

CONTEST CHOOSES APPS TO HELP FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY

 WORK & LIFESTYLE

The potential for digitally-enhanced games to help combat childhood obesity has already been widely recognized—witness [Treasure World](#), [LocoMatrix](#), [Swinxs](#) and [The Hidden Park](#) for just a few examples. Now the U.S. government has gotten involved with a contest inviting app developers to create tools and games that encourage kids to eat better and be more active. Launched in March, the USDA's [Apps for Healthy Kids](#) competition is part of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign to end childhood obesity within a generation. Toward that end, it has challenged software developers, game designers and other innovators to develop fun and engaging software tools and games that deliver nutrition and health concepts in a fun and engaging way. The submission deadline was June 30; tools and games had to be built using the USDA nutrition dataset recently made available to the public through the Open Government Initiative. All apps are now going through the judging process, with panelists including executives from Apple, Google, Zynga and LucasArts. In September, winners will be awarded a total of USD 60,000. U.S. obesity rates have tripled in the past 30 years, the USDA says, which could mean a shorter expected lifespan for today's children than their parents enjoyed. App-minded entrepreneurs: keep the fitness-focused innovations coming! (Related: [Wrist device rewards kids for exercising](#) — [Volkswagen crowdsources apps for in-car info & entertainment](#) — [NYC challenges developers to create apps using city data.](#))

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