

## Food Security and Obesity

Good nutrition and exercise in childhood are keys to lifelong healthy growth and development. Currently in Iowa, however, studies show that a significant portion of the child population suffers from food insecurity and even malnutrition. At the same time, childhood obesity rates have skyrocketed. While some steps have been taken, such as establishing school nutrition standards, much more needs to be done to reduce both malnutrition and obesity. In part due to these threats, for the first time in Iowa's history, children face the prospect of being less healthy and living less long than their parents.

*As Governor, what will you do to improve child nutrition and combat the twin threats of malnutrition and obesity?*



**BRANSTAD:** Changes in lifestyle and interests have created a greater number of obese children. When I was President of Des Moines University we became the nation's first

university or college to earn the highest recognition granted by the Wellness Councils of America because of our comprehensive wellness offerings and operating plans. Some private companies in Iowa desire to partner with the public sector to encourage and send a message to our children about the importance of exercise and healthy lifestyles. A key component is to educate parents and to provide incentives to low-income families to purchase healthy foods.



**CULVER:** Adequate and appropriate childhood nutrition is a key component in developing Iowa's children into successful students and working adults.

A child will not be able to concentrate well in school if they have not had breakfast. Likewise, childhood obesity threatens to cause serious health problems later in life and place additional burdens on our health care system. I am proud to have signed the Healthy Kids Act into law: this legislation requires a minimum amount of physical activity by students and limits junk food sales in our schools. I was also proud to create the Governors' Council on Physical Fitness, which has partnered with nonprofit entities to promote Live Healthy Iowa Kids, a wellness program. During my second term I will continue to focus on these wellness programs and other nutrition programs in order to promote wellness amongst Iowa's children.