

HEALTH:

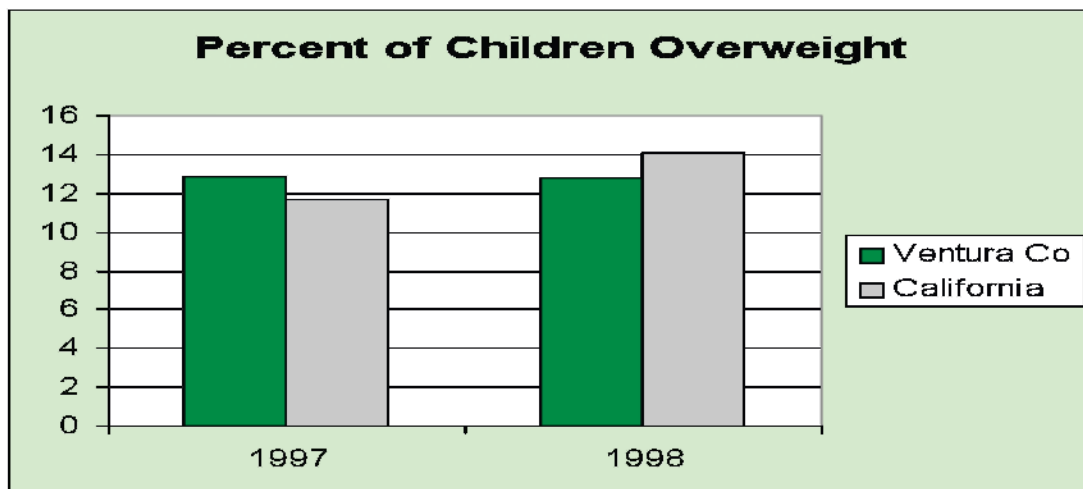
Childhood Obesity

Goal: Development which promotes a more active lifestyle among children and youth by encouraging outdoor sports and recreation, walking and bicycling. These contribute to a desired low rate of obesity (< 5%) among 0-17 year olds and corresponding health benefits.

Measured by: Proportion of children who exceed the 95th percentile for body weight.

Findings: Ventura County children had a higher rate of obesity in 1997 than California as a whole, but that was reversed in 1998. The proportion of overweight County children is still more than twice the national goal.

Context: Children have been experiencing an increase in obesity largely because of more passive kinds of entertainment like television and computer games and high calorie and fat diets. Unfortunately, obesity is something that tends to stay in adulthood and health problems such as diabetes are increased. Development that promotes physical activity among children and teenagers would help stop the trend toward overweight Americans and a host of related health problems. Places for roller skating, skate boarding, bicycling, etc., should be encouraged as well as safe, well-equipped play-grounds.



Source: Erika Takada, California Project Lean, CHDP Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance
Children's Medical Service Branch