

North Dakota Department of Health Makes Healthy Living Easier for Young Children

by: Kim Crawford, Cheri Kiefer, and Shonda Wild

SUMMARY

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) and Child Care Aware of North Dakota are working to increase access to healthy eating and physical activity options for young children. Each year, the team works with 25 new child care facilities to set up healthy program initiatives. Each facility works with a Child Care Aware consultant to complete a best practice assessment and make improvements to nutrition and physical activity options. As a result, 1,473 young children have access to improved physical activity or healthy eating environments.



CHALLENGE

According to North Dakota WIC program statistics, approximately 30% of children aged 2 to 4 years who participate in WIC programs are overweight or obese. WIC serves about 65% of the state's resident births. In addition, obtaining child care can be a struggle in North Dakota. Many parents join long waiting lists as soon as they are pregnant in hopes of finding a licensed provider. Therefore, competition among providers is low,

and there is little incentive for licensed centers to make healthy eating or physical activity changes.

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IS KEY

To learn more about Child Care Aware of North Dakota, visit <http://ndchildcare.org/>.

This project is supported by the State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health cooperative agreement (DP13-1305).

"At the center I worked with, parents were very excited that the infant or toddler classrooms were going to start offering healthier snack options. Before LMCC, the staff offered cookies, chips, fruit snacks, and other not so healthy snack options."

- ECE Consultant

Contact

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SOLUTION

NDDoH is partnering with Child Care Aware of North Dakota, a nonprofit organization that helps families find quality, affordable child care. Their aim over 4 years is to help 100 early childcare and education facilities (ECEs) improve their healthy eating and physical activity options for young children. Using the Let's Move! Child Care Checklist as best practice standards, as well as Let's Move! Child Care educational resources and tools, ECE providers identify and make healthy eating and physical activity improvements. Two examples of these changes could include increasing active play time and serving children fruits and vegetables during mealtime.

RESULTS

From 2014-2016, 48 ECEs made a nutrition and/or physical activity improvement that encourages children to eat healthier foods or drinks or be more active during the day. These changes will benefit 1,473 young children.

Nutrition environment improvements:

- 29 ECEs now serve meals family style to encourage a healthy mealtime environment and help children learn to enjoy healthy foods.
- 22 ECEs limit fried foods such as tater tots, potato chips, or other pre-fried foods to once a month.
- 11 ECEs made self-serve water stations more accessible to children in and outside of facilities.

Physical activity practice improvements:

- 16 ECEs now allot 60-90 minutes of active indoor or outdoor play time every day to toddlers.
- 30 ECEs are providing 120 minutes of active indoor or outdoor play time every day to preschoolers.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human
Services
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Prevention
NCCDPHP**

Contact CDC

<http://www.cdc.gov/cdc-info/requestform.html>

Web site

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>

The findings and conclusions in this success story are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official position of the funding agencies or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

NDDoH and Child Care Aware of North Dakota will continue to support 25 new ECE sites each year. Efforts will continue to expand into more rural areas. Past and current ECE providers receive a Child Care Alive e-newsletter on a monthly basis that encourages Healthy Living best practices. If an ECE reaches out to Child Care Aware of North Dakota after participating in the project, they will continue to provide technical assistance to them face to face, over the phone, or through email. NDDoH is also exploring ways to determine program sustainability and expand to other ECEs.

National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
NCCDPHP



Success Stories

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