



# Childhood Obesity Prevention

## e-Bulletin

Spring 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.



## *This spring, help children grow up healthy!*



As the snow melts, the days grow longer and the sun shines brighter, spring is a good time to consider planting a vegetable garden for your child care program.

Gardens offer an interactive and engaging learning environment for young children to explore, experiment, and be physically active. [Studies](#) show that school gardens can increase fruit and vegetable knowledge, preference, and consumption among children. Gardening also builds teamwork skills and provides an opportunity for child care programs to increase family and community engagement.

Planting a garden doesn't need to be a daunting task. It should be a fun learning experience for everyone. If heading outdoors and planting a garden is outside of your comfort area, start small by planting an [indoor or container garden](#). Whatever you choose, remember that you do not need to be a gardening expert. Your time and dedication to teaching healthy habits are what really matters. This e-Bulletin provides nutrition and physical activity resources to promote healthy habits for life. Please share these resources with your colleagues and families.

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## What's New?

### Help Children Develop Healthy Eating Habits

Per the [regulations](#) that govern child care in Connecticut (Section 19a-79-6a), all licensed child care centers and group child care homes serving meals and/or snacks are required to follow nutrition standards established by the federal Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), even if they don't participate in CACFP. Although not required, unlicensed providers are encouraged to follow these standards as they support the development of healthy eating habits in young children. To learn more about the CACFP nutrition standards, please visit [www.uconnruddcenter.org/cacfp](http://www.uconnruddcenter.org/cacfp).

### Video: Incorporating Healthy Eating in Child Care

Sandusky YMCA in Ohio shares the steps they took to successfully create a healthier child care environment within their center. Moving to whole grains, eliminating flavored milks, eating family style, having a healthy food curriculum, and sending home recipes are just a few examples of the important transition they have made in implementing healthy food standards in a childcare setting. Check out the short [video](#) to learn more

## Resources for Teachers and Providers



### Let's Move - School Garden Checklist

Before you start a garden of your own, read and download this [step-by-step guide](#), which offers important information about how to safely grow your own fruits and vegetables with your students.

### Farm to Preschool Gardening Resources

This [website](#) provides preschool gardening resources compiled from farm to preschool programs around the country. Here you can find gardening best practices, checklists, produce guides, and much more!

### Department of Public Health (DPH) SNAP-Ed Program

The SNAP-Ed program provides teacher workshops designed to explore childhood nutrition concepts and a garden-based "[Grow it, Try it, Like it](#)" curriculum. Head Start and School Readiness Programs are eligible for services at no charge. Contact [Teresa Dotson](#) for more information.

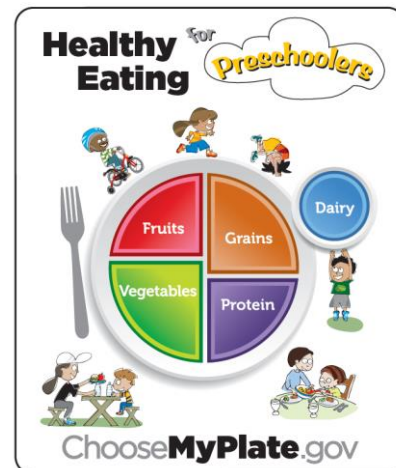
## Resources for Families

### MyPlate for Preschoolers

MyPlate is a healthy eating tool created by the federal government that provides practical nutrition information to consumers and educators. The website provides a variety of resources including meal planning tools, healthy cooking tips, and more. Visit [MyPlate](https://www.myplate.gov) for more information.

### Spring Food Fun for Kids

Spring is here! Get kids excited about healthy eating with this easy kid friendly [activity](#) that incorporates all five of the MyPlate food groups -- Fruits, Vegetables, Protein Foods, Dairy, and Grains!



### Farm Fresh Eating!

Farmers' markets are ready to sell fresh, local foods. Find out what's in season [here](#), and where to [find a farmers' market](#) near you!

## Policy Guidance & Research

### Water First For Your Thirst Toolkits and Implementation Resources



Visit the Connecticut 2-1-1 Child Care [website](#) to access obesity prevention resources including the [Water First For Your Thirst toolkit](#). This toolkit was designed to provide resources for child care providers to develop and implement policies and practices that support children's oral health and prevent obesity with a focus on increasing access to fluoridated drinking water. For a limited time, until supplies last, you may order a free set of implementation resources

which may include water pitchers, water jugs, cups, water bottles, or other promotional items. Please contact [Jennifer Vinci](#) for more information.

### 2017 State of Obesity: Better Policies for a Healthier America

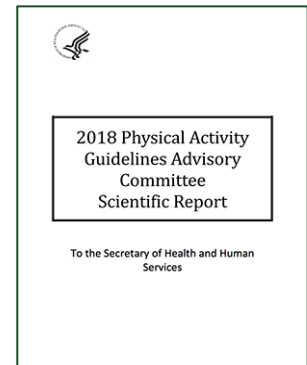
This 2017 report contains colorful and easy to access state obesity prevention policy profiles. The policy categories are Early Childhood, School, and Community. The Community category shows state rates of child food insecurity, overall food insecurity, and the percent of the state population utilizing SNAP. The report with its state-by-state rankings, policy briefs, and interactive maps is available on the State of Obesity [website](#).

## Early Care and Education Policies and Programs to Support Healthy Eating and Physical Activity: Best Practices and Changes Over Time

This [report](#) provides an updated evidence review of nutrition programs including the Child and Adult Care Food Program and State Child Care Licensing Standards, in addition to physical activity and screen time best practices.

### 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific Report

For the first time, the 2018 Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee Scientific [Report](#) demonstrates that regular physical activity provides health benefits to children as young as ages 3 to 5 years. A substantial increase in evidence has allowed the Committee to conclude that, in addition to the reduced risk of excessive gains in body weight, regular physical activity improves bone health in this young age group. These findings call attention to the importance of establishing healthy physical activity behaviors at an early age.



### The Office of Early Child Care Training and Technical Assistance: Data Explorer and State Profiles



A [tool](#) to explore data on various early care and education (ECE) topics is available from the Office of Early Care Training and Technical Assistance. The database contains various early care and education topics, such as demographic information, program participation and funding, CCDF subsidy program administration, program quality improvement activities, and professional development workforce initiatives. In addition to data, you can also find ECE

state profiles, QRIS state profiles (via QRIS compendium), and state licensing profiles.

#### Contact Us

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