. If we don't start taking more crucial actions to stop this problem now, then we can only imagine how the statistics will be changed in the next 30 years. Work Cited Childhood Obesity Info, . "Genetic causes of childhood obesity. " Child Obesity. (2010) Web. March, 25. 2013 Gensheimer, Jolene. " Technology and Childhood. " Parent Map. (2006). Web. March 25. 2013 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, . "Childhood Obesity Facts. " Adolescent and School Health. (2013). Web. March, 25. 2013 WebMD, . "Obesity in Children. " Children's Health. WebMD, Web April 7, 2013