

**EARLY CARE
& EDUCATION**



Increase the number of regulated sites (group and family child care) in the early care and education system implementing evidence-based and promising strategies to increase healthy eating and physical activity.

goal 3: early care & education

vision 2020:

Improved nutrition and physical activity among children (0-5 years old) through a change in early care and education provider practices and policies in place to support healthy eating and physical activity.

rationale:

Children 0-5 years old spend an average of 31 hours per week in regulated care. There are over 170,000 Wisconsin children in regulated care. Additionally, healthy eating and physical activity habits form early in life. Thus, work in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) system is important. To date,

the Wisconsin Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Initiative (WECOPI), a collaborative partnership effort, has conducted formative assessment through the use of focus groups, surveys, key informant interviews, and a literature review to understand the ECE system. Since 2008, WECOPI partners have been engaged in piloting programs, creating resources, and evaluating potential strategies to support obesity prevention efforts in ECE. In 2010, the State Legislature approved the creation and funding of a quality rating improvement system called YoungStar. YoungStar includes a wellness component, which includes nutrition and physical activity criteria. This is a first attempt at policy change to support healthy eating and physical activity.

EARLY CARE & EDUCATION STRATEGIES

strategy EC1: Increase supportive nutrition and physical activity environments in regulated care through state-level policy change.

WILL THIS...	IMPROVE NUTRITION	INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	REDUCE OBESITY
	Limited evidence, supported by expert opinion	Limited evidence, supported by expert opinion	Limited evidence, supported by expert opinion

strategy EC2: Improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served in regulated care settings.

WILL THIS...	IMPROVE NUTRITION	REDUCE OBESITY
	Some evidence	Limited evidence, supported by expert opinion

strategy EC3: Increase physical activity levels of children in regulated care.

WILL THIS...	IMPROVE NUTRITION	REDUCE OBESITY
	Some evidence	Limited evidence, supported by expert opinion

strategy EC4: Promote and sustain breastfeeding of infants in regulated care.

WILL THIS...	IMPROVE BREASTFEEDING	REDUCE OBESITY
	Scientifically supported	Scientifically supported

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strategy EC1

Increase supportive nutrition and physical activity environments in regulated care through state-level policy change.

Objective EC1.1:

By 2018, increase the number and strength of nutrition and physical activity-related criteria in the wellness component of YoungStar (Quality Rating Improvement System) from 2 to 4.

Objective EC1.2:

By 2018, increase the number of nutrition and physical activity-related indicators from 4 to 6 in licensing standards for both group and family child care centers.

suggested actions:

supportive policies

- Use licensing to support improved nutrition and physical activity environments
- Continue to evaluate how the wellness component of YoungStar can be strengthened related to breastfeeding, nutrition and physical activity
- Require nutrition and physical activity-related training for initial early care and education licensure
- Require nutrition and physical activity-related training for maintenance of licensure
- Develop and implement a local wellness policy within the child care site that supports breastfeeding, healthy food and beverages, and nutrition and physical education, and creates environments that help children learn healthy habits

infrastructure

- Use existing training structures for early care and education providers; disseminate nutrition and physical activity resources to early childhood organizations that support YoungStar
- Continue to support and expand existing resources and trainings for youth gardening; create a centralized organization of trainings, resources, and technical assistance for youth gardening
- Develop an award/recognition system that encourages providers to implement environmental and policy changes
- Connect existing community coalitions to efforts to create supportive nutrition and physical activity environments for 0-5-year-olds within early care and education settings and at the community level
- Complete formative assessment related to evidence- and practice-based nutrition and physical activity strategies for 0-2-year-olds
- Develop WECOPI sub-group focused on translating formative assessment into strategies for parent-engagement

resources and training

- Disseminate and train providers on Active Early, Healthy Bites, and 10 Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care
- Disseminate the What Works in Early Care and Education and the What Works in Afterschool to providers
- Develop supportive licensing commentary related to nutrition and physical activity strategies
- Collect and share lessons learned, materials, and trainings for teachers/providers to assist in supporting healthier environments
- Use Wisconsin's existing technical consultant structure, specifically the Registry and credit-based courses at technical and four-year colleges

local implementation

- Identify and implement steps of coordination and funding for the necessary resources to improve the nutrition and physical activity practices in the early care and education setting
- Implement and evaluate potential strategies from Active Early and Healthy Bites guides in group child care and family child care settings with special attention to inclusion and cultural competencies
- Review and evaluate data from YoungStar to determine if components are effective
- Use existing WECOPI structure to coordinate and evaluate efforts to create supportive nutrition and physical activity environments in the early care and education setting

strategy EC2

Improve the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served in regulated care settings.

Objective EC2.1:

By 2018, at least 75% of group child care and 60% of family child care sites participating in the DPI-USDA Wellness Grant have adopted voluntary nutrition standards for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal pattern. (Baseline will be established in 2013)

suggested actions:

supportive policies

- Establish voluntary nutrition standards for CACFP meal pattern
- Establish best practice standards for nutrition in licensing

infrastructure

- Create a wellness toolkit which will include nutrition and physical activity strategies for early care and education (Active Early and Healthy Bites)
- Use existing training structures for early care and education providers; disseminate nutrition and physical activity resources to early childhood organizations that support YoungStar
- Continue to support and expand existing resources and trainings for youth gardening; create a centralized organization of trainings, resources, and technical assistance for youth gardening

goal 3: early care & education

resources and training

- Ensure training development and dissemination related to healthy menu planning for professionals who are preparing food for children
- Disseminate and train providers on Active Early and Healthy Bites
- Disseminate the What Works in Early Care and Education to providers
- Encourage the use of USDA Team Nutrition's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*

local implementation

- Work with group and family child care providers as they implement applicable portions of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (2010 Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act) related to the CACFP Meal Program

strategy EC3

Increase physical activity levels of children in regulated care through intentional teacher-led and unstructured physical activity.

Objective EC3.1:

By 2018, increase the required daily minutes of teacher-led physical activity time for children in regulated care from 0 to at least 60 minutes.

Objective EC3.2:

By 2018, increase the required daily minutes of unstructured physical activity time for children in regulated care from 0 to at least 60 minutes.

suggested actions:

supportive policies

- Explore policy concepts related to reducing TV and screen time
- Establish best practice standards for physical activity in licensing

infrastructure

- Create a toolkit which will include nutrition and physical activity strategies for early care and education (Active Early and Healthy Bites)
- Use existing training structures for early care and education providers; disseminate nutrition and physical activity resources to early childhood organizations that support YoungStar
- Continue to support and expand existing resources and trainings for youth gardening; create a centralized organization of trainings, resources, and technical assistance for youth gardening

resources and training

- Define teacher-led/structured and unstructured physical activity; communicate to providers and early childhood organizations
- Disseminate and train providers on Active Early, Healthy Bites and What Works in Early Care and Education to providers
- Develop supportive licensing commentary related to physical activity strategies
- Provide technical assistance to providers on the use of circle time, transition time, outdoor play, etc., to increase physical activity

local implementation

- Evaluate and disseminate strategies and resources from the Active Early project
- Work with group and family child care providers as they implement applicable portions of the 2010 Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act

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strategy EC4

Promote and sustain breastfeeding of infants in regulated care.

Objective EC4.1:

By 2018, increase the adoption and use of Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers. (Baseline will be established in 2013)

suggested actions:

supportive policies

- Require breastfeeding-related training for early care and education providers caring for infants and support of breastfeeding mothers
- Incorporate criteria related to breastfeeding support into YoungStar

infrastructure

- Disseminate breastfeeding information and resources to state, regional, and local early care and education associations that provide training and support for providers

resources and training

- Develop a curriculum and training package to support the Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care
- Disseminate and provide training for early care and education providers on the Ten Steps to Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers

local implementation

- Participate in training and education to support breastfeeding women and children
- Create an environment that promotes and supports breastfeeding within the child care center

OTHER RESOURCES

Active Early and Healthy Bites

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/Childcare/index.htm

What Works in Early Care and Education

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/P0/P00232.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Children & Families

202 Child Care Certification Rule with Commentary Manual

www.dcf.wi.gov/childcare/certification/pdf/commentarymanual.pdf

Got Dirt? Garden Toolkit

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/FoodSystem/Gardening/Index.htm

Got Veggies? A Youth Garden-Based Nutrition Education Curriculum

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/FoodSystem/Gardening/Index.htm

Ten Steps to a Breastfeeding Friendly Child Care Centers

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/Childcare/BFFChildCare.pdf

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Child and Adult Care Food Program

http://fns.dpi.wi.gov/fns_cacfp1

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keeping active at the Child and Family Center at Madison College

The Child and Family Center at Madison College has made great strides in keeping their kids active and moving throughout the day. Lisa Jones, a teacher at the center, and the staff keep a collection of physical activity ideas with them at all times to ensure they always know how to encourage the children to keep moving. Since the Child and Family Center increased the amount of daily teacher-led physical activity, teachers have noted that they need to discipline children less often, a positive development that they attribute to the “controlled chaos” of regular active play. When asked about the importance of teacher-led physical activity, Lisa said, *“Teachers need to participate in the activities, too. You have got to get up and move with them. When kids see you doing the activities, they are more likely to get up and move with you, not to mention the impact it has on our own health.”* “I dislike exercise, but I love to play,” Lisa added.

making nutrition happen at Cradles 2 Crayons Childcare Center

For Heather Brantner and the rest of the staff at Cradles 2 Crayons Childcare in Durand, WI, supplying children with nutritious meals and snacks is essential. Though preparing healthy meals was not a priority at Cradles 2 Crayons initially, Heather and her staff began incorporating healthier snacks and meals at the center after a parent voiced concerns. Since then, they have stopped serving fried food, switched to one percent milk, and started offering the children water and fresh fruit instead of juice. For ingredients, Heather makes weekly trips to the local farmers’ market and hopes to start a garden at the center in the future.

Though the response to these changes has been positive overall, incorporating healthy, fresh meals at the center is not without challenges. Space and money constraints limit what meals the staff can provide. And while some children jump at the chance to try new foods, others are not as adventurous. *“It takes about seven attempts for a child to try a new food and decide if they like it, so persistence is key”*, Heather says. *“We also send daily notes home with the kids, saying what foods were introduced, what was tried or not tried, and whether they ate it or not.”* Another strategy the staff employs is to eat along with the kids during mealtime and come up with stories about the different fruits and vegetables to make eating them more exciting. *“You’d be surprised what they like – some kids tried kiwi and papaya and ended up really liking it”*, Heather notes. The parents also appreciate the center’s measures to improve nutrition, and some of them have begun asking for recipes from the staff so they can prepare similar meals at home.