

**Joint Meeting on NCDs and Law with the Caribbean
Public Health Law Forum and Health Tax Policies**

Technical Recommendations for the Development of Nutrition Standards for Caribbean Schools

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Caribbean
Public Health
Agency

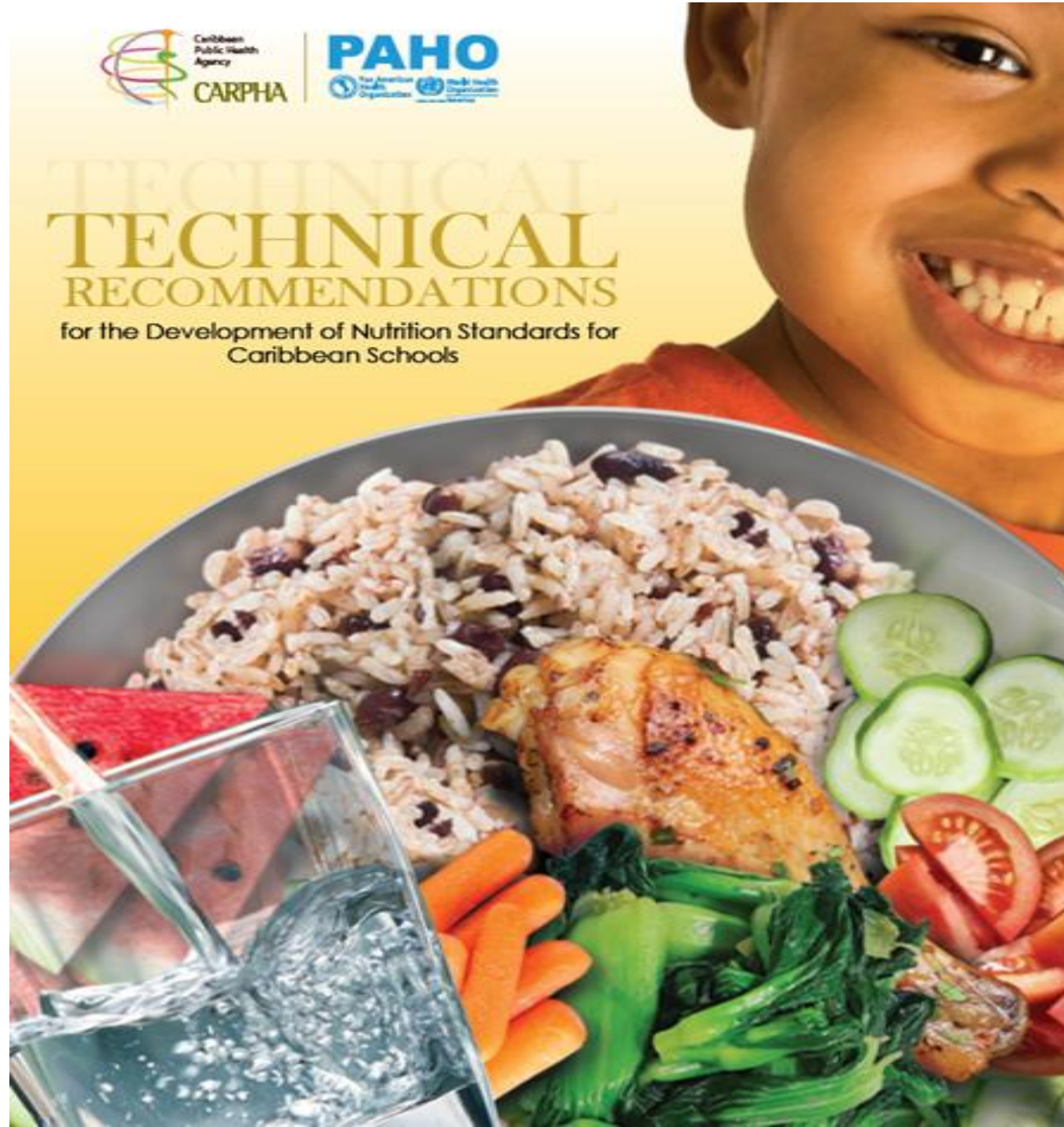
CARPHA

PAHO

The American
Health
Organization
World Health
Organization

TECHNICAL TECHNICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

for the Development of Nutrition Standards for
Caribbean Schools



RATIONALE

- Rising prevalence of overweight and obesity in Caribbean children – **every 1 in 3 children**
- Overweight and obesity are **leading risk factors for NCDs** – the leading cause of morbidity, mortality and disability in the Caribbean
 - Attributed to the **nutrition transition**
 - ↓ fruits, vegetables, ground provisions and legumes
 - ↑ fatty, salty and sugary foods, including ultra-processed products

RATIONALE

- In response, CARPHA instituted the **Six Point Policy Package (6-PPP)** (2017)
 - Recommendation under Policy Point # 2 – Nutrition Standards and Guidelines for Schools and Other Institutions, is the development of **mandatory national nutrition standards for all foods provided and sold in schools and early childhood services, based on a generic sub-regional (Caribbean) guideline**
- Schools present a critical tactical avenue to influence child dietary behaviour at a population level

RATIONALE

- The implementation of these recommendations will be supported by interventions to improve the regulatory environment for foods through the development of **regional standards for nutrition labelling and FOPL** being spearheaded by CROSQ



Octagonal Front-of-Package
Nutritional Warning Labels

DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

CARPHA and PAHO held **consultations with technical experts** from Ministries of Health and Education, and Academia

- Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, Dominica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Jamaica, Grenada, Antigua and Barbuda
- The University of the Southern Caribbean, The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine



First draft developed at Regional Meeting in November 2019



Revised Final draft developed in September 2023

PURPOSE



Create enabling environments in schools, which increase access to a range of healthy, nutrient-dense foods (i.e., foods which provide adequate nutritional content that support optimal growth and development of students and that do not increase the risk of malnutrition)



Reduce the consumption and availability of foods and beverages high in unhealthy fats, sugars and/or sodium



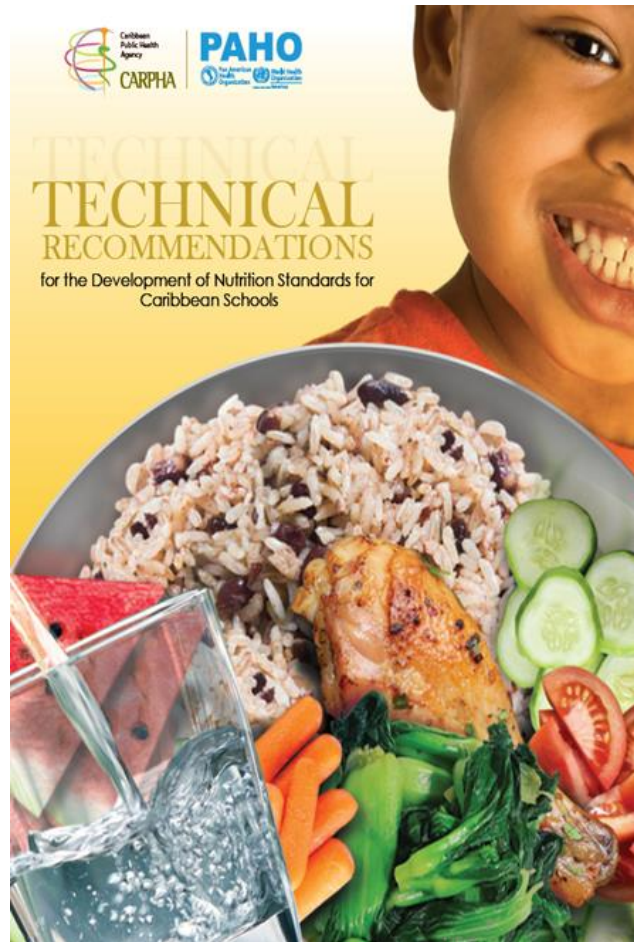
Promote healthy eating habits among school children that contribute to reducing childhood obesity and preventing malnutrition in all its forms

USE



- **Apply to all foods and beverages (cooked/ready to serve and packaged) served in Caribbean primary and secondary schools, whether sold or offered free of cost**
- Use to **guide recipe development** for prepared food items
- For **processed and UPP**, review the nutrition facts labels against the cut-offs based on the PAHO NP Model, to determine suitability to sell or serve

USE



- **Technical Recommendations should be fully adopted to develop national guidance for food providers**
- **Interim guidance may be necessary while progressing towards full adaptation**



STAPLES

Oats

Cashew Nuts

Black Eye Peas

Split Peas

Peanuts

Cornmeal

CORNE

MILK

YOGURE

FOODS FROM ANIMALS

TECHNICAL CONTENT

I. Determining Nutrient and Meal Standards for Schools

Document provides:

- ❖ **Recommended energy and nutrient intakes** for children 4 to 18 years old
- ❖ **Examples of meal plans for lunch** for the 4-8, 9-13 and 14-18 year olds (\approx 25-30% of caloric needs per meal)
- ❖ **Recommended exchanges/servings** by suggesting examples of foods that can be used to constitute portions by age group

II. Technical Recommendations for School Nutrition

Document provides:

❖ **List of food groups/categories along with criteria for each group**

➤ **Itemises the measured amount for the corresponding serving/food exchange for each food item**

Food Categories

1. Staples
 - Starchy Fruits, Roots and Tubers
 - Cereals, Grains and Substitutes
2. Legumes and Nuts
 - Peas and Beans
 - Nuts and seeds
3. Vegetables
 - Green Leafy Vegetables
 - Other Vegetables
4. Fruits
5. Meat, Fish and Poultry and Alternatives
6. Milk, Dairy and Milk Alternatives
7. Fats and Substitutes
8. Combination Foods
9. Baked goods and Confectionery
10. Snacks – Defined According to Country
11. Beverages

II. Technical Recommendations for School Nutrition

Document provides:

- ❖ **Criteria for pre-packaged processed and ultra-processed foods**
(based on the PAHO NP Model)

Recommend if:

<1 mg sodium / kcal
< 10% total energy from free sugars
< 30% of total energy from total fat
<10% of total energy from saturated fat
<1% of total energy from trans fat

- ❖ **Criteria for meals prepared from fresh foods & mixed ingredients**

Other Areas Covered

III. Other Recommendations for School Food Service:

- ❖ Safe food handling and Hygiene, Media and Marketing, Sponsorship

IV. Preparing National Guidance for Food Providers:

- ❖ General guidelines / subject areas for food providers

V. Roles and Responsibilities:

- ❖ Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Cafeteria & Kitchen Facilities



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REFERENCES

[Childhood Obesity Prevention - Healthy Caribbean Coalition](#)

[NCDs at a Glance: NCD Mortality and Risk Factor Prevalence in the Americas \(paho.org\)](#)

[CARPHA 6 Point Policy for Healthier Food Environments.pdf](#)

Caribbean Public Health Agency. (2023). *Technical Recommendations for the Development of Nutrition Standards for Caribbean Schools.*