



Childhood Obesity Prevention

e-Bulletin
Summer 2016

Dear Colleagues:

Obesity prevention begins early in life when children are still forming healthy behaviors. Implementing policies that support a healthy childcare 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 in an effort to provide information to assist early care and education programs in the promotion of healthier environments to support development and learning. In this issue, you will find information on the new [CACFP](#) guidelines, free resources for parents and teachers that promote fruit and vegetable consumption, as well as research and policy guidance pertinent to early childhood education.

June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month

Fruits and vegetables provide important nutrients essential for good health. Research continues to demonstrate that eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables lowers the risk of developing chronic conditions such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. The [MyPlate](#) food guidance system recommends Americans fill half their plates with fruits and vegetables at meals. With a wide variety of fruits and vegetables in season, summer is the perfect time of year to focus on eating more. This month, encourage the children and families you work with to fill their plates with fruits and vegetables.



What's New?

New Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Final Rule

The USDA released the final rule for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Participating centers and family child care homes must comply with the new meal standards by October 1, 2017. Young children will now receive meals with more whole grains, a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, and less added sugars and solid fats. The new meal patterns will improve access to healthy beverages, including low-fat and fat-free milk and water, and encourage breastfeeding.

One-Page Summaries

- [Infants](#)
- [Children and Adults](#)
- [Best Practices](#)

New Meal Standards Charts

- [Infants](#)
- [Children and Adults](#)
- [Best Practices](#)

USDA Team Nutrition MyPlate eBooks

The Two Bite Club and Discover MyPlate: Emergent Reader Mini Books are now available as eBooks on the Team Nutrition website! These **free** eBooks teach young children about the MyPlate food groups and include interactive features to test comprehension and make learning fun. These books are recommended for use with preschool or kindergarten age children

Resources for Teachers and Providers

Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate

This garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff introduces children to three fruits and three vegetables. The kit includes seven booklets featuring fruits and vegetables with fun activities through an imaginary garden. Use the kit to promote learning at home with fun parent/child activities and family-sized recipes that give tips for cooking with children.

The Adventures of Captain 5 A Day

Captain 5 A Day is a superhero who leads teachers, children and parents on exciting nutrition adventures to build skills and improve fruit and vegetable intake. The Adventures of Captain 5 A Day curriculum includes interactive music and lessons that enhance children's skills in literacy, math, science and physical development. All program activities are no-cost and available to Head Start and School Readiness preschool centers.

For more information contact:

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[Caring for Connecticut's Children Handbook](#)

This handbook includes information and best practices on key early childhood topics such as health; nutrition and physical activity; safety; and physical, intellectual, and emotional development. By presenting material in a user-friendly format and including tips, activities, and resources throughout, this series of handbooks is a valuable reference for all providers caring for young children.

[Let's Move Childcare Providers](#)

Learn more about the national Let's Move childcare initiative. Resources are available to support the initiative's five steps for helping young children learn healthy habits to prevent childhood obesity:

1. Increase physical activity
2. Limit screen time
3. Encourage healthy eating
4. Offer healthy beverages
5. Support infant feeding

Resources for Families

[We Can!® Resources for Your Family](#)

We Can! provides information and resources to help your family stay healthy. [The Healthy Weight Basics](#), [Eat Right](#), [Get Active](#), [Reduce Screen Time](#), and [Tools and Resources](#) sections of this website include useful information and tips created specifically for individuals, parents, caregivers, and families.

[MyPlate Kids' Place - ChooseMyPlate.gov](#)

Provides a tailored explanation of how to balance your family's meals and includes an interactive game for kids, an activity sheet, songs and videos.

[Farmers' Markets - Fresh Local Produce](#)

Fruits and vegetables that are in season have more flavor and are usually less expensive. Your local farmer's market is a great source of seasonal produce, and many of CT's local farmers' markets accept WIC and/or SNAP benefits. Click on the above link for a complete list of markets near you.

Policy Guidance & Research

[The Relationship Between Physical Activity and Diet and Young Children's Cognitive Development: A Systematic Review](#)

This research article reviews the evidence for cognitive benefits of physical activity in early childhood, suggests an association between diet in early childhood and later cognition, and states that health behaviors that prevent obesity could also promote children's cognition.

[Obesity Prevention Standards in State QRIS and Licensing Regulations](#)

Nemours Children's Health System Office of Policy & Prevention created a new technical assistance resource document summarizing how obesity prevention standards (healthy eating, breastfeeding, physical activity, and limited screen time) have been incorporated into state licensing and state Quality Rating and Improvement Systems.

[Association Between Age and Obesity Over Time](#)

Study finds a decline in obesity among 2-5 year olds. Ashley Wendell Kranjac, PhD, at Rice University in Houston, and Robert L. Wagmiller, PhD, at Temple University in Philadelphia, reported in Pediatrics that the obesity rate for 2-5-year old children was higher in 2003-2004, at 13%, than in 2011-2012, at 7%. In addition, older children were more likely to be obese in 2003-2004 but not in 2011-2012.

Stay Tuned

DPH will be recruiting 20 early care and education programs and mentors to participate in the 2016-2017 *I am Moving, I am Learning* Partnership in the summer of 2016. If you are interested in receiving an application when it is available, please feel free to contact one of the DPH staff listed below.

Contact Us

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