

Obama noted that the rate of children who are obese has stopped increasing, and that in some age groups the rate has even declined. She cautioned that the progress is "fragile," though, emphasizing that the nation "can't afford" to slow down the effort to reduce the number of obese children.

Children's health is one of the issues Obama has become known for since she became first lady in 2009. Five years ago, she began a project called "Let's Move!" which encourages kids to exercise.

A Culture Of Health

Dr. Risa Lavizzo-Mourey is president and chief executive of RWJF, a national health organization based in New Jersey. According to Lavizzo-Mourey, Americans can change their habits and embrace a culture of health, just as they have changed their attitudes toward smoking and the importance of using seat belts in cars.

The foundation's new \$500 million donation follows up on a \$500 million donation made in 2007, bringing the foundation's total contribution to the effort to \$1 billion. The money will be distributed nationwide during the next 10 years to partner groups fighting to reduce the number of very overweight children. In addition to helping parents do their part, the foundation also aims to make school environments healthier and make healthful foods more available. It will especially focus efforts on children of color and children living in poverty, Lavizzo-Mourey said.

Obama mentioned a few examples of progress since 2007, when the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation made its first \$500 million contribution to help kids grow up at a healthy weight. Since then, some fast-food restaurants have started including apples and skim milk in their kids' meals. Also, the labeling on food has become clearer, helping parents choose healthier products in supermarkets, and schools throughout the country have adopted higher health standards for lunches.

"We've seen the progress we can make when we educate parents and we help them make healthier decisions," Obama said.