



Childhood Obesity Prevention

e-Bulletin
Winter 2016

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 in an effort to provide information to assist early care and education programs in creating healthier environments to support development and learning.

Staying Healthy & Active This Winter



As we make our way through the winter months, it is important to take steps to keep yourself and the families you work with healthy. The incidence of the flu and norovirus peak between the months of December and March. According to the CDC, an average of 20,000 children under the age of 5 are hospitalized annually due to influenza complications. Appropriate hand washing, following food safety guidelines, eating well and maintaining an adequate level of physical activity are all good ways to keep children and adults healthy throughout the season.

With the cold weather keeping many people inside, center administrators, educators and parents should encourage physical activity as opposed to sedentary screen time for children. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently updated their recommendations for screen time in young children. See below for more information.

What can early care and education professionals do to keep kids healthy and active?

- Ensure enough indoor space for jumping, rolling and dancing
- Create an “active” space in classrooms
- Reduce screen time
- Follow hand washing guidelines
- Practice food safety recommendations



What's New?

AAP Screen Time Guidelines

The National Center for Health Research states that very young children learn best by relating to live people and their interactions with them through moving and doing. Screen time has been linked to language delay and smaller vocabularies. More studies are uncovering a potential link between screen time and obesity due to inactivity and exposure to food marketing. Although research on this topic is still emerging, the AAP finds it important to present guidelines and recommendations on screen use in young children. The AAP policy statement offers an in depth review of the current literature related to electronic media use in young children (0 to 5 years of age).



A summary of the updated recommendations are outlined:

- **Under 18 months**
 - * Avoid digital media use
 - * Video-chat (i.e., FaceTime) with parental support is the exception
- **18 months – 2 years**
 - * Co-viewing is recommended, choosing high quality educational media/apps
 - * Treat the video like a book and discuss comparisons to the real world
 - * Avoid solo media viewing under the age of 2
- **2 years – 5 years**
 - * No more than 1 hour per day of high quality programming
 - * Caregivers should still consider co-viewing
 - * Help the child understand what they are seeing and apply it to the world around them
 - * Use quality children's education media like PBS and Sesame Workshop
- **6 years and older**
 - * Parents should determine the restriction and monitor the type of media
 - * Consider rules: no tech devices in bedroom, bathroom, or at dining table

United States Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

The National Physical Activity Plan Alliance released a report on physical activity in U.S. children. Key recommendations include:

- Schools should work to increase physical activity opportunities among youth and should be a key part of a national strategy to increase physical activity.
- Preschool and child care centers should enhance physical activity opportunities.
- To advance efforts to increase physical activity among youth, key research gaps should be addressed.
- Changes involving the built environment (such as safe outdoor and indoor recreation spaces) and similar sectors are promising, but need additional work.

Resources for Teachers and Providers

[The Child Care Health Advocate Online Course](#)

Northampton Community College is offering an online, 3 credit hour Child Care Health Advocate course, taught over 15 weeks. The course is for directors, lead teachers and family child care providers. Students are expected to be able to meet Standard 1.3.2.7 in Caring for Our Children 3rd edition, the National Health and Safety Standards for Early Care and Education, after completion of the course.

[Screen-Time Reduction Toolkit for Child Care Providers](#)

This toolkit comes from Michigan Healthy Child Care, a partner in the Michigan Healthy Communities Collaborative. The toolkit includes information about kids and screens, a letter that can be distributed to parents, screen-free activities and more.

[Hand Washing Tips for Child Care Providers](#)

Paying particular attention to proper hand washing is important to keep providers, children, and their families healthy through the winter months. Child care providers should review this resource and consider posting child-friendly graphics at each sink, if not already provided. Games, songs, and rewards can make hand washing a fun and enticing activity!

[No to Low Cost Ways to Promote Physical Activity](#)

The Iowa Department of Education, through a Team Nutrition grant, produced a series of low cost ways to promote and implement physical activity in the preschool setting. This resource includes a variety of low cost or no cost ideas to get kids moving such as creating physical activity tools from recycled and repurposed materials and active story time.

[Sample Physical Activity Daily Schedule](#)

Not sure how to fit physical activity into your classroom's busy schedule? Click on the above link for a sample physical activity schedule for both group child care and family child care programs. Also, see the link to the physical activity calendar listed under the family resources section of this eBulletin.

[Brush Up on Oral Health October 2016: Case Management in Head Start](#)

The National Center for Early Childhood Education and Wellness is pleased to share the October 2016 issue of *Brush Up on Oral Health*. In this issue, learn more about case management and how it can improve the oral health of children enrolled in Head Start. Also, find out how case managers and parents can work together to meet children's oral health needs. This issue includes a recipe for a healthy snack that can be made in the classroom or at home.

Resources for Families

[Developing a Family Media Plan](#)

When used thoughtfully & appropriately, media can enhance daily life. But when used inappropriately, media can displace many important activities such as face-to-face interaction, outdoor-play, exercise and sleep. This tool encourages families to make the best media choices for their child's development.

[Common Sense Media](#)

Common Sense Media helps families make smart media choices. They offer the largest, most trusted library of independent age-based and educational ratings and reviews for movies, games, apps, TV shows, websites, books, music and more!

[Get Moving Today Activity Calendar](#)

The American Alliance for Health's *Get Moving Calendar* provides families with a different physical activity idea for each of the 365 calendar days!

Policy Guidance & Research

[Evaluation of a Physical Activity Regulation for Child Care in Massachusetts](#)

The Institute of Medicine recommends that child care centers provide 15 minutes of light, moderate, and vigorous activity every hour to meet the 120 minute recommendation for an 8 hour day. This study highlights the findings in a recently conducted evaluation on the Massachusetts' 2010 regulation to include 60 minutes of light, moderate, and vigorous physical activity each day for children in child care in comparison to the neighboring state of Rhode Island, which does not have any such regulation on physical activity. This study can be helpful to demonstrate the tools and strategies to evaluate the level of physical activity in child care across the state of Connecticut.

[Early Care and Education State Indicator Report](#)

The CDC's Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity (DNPAO) developed this Early Care and Education (ECE) State Indicator Report to highlight state efforts to address and change childhood obesity in ECE. This report features the Spectrum of Opportunity which includes eleven changes ECE facilities can make to improve Nutrition, Physical Activity, Breastfeeding Support, and Reduction in Screen Time. Seven of the eleven areas are outlined in this report, emphasizing- Licensing, Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) and Professional Development.

[CDC Reports Modest Drop in Obesity Among 2-4 year old WIC Participants](#)

A new study was released from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), found that 34 states reported a modest decrease in obesity among young children enrolled in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) between 2010 and 2014. The percentage of obesity among 2-4 years olds participating in WIC decreased from 15.9 percent in 2010 to 14.5 percent in 2014.

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