

Self-Assessment for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies

Policy Component 4: Physical Activity

This tool is intended to help child care programs assess their current nutrition and physical activity practices and identify areas in need of improvement, based on the policy recommendations of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) *Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies*. This document is one of six self-assessment tools available in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#) webpage.



Step 1 — Assessment. Check the appropriate box to indicate whether each policy recommendation is fully implemented, partially implemented, or not implemented by the child care program. Refer to the child care program’s policies and guidelines. If a policy recommendation does not apply, check “NA” (not applicable). For example, the policy recommendations for infants do not apply to an afterschool program serving school-age children.

Daily physical activity for children	Implementation			
	Full	Partial	None	NA
1. In accordance with national guidelines, the child care program encourages all children to participate in a variety of daily physical activity opportunities that are appropriate for their age, that are fun, and that offer variety. The child care program provides all children with numerous opportunities for physical activity throughout the day.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddlers (ages 1 to 2) are provided with at least 30 minutes of structured activity and at least 60 minutes up to several hours of unstructured physical activity daily. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preschoolers (ages 3 to 5) are provided with at least 60 minutes of structured activity and at least 60 minutes up to several hours of unstructured physical activity daily. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toddlers and preschoolers are not sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time except while sleeping. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School-age children (ages 6 and older) are provided with at least 60 minutes of daily physical activity that includes aerobic and age-appropriate muscle- and bone-strengthening activities. 				
2. Program practices are inclusive and offer access for children with disabilities to participate in physical activities with nondisabled peers.				
3. All children are provided outdoor time at least twice daily, weather and air quality permitting.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children can go outside when the temperatures are above 15 degrees Fahrenheit (including wind chill factor) and below 90 degrees Fahrenheit. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor time should be limited to 20 to 30 minutes when temperatures are between 16 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit. 				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outdoor time is in safe settings supervised by adults. 				
4. Staff members lead and participate in active play (e.g., games and activities) during outdoor time and other times devoted to physical activity.				

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Daily physical activity for infants	Implementation			
	Full	Partial	None	NA
5. In accordance with national guidelines, the child care program provides all infants with planned daily physical activity to safely support their physical development and health. Activities are planned to support infants’ developmental milestones, such as self-supporting head and neck, rolling, reaching, sitting, kicking, crawling, standing, and walking.				
6. Following the American Academy of Pediatrics’ recommendation, infants are provided “tummy time” (time spent lying on their stomachs) for short intervals at least two to three times each day while they are awake and supervised by an adult.				
7. All infants are provided daily outdoor time when the weather and air quality are safe.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infants can go outside when the temperatures are above 15 degrees Fahrenheit (including wind chill factor) and below 90 degrees Fahrenheit. • Outdoor time should be limited to 20 to 30 minutes when temperatures are between 16 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit. • Outdoor time is in safe settings supervised by adults. 				
8. To support infant development, confining equipment (e.g., swings, bouncy chairs, exercise saucers, car seats, and strollers) is limited to less than 30 minutes while infants are awake.				
Play space and equipment for children	Full	Partial	None	NA
9. The child care program provides children with a physical environment that promotes active play. Safe, sufficient and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor space and equipment encourage all children to be physically active, including children with disabilities. Sufficient equipment is provided to avoid competition and long waits.				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of fixed play equipment is available that accommodates the needs of all children, such as climbing structures, swings, sandboxes, tunnels, and slides. • A large variety of indoor and outdoor portable play equipment is available for children to use at the same time, such as balls, hula hoops, tumbling mats, jump ropes, tricycles, and buckets. • Outdoor play space includes open grassy areas and a path for wheeled toys. • Indoor play areas are safe and provide adequate space for each child. 				
10. Staff members regularly inspect equipment and play areas to ensure they are safe.				
11. Staff members always supervise children on playground equipment and during active play and other physical activities.				
12. The physical environment does not promote sedentary activity. Sedentary equipment such as televisions, videos, and electronic games are not prominently displayed.				

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	Full	Partial	None	NA
Play space and equipment for infants				
13. The child care program provides infants with a safe and engaging physical environment that encourages movement and exploration.				
14. The child care program provides safe, sufficient and developmentally appropriate equipment for infants, such as rattles, balls, and simple cause and effect toys.				
15. Staff members regularly inspect infant equipment and play areas to ensure they are safe.				
16. Staff members always supervise infants in their play environments.				
Standards-based physical education	Full	Partial	None	NA
17. The child care program provides standards-based physical education for children at least once per week, using national or state-developed standards, such as the <i>Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards</i> and the CSDE’s <i>Healthy and Balanced Living Curriculum Framework</i> , and guidelines from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.				
18. Physical education complements health education by reinforcing the knowledge and self-management skills needed to maintain a physically active lifestyle and to reduce time spent on sedentary activities, such as watching television and playing video games.				
19. Children with disabilities have appropriate physical education opportunities and participate with nondisabled peers.				
Connecting with planned learning experiences	Full	Partial	None	NA
20. Opportunities for physical activity and active play are incorporated into planned learning experiences outside physical education, such as language and literacy development, mathematics, science, and music.				
21. Teachers provide short physical activity breaks between learning activities, as appropriate.				
22. Physical activity is integrated into daily routines whenever possible, such as transition time.				
23. As age appropriate, physical activity is used as reinforcement, reward, and celebration for group achievement.				
24. Afterschool programs integrate physical activity throughout the learning environment.				
Screen time	Full	Partial	None	NA
25. In accordance with the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendations, the child care program does not permit screen time (e.g., television, movies, video games, and computers) for infants and children younger than 2.				
26. For children ages 2 and older, screen time is limited to less than one hour per day and consists only of quality educational activities that are connected to learning goals and standards or programs that actively engage child movement.				
27. The child care program does not allow screen time during meals or snacks.				

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Physical Activity and Punishment	Implementation			
	Full	Partial	None	NA
28. Staff members do not withhold opportunities for physical activity (e.g., not being permitted to play with the rest of the class or being kept from play time), except when a child’s behavior is dangerous to themselves or others.				
29. Staff members never use physical activity or exercise as punishment, e.g., doing push-ups or running laps.				
30. Play time or other opportunities for physical activity are never withheld as a measure to enforce the completion of learning activities or academic work.				
31. The child care program uses appropriate alternate strategies as consequences for negative or undesirable behaviors.				

Step 2 — Prioritize areas for change. Review the areas rated “none” or “partial” and identify the priority areas for change in your child care program.

For implementation strategies and resources, refer to the CSDE’s [Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Step 3 — Develop an action plan for each priority area. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s action planning form and sample completed action planning form in the “[Documents/Forms](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#) webpage.

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Resources

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/CCPolicy/Child_Care_Action_Guide.pdf

Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Care-Nutrition-and-Physical-Activity-Policies>

Resource List for Physical Education and Physical Activity in Schools and Child Care (CDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Physical_Activity.pdf

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies](#) webpage, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/CCPolicy/Assess_Policies_Physical_Activity.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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