

# The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Intervention: Social Marketing Strategies for Nutrition

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## INTRODUCTION

The primary modifiable causes of obesity are poor nutrition and physical inactivity. Young children, who generally rely on their parents for food choice and physical activity opportunities, need a family environment that promotes good nutrition and encourages safe exercise and physical activity. Families in many urban communities face challenges in terms of access to, and availability of, healthful food choices (eg, reasonably priced fruits and vegetables); availability of safe and appealing community resources for physical activity; and increased social capital through community participation and local advocacy efforts (social agency) to improve community resources and safe access to enable healthful lifestyles.

With these challenges in mind, the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children (CLOCC; [www.clocc.net](http://www.clocc.net)) developed a public health education initiative to bolster ongoing local efforts addressing Chicago's childhood obesity epidemic through healthful eating and physical activity. The CLOCC is a citywide coalition of over 500 organizations representing virtually all social sectors. The Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children and its partners have developed the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! social marketing initiative. The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative involves community youth and partners across Chicago in development and dissemination of the core messages. After completing a training process, youth ambassadors will deliver these messages through community outreach activities. The campaign is based on healthful eating and active living messages for children: Consume 5 or more fruits and vegetables, 4 servings of water, and 3 servings of low-fat dairy a day; spend no more than 2 hours watching television or in similar sedentary behavior,

and engage in at least 1 hour of physical activity per day.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative uses a healthful lifestyles branding strategy aimed at improving family food choices and increasing use of community physical activity resources.<sup>1</sup> It is aimed initially at 6 vanguard community areas that are linked to census boundaries in Chicago: Englewood, Humboldt Park, Lower West Side, Rogers Park, West Garfield Park, and West Town. These areas were targeted based on high pediatric obesity prevalence<sup>2</sup> found in research, conducted by the Sinai Urban Health Institute (SUHI),<sup>3</sup> that described the clinical and sociodemographic characteristics of the overweight and obese populations in targeted areas, local resources, and an existing relationship with CLOCC.

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative has become a component of the City of Chicago's strategic efforts for addressing obesity through Chicago's Department of Public Health and Chicago Department of Youth Services. In partnership with Chicago Community In Schools (CCIS), CLOCC has also secured funding from the PepsiCo Foundation to support training of youth ambassadors.

This brief paper describes the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative, which was first implemented in Chicago neighborhoods in the fall of 2006; intervention strategies; the use of bundled messages promoting consumption of fruits and vegetables, water, and dairy; the use of multiple message channels; and evaluation strategies. Subsequent publications will report on evaluation findings and the intervention's effectiveness in changing health knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors related to 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages. Research activities described in this article were approved by the responsible Institutional Review Board at the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chi-

ago Children or Research Triangle Institute, as appropriate.

## BACKGROUND

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative is in part a response to the “obesigenic environment”—that is, a social and physical environment that inhibits healthful lifestyles—prevalent in the 6 target communities.<sup>4,5</sup> Environmental factors that may contribute to unhealthy nutrition and reduced levels of physical activity include inability to consume sufficient quantities of fruits and vegetables because of high cost and a lack of convenient access to supermarkets;<sup>6,7</sup> restaurant offerings in lower-income areas that present a barrier to eating a healthful diet outside of the home;<sup>8,9</sup> and lack of obesity-related social capital, such as community participation through a social agency, and feelings of trust and safety to use community resources.<sup>10,11</sup> The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative also responds to the complex and potentially reciprocal relationship among characteristics of the physical environment, social capital, and physical activity. For example, highly walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods have been associated with increased physical activity in the form of more walking for transportation.<sup>12</sup>

The creation of 5-4-3-2-1 Go! was prompted by specific barriers and potential opportunities in the target communities. As noted in a series of “Chat and Chew” focus groups conducted with community leaders, service providers, and residents, there is very limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables and few supermarkets or farmer’s markets, few healthful restaurant options, safety concerns about use of parks and recreational facilities because of gangs, and lack of widespread information about alternative access to better nutrition and physical activity options. These same focus groups also found high levels of community demand for resources, such as a Web site where information on community resources could be disseminated, promotion of community events and resources such as health

fairs and after-school activities, and interventions such as the Greater Chicago Food Depository “Produce Mobiles” that bring surplus fruits and vegetables directly to communities.

The resulting 5-4-3-2-1 Go! concept is to brand a culturally relevant and “source authentic” (ie, delivered by authentic voices and true to community norms and values) message platform based on nutrition and relevant health promotion science. Youth ambassadors from Chicago communities participate in interpreting and adapting the message to compelling forms of media, and in disseminating the message to the communities’ children and parents. Thus messages and delivery channels are “by and for the people” and are aimed at changing nutrition and physical activity practices and altering the local obesigenic environment.<sup>13</sup>

## DISCUSSION

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative is based on current lifestyle recommendations and guided by CLOCC’s community assessments<sup>2,3</sup> and formative research (Chat and Chew sessions) on community attitudes, beliefs, lifestyle, health information-seeking practices, and service in target communities. The investigators conducted focus groups in all 6 CLOCC vanguard communities (total of 12, or 2 per community) with community service providers (eg, lay health workers and community recreation groups). The purpose of the focus groups was to collect input on redesigning the CLOCC Web site to support health promotion activities such as its 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message. The focus groups also addressed communication infrastructure (how community members communicate about health issues), social support for nutrition and physical activity, community activities and resources for physical activity, and food access and availability.

The study identified potential barriers (such as the “digital divide” in access to health information), supports, message strategies (e.g., promoting site to community-based organiza-

tions), and community readiness for change.<sup>14</sup> Results of these groups and ones with community youth have been used in development of specific 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages, message delivery strategies, and the development of an evaluation strategy.

## Social Marketing Strategy

5-4-3-2-1 Go! objectives are to: (1) raise awareness of the local opportunities and community-based services available to promote healthful lifestyles; (2) drive intent to participate in activities that promote healthful lifestyles; (3) increase year-round involvement in activities that promote healthful lifestyles; (4) raise awareness of Chicago as a city that is tackling the obesity epidemic; and (5) raise awareness of CLOCC’s work among corporations, community groups, and grassroots organizations (CLOCC partners and non-partners) to engage them in program activities and initiatives.

The strategy behind 5-4-3-2-1 Go! is to create a new healthful lifestyles brand in Chicago that: (1) uses a name and logo treatment that embodies the brand essence: “Eating right and being healthful is as easy as 5-4-3-2-1 Go!”; (2) communicates positive messages that resonate across different ethnic communities; (3) uses high school volunteers—“Go! Teams”—to serve as community ambassadors; (4) “comes to life” at programs and events and through earned news media coverage; (5) enjoys support of key civic and community leaders; (6) rewards youth and adult involvement; (7) optimizes awareness and participation by becoming part of as many current neighborhood and citywide programs as possible; and (8) builds on local community pride in being Chicago residents. The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! brand includes key messages about daily nutrition and physical activity—consume 5 servings of fruits and vegetables, 4 servings of water, and 3 servings of low-fat dairy per day; limit screen time to 2 hours per day; and engage in at least 1 hour of moderate physical activity per day. The

Figure summarizes key messages and elements of 5-4-3-2-1 Go!

The Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children makes use of the basic principles of the marketing mix, or the 4 Ps of marketing—place, price, product, promotion—and adapts them to the target communities.<sup>15</sup> For example, there is a Spanish language version of the graphic in the Figure, which is used as a campaign brochure, and content is adapted in neighborhood Spanish-language newspapers. Authentic sources and marketing that aligns with community health information sources and aspirational images can help to build the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! brand. The Table summarizes the delivery channels used to market key messages and hypothesized effects (to

be examined in the evaluation study described below).

## Evaluation Strategy

The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative is based on a behavior change model grounded in social marketing theory and local formative research, as noted earlier. Investigators from Research Triangle Institute and CLOCC have developed a comprehensive outcome evaluation strategy with 4 specific aims:

- *Aim 1:* To assess parent and community audience exposure, awareness, and cognitive and affective reactions to 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages.
- *Aim 2:* To identify direct effects of 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages on family

outcomes, including parental food choice, parent and child use of community resources, and parent and child screen time.

- *Aim 3:* To identify the moderating effects of social capital, community food access and availability, availability of community resources, and individual readiness to change on the path from 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages to family outcomes.
- *Aim 4:* To determine the effect of social cognitive mediators on the relationship between 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages and intended outcomes.

Evaluation planning has been completed, and the study will launch in conjunction with the initiative. The proposed panel design

**Eating Right and Being Active Are as Easy as...**

**54321go!**

**5 servings of fruits and vegetables**  
Fresh or frozen, whole or cut-up, fruits and vegetables are natural sources of many important nutrients. Five or more servings of fruits or vegetables a day provide your children with vitamins, minerals and fiber that may help reduce their risk of illness, including heart disease. A serving is one-half cup of cut fruit or veggies, one cup of salad greens or one-quarter cup dried fruit.  
**Suggestions:** Choose whole fruits and vegetables over juice, since these contain more fiber and offer a natural balance of vitamins and minerals without added sugar. Keep fresh cut-up fruits and veggies around for snacks.

**4 cups of water**  
Encourage your children to drink water every day to satisfy their thirst and provide fluid for their growing bodies. Four or more glasses of water will help keep your kids healthy and active without adding extra calories.  
**Suggestions:** Give your children water bottles and keep them filled. Keep track of how much they drink, especially during play or sports. Put a pitcher of water on the table at dinner.

**3 servings of low-fat dairy**  
Low-fat dairy products provide protein and calcium for strong bodies, bones and teeth. A serving is an eight-ounce cup of low-fat or skim milk or yogurt, or 1½ ounces of low-fat cheese.  
**Suggestions:** Blend low-fat or skim milk or yogurt with fruit and ice to make a tasty treat. Add low-fat cheese to soups and salads.

**2 hours or less of screen time**  
Time spent watching television, using the computer or playing video games means fewer calories burned and extra weight gained.  
**Suggestions:** Work with your children to select age appropriate shows and turn the television on only for those programs. Limit overall television, computer and video game time. Make TV a reward, not a daily routine.

**1 hour or more of physical activity**  
Encourage your children to participate in 60 minutes of walking, running, skipping, jumping or dancing each day. Physical activity combined with good nutrition will help them stay healthy.  
**Suggestions:** Scatter activities throughout the day. For short trips, walk instead of driving, and take the stairs when possible. Enroll your children in after-school or weekend activities, or plan for active family time.

**5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day**

**4 cups of water a day**

**3 servings of low-fat dairy a day**

**2 hours or less of screen time a day**

**1 hour or more of physical activity a day**

**go!**

For more information, please contact: (please put your contact information here)

Figure. 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages.

**Table.** 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Delivery Channels

<b>Channels</b>	<b>Aim</b>	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Tactics</b>	<b>Effects</b>
Channel 1: Go! Teams	Create 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Teams to provide a “for us, by us” element to the program so that the Chicago kids and families we want to reach will relate to it.	Engage Chicagoans who are aspirational and embody the values of living a healthful lifestyle, such as high school sports stars, political leaders, sports, TV and movie personalities, and other notables from Chicago.	Create a team of high school student leaders (the Go! team) from diverse ethnic backgrounds who can serve as positive role models for younger kids and, at the same time, serve as living mascots who build awareness for the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! brand.	Brand the look of the Go! team to guarantee recognition and visual appeal.
Channel 2: Earned Media – Coverage through Community Media and Events	Raise public awareness and promote support for 5-4-3-2-1 Go! and involvement in activities through advocating for and drawing attention to the campaign leading to news media coverage.	CLOCC has over 500 community partners, many in the 6 target communities. Working with partners, 5-4-3-2-1 Go! will promote news media attention to its activities using media advocacy techniques such as staging events. <sup>16</sup>	Go! Teams work through community partners to reach community-level newspapers published in English and Spanish.	Awareness of the existence of 5-4-3-2-1 Go! will increase, as measured by response to 5-4-3-2-1 Go! awareness, and specific questions about exposure to news media coverage of 5-4-3-2-1 Go!
Channel 3: <a href="http://www.clocc.net/">www.clocc.net/</a>	Create a 5-4-3-2-1 Go! Web site ( <a href="http://www.clocc.net/ckg!">www.clocc.net/ckg!</a> ) featuring information in English and Spanish as an effective way to disseminate information about the campaign 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.	The site contains detailed and practical information based on key messages (see Figure) and is updated weekly. It features upcoming events and how to participate, prizes and how to win them, photos, and games to test kids’ nutrition and fitness knowledge. The CLOCC works with Chicago schools to direct traffic to the site and make it a “favorite” on all elementary school computers.	Drive traffic to the site by coordinating with Chicago Park District, Chicago Public Schools, Mayor’s Office of Special Events and other partners to establish a hyperlink back to the site. Promote the site through Go! Teams.	The Web site becomes a trusted health information source for community members. They receive more detailed information on the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message, and specific information about how to access community resources, how to make more healthful food choices, access to nutritious foods (eg, local farmer’s markets and the produce mobile).

will take advantage of natural variation in exposure to the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! message. Using a targeted sampling technique, investigators will recruit a panel of households in the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! neighborhoods; eligible households will have at least one parent and one child 3-7 years of age. Baseline data collection will include interviews with parents and collection of observational data on the children and home nutrition environment. At 2 follow-ups, parents will be re-interviewed, additional home observations will be completed, and self-reported exposure to 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages will be collected. Analysis will include effects of message exposure and reactions on knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs; mediation and moderation effects; individual and family behavior change; and community-level change associated with the initiative. Results will be reported in future publications on the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! initiative.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The authors believe many important lessons can be learned from 5-4-3-2-1 Go! that should be considered when developing public health education campaigns focused on healthful eating and physical activity.

- *Source credibility and message receptivity.* Social marketing and message theory stress the importance of source credibility and positive cognitive and affective reactions to health messages.<sup>17</sup> Formative research for the 5-4-3-2-1 Go! confirms this fact and points to the importance of nutrition messages that take urban lifestyles, health information sources, and healthful eating barriers into account in developing culturally relevant messages and delivery systems. Go! Teams composed of adolescent youths who represent social models for young children, and who are thereby highly credible messengers, are a central message strategy.

- *Culturally relevant health information sources.* Many urban communities rely on health information from trusted local sources rather than physicians or mass media sources. Spanish-speaking communities, in particular, obtain such information from their own media and targeted service providers such as local clinics or faith leaders. The 5-4-3-2-1 Go! intervention uses local health information sources to reach urban target audiences. The evaluation seeks to determine audience receptivity and reactions to these sources.
- *Multipronged outreach strategies.* Given that many urban audiences use local health information sources with relatively low reach (eg, community newspapers), 5-4-3-2-1 Go! is using a multipronged outreach and message delivery strategies. By using multiple sources targeting community members in their homes, through businesses or churches, and at public events, 5-4-3-2-1 Go! maximizes reach using cost-effective strategies.
- *Community partners and "influentials."* Another critical approach to extending reach is through partners, such as community-based organizations and the city of Chicago (eg, CCIS and PepsiCo Foundation funding). The Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children works with partners to leverage resources and enhance acceptance in target communities. Community leaders can also serve to reinforce 5-4-3-2-1 Go! messages and act as another channel to support Go! Teams, earned media, and [www.clocc.net](http://www.clocc.net).

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