

emphasize large meals, admonish children for leaving food on their plates, or use food as a reward or punishment. Parents may have an exaggerated concept of the amount of food children require and expect them to eat more than they need.

Disparities in obesity rates exist among racial/ethnic minorities, immigrant and refugee communities, and socioeconomic status (SES) with differences often becoming apparent before 6 years old. Lower socioeconomic groups have a greater prevalence of obesity, especially in girls. Youth immigrating to the United States tend to have lower initial weight statuses, but on a population level, immigrant youth have higher BMIs than their native-born counterparts after one generation of living in the United States. This is particularly true for Hispanic immigrants ([Singh and Yu, 2012](#)). Physical activity may also be influenced by sociocultural factors. Studies have shown that activity and inactivity patterns differ by ethnicity, and minority adolescents (non-Hispanic African-Americans, Hispanics, and Filipinos) engage in less physical activity and more inactivity than their non-Hispanic Caucasian counterparts ([Gortmaker, Lee, Cradock, et al, 2012](#)).

Some **community factors** that influence eating and activity patterns include a lack of built environment (food deserts, community gardens, farmers markets, sidewalks, parks, bike paths) or affordable and accessible facilities for low-income youth to be active, thus limiting their opportunities to participate in physical activities or healthful eating. Social policies also contribute to obesity. The increased availability of energy-dense foods, pricing strategies that promote unhealthy food choices, and overzealous food advertising that targets children and adolescents with high-fat and high-sugar foods are some examples ([Schwartz and Ustjanauskas, 2012](#)).

**Institutional factors** also influence patterns of obesity and decreased physical activity. Many school policies allow students to leave school for lunch. Vending machines in school often are filled with high-fat and high-calorie foods and soft drinks. Although well-balanced, nutritious school lunches may be available to students, they often opt for less nutritious choices, such as high-fat and high-sugar snacks.

**Physical inactivity** has also been identified as an important contributing factor in the development and maintenance of