The HEALTHY Study, sponsored by the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (2008), examined the effects of a multicomponent, school-based program addressing risk factors for diabetes among children whose race or ethnic group and socioeconomic status placed them at high risk for obesity and type 2 diabetes over 3 years with more than 4,600 children from sixth to eighth grade. Twenty-one randomly chosen schools received a multicomponent, school-based intervention, and 21 randomly chosen schools were the control or “assessment only” schools. Both school clusters had high enrollments of black and Hispanic children of lower socioeconomic status with at least 50% of the children eligible for free or reduced meals. The multi-component school cluster had four components: nutrition, physical activity, behavioral knowledge and skills, and communications and social marketing. (Intervention materials are available online at: www.healthystudy.org.)

The results indicated that the “comprehensive school-based program did not result in greater decreases in the combined prevalence of overweight and obesity than those that occurred in control schools. However, the intervention did result in significantly greater reductions in various indexes of adiposity [waist circumference, fasting glucose level, and fasting insulin level]. These changes may reduce the risk of childhood-onset type 2 diabetes” (HEALTHY Study Group et al., 2010, p 8). There were significant decreases in adiposity in both control and intervention groups. The decrease in adiposity in the control (assessment only) group might be attributed to feedback from parents, and greater public awareness and concern about childhood obesity. Interventions that took place in the schools in this study may reduce the risk for childhood onset of type 2 diabetes (HEALTHY Study Group et al., 2010).