



Childhood Obesity Prevention

e-Bulletin

Winter 2018

Dear Colleagues:

Obesity prevention begins early in life when children are still forming healthy behaviors. Implementing policies that support a healthy child care environment is a crucial step in ensuring the health of Connecticut’s youngest residents. The Department of Public Health, in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, has developed this e-Bulletin to provide information and resources to assist early care and education programs in creating healthier environments that support child development and learning.



Being Active in Child Care

Nationally, [13.9%](#) of 2-to 5-year-olds and [18.4%](#) of 6-to 11-year-olds are obese. Obese children are at risk of developing chronic diseases such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, asthma, and may experience psychological stress stemming from bullying and stigma.



Daily physical activity promotes gross motor development and provides many health benefits including improved heart health, healthy bone development, improved mood, and is also a childhood obesity prevention strategy that aligns with the Connecticut Early Learning and Development Standards ([CTELDS](#)).

With more than [60%](#) of young children spending time in early care and education programs, child care providers are positioned to directly influence the amount of activity in which young children engage. [Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Ed.](#) recommends that full-day preschool children engage in at least 90-120 minutes of physical activity daily, which may seem challenging to achieve in the winter months. This e-Bulletin provides resources that may help child care providers and families alike to meet these best practice physical activity recommendations by offering multiple short bursts of activity throughout the day.

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What's New?



Youth Compendium of Physical Activities

The National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) has launched the new online Youth Compendium of Physical Activities [tool](#). The tool provides a list of 196 common activities in which youth participate and the estimated energy cost associated with each activity. It can be used by researchers, health care professionals, teachers and coaches, and fitness professionals in a variety of ways—including research, policy making, education, and interventions to encourage activity in youth ages 6 years and older. This

resource may also be useful to the child care community.

CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays

Join USDA's Team Nutrition initiative for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) [Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays](#), a free monthly training webinar series on hot topics related to the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. Webinars will be held on the third Thursday of every month from 2 to 2:30 PM ET. A Spanish-language webinar is held from 3 to 3:30 PM ET. The next webinar will be held on Thursday, January 18, 2018 on the topic of "Serving Milk in the CACFP." Visit the CACFP Halftime: Thirty on Thursdays [website](#) for more information.

Resources for Teachers and Providers

Supporting Children's Physical and Outdoor Play

Eastern CT State University has developed a series of [videos](#), funded in part by Head Start Body Start, demonstrating how to implement physical development in the classroom.

Stories in Motion

The Iowa Department of Education provides resources for including physical activity breaks, called "[Stories in Motion](#)." They are short stories that include action words which prompt bursts of physical activity. Utilize these stories in your classroom for short physical activity breaks.

The Adventures of Captain 5 A Day

Captain 5 A Day is a superhero who leads children on exciting nutrition and adventures to build motor skills and improve fruit and vegetable intake. Program activities are available at no-cost to Head Start and School Readiness preschool centers. Click [here](#) for more information.





Move for Thought

Move for Thought is a [resource](#) to increase physical activity opportunities for pre-K and Kindergarten. The strategies can be used to meet physical activity needs and improve fundamental gross motor skills. The kit was developed by Iowa State University as part of an Iowa Team Nutrition Grant (USDA Funded).

Let's Go! Child Care Toolkit

The Let's Go! Toolkit integrates physical activity standards and recommendations into child care programs that are based on their "5-2-1-0" message, which expresses the recommendations for children and adolescents: 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day, 2 hours of screen time or less, 1 hour of physical activity or more per day, and 0 sugar sweetened beverages each day. Click [here](#) and see strategy 4 for a list of PDF resources that provide tips on implementing physical activities in child care.

Get Moving Today! Physical Activity Calendar

The American Alliance for Health's Get Moving Today! [Calendar](#) provides teachers and families with different physical activity ideas for each day of the year!

Resources for Families

We Can! Get Active!

Are parents looking for some ideas to get their children active at home? This national movement, through the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, is designed to provide parents with resources to get their children active and moving throughout the day. This [link](#) offers tools and resources, guidelines, and "heathy habits" worksheets to support children and their family's efforts to incorporate more physical activity on a daily basis.

Go Noodle

Go Noodle is a website that turns screen time into active time, creates great family fun, and makes time spent at home healthier. Families can download fun, physically active games and exercises to do together. This [resource](#) can also be used in the classroom.

Indoor Play Spaces in Connecticut

Myconnecticutkids.com provides a [listing](#) of various indoor attractions that promote active living. Example attractions include an indoor mini golf and laser tag facility, an indoor play gym, and an indoor adventure center.



Policy Guidance & Research

Ensuring Children Grow Up at a Healthy Weight:

Supporting Emerging Research and Prevention Efforts in Connecticut

The Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut (CHDI) [Issue Brief 59](#) highlights CHDI obesity prevention projects, both past and present, funded by the Children's Fund of Connecticut (CFC). This funding has helped CFC and CHDI identify public policies that contribute to obesity prevention, test the effectiveness of messages promoting obesity prevention in infants and toddlers, and support breast feeding strategies for hospitals. The current round of funding was informed by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's [Feeding Guidelines for Infants and Young Toddlers: A Responsive Parenting Approach](#), which highlights new areas of research and practice in obesity prevention. The four new projects will test the effectiveness of innovations across several early childhood settings with a focus on improving early feeding practices in diverse socio-economic, racial, and ethnic groups. Solutions identified and tested will offer Connecticut policymakers, providers, and others opportunities to ensure children grow up at a healthy weight.

More Than Half Today's Children Expected to Be Obese at 35

The New England Journal of Medicine published a [report](#) by the School of Public Health in Boston that used a simulation model to estimate the risk of adult obesity at the age of 35 years for the current population of children in the United States. The researchers found that the models predicted that 57.3 percent of today's children will be obese at the age of 35 years, given the current level of childhood obesity; about half of the projected prevalence will occur during childhood.

Childcare Staff Behavior May Encourage Kids to Sample Healthier Food

The Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics published a [study](#) that indicates meal-time behaviors by childcare providers may encourage children to sample more nutritious foods. Specifically, children in daycare were more willing to taste greater numbers of nutritious foods when staff members sat with them and ate the same food, when the staff determined whether children were full before removing the plate, and when they talked about healthy food.

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