



Early Childhood On-Line SNAP-Ed Toolkit

Early care and education (ECE) settings such as child care centers, family child care homes, and preschools, are ideal venues for engaging young children in healthy eating and physical activity because the children in these settings are often there on a daily basis for several hours at a time, and in many cases for full days. Additionally, it is during the early years, from birth to age five, when many future habits are developed, including nutrition and physical activity habits.

Creating and maintaining effective nutrition education and physical activity programs in ECE settings involves engaging health champions such as family child care providers, preschool teachers, center directors, parents, and other adults; and using developmentally appropriate, practice- and/or evidence-based resources.

This Early Childhood On-Line Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed) Toolkit was designed to help Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Branch (NEOPB)-funded local health departments (LHDs) working with early care and education providers, other relevant professionals, and parents to find quickly the resources they need to support and promote healthy eating and physical activity in ECE settings. Though organized as resources to help assess and plan, implement, and evaluate SNAP-Ed efforts, many of the resources support functions in more than one category. NOTE: Implementation resources are further identified by their practical uses (i.e., activities and games, and curriculum and lessons).

Assess and Plan

Assessment tools and activities provide a “snapshot” of the current ECE environment and practices, as well as identify areas where changes are potentially needed; thereby providing a foundation for goal-setting or planning based on those areas. Planning should address assessment areas identified for change through the development of an implementation plan with specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-specific (SMART) objectives. Implementation plans should also identify essential tasks, responsible persons, and timelines.

Creating Healthy Opportunities in Child Care Environments (CHOICE)

<http://www.cocokids.org/child-health-nutrition/c-h-o-i-c-e-toolkit-self-assessment-questionnaire/>

Self-assessment tool and best practices, as well as links to resources to help assess ECE nutrition and physical activity environments and use best practices to develop and implement written nutrition and physical activity policies and procedures.

Let's Move Child Care Checklist Quiz

<https://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org/filebox/letsmove/childcareclist.pdf>

The Let's Move! Child Care Checklist Quiz is based on the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program and addresses the five goal categories of the Let's Move Initiative for early care and education: physical activity, screen time, food, beverages, and infant feeding.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child-Care (NAP SACC)

<http://www.napsacc.org>

Self-assessment, goal-setting, and action planning tools combined with workshops and technical assistance tools, used together to enhance child care policies, practices, and environments. The NAP SACC Self-Assessment Instrument is also available here:

<http://www.iibnpa.org/content/supplementary/1479-5868-4-29-s1.pdf>

RE-AIM Early Childhood

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Documents/RE-AIMEarlyChildhood.pdf>

Planning and evaluation guide that illustrates the five dimensions of the RE-AIM framework: **R**each, **E**ffectiveness, **A**doption, **I**mplementation, and **M**aintenance. The framework is useful for planning new interventions, adapting existing interventions, and designing evaluations that assess the potential public health impact of interventions.

Implement

In addition to a clear, written plan informed by assessment and planning activities, a variety of practice- and/or evidence-based resources are available to support the implementation of nutrition and physical activity efforts in ECE settings.

Activities and Games

Potter the Otter/Rethink Your Drink

<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/RethinkYourDrink-Resources.aspx>

Rethink Your Drink Potter the Otter materials include posters, tip sheets, postcards, table tents, stickers, puppets, and activity sheets. Materials are available by on-line ordering.

It's Picnic Day Potter!

Updated Book <http://www.scholastic.com/first5/pdfbook/> (the only Potter the Otter book currently approved for use with SNAP-Ed funding)

Common Core-ready materials for California preschool and kindergarten classrooms

http://www.scholastic.com/first5/pdf/first5_prekk_ptg_bk.pdf

http://www.scholastic.com/first5/pdf/first5_prekk_twp.pdf

Curriculum or lessons

Preschools SHINE (developed by the California Department of Education)

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/preschoolshine.asp>

A statewide effort that recognizes preschool programs that demonstrate optimal health, nutrition, and physical activity policies and practices that support children's health and readiness to learn

CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health)-Early Childhood

<http://catchusa.org/cec.htm>

This curriculum features 19 classroom lessons to encourage healthy eating and activity. Parent Tip Sheets (in English and Spanish) provide coloring activities, additional information and recipe ideas. Also includes hand puppets to use while reading stories in the catch curriculum.

Color Me Healthy: preschoolers moving and eating healthy

<http://www.colormehealthy.com/>

Color Me Healthy is a program developed to reach children ages four and five with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. The kit includes CD with music activities, parent newsletters in English and Spanish, and 12 circle time lessons.

Farm to School Curricula*

<http://www.farmpreschool.org/curricula.html>

This resource is a list of nutrition and/or garden-based education curricula that is utilized by Farm to Preschool programs throughout the US.

Farm to Preschool Harvest of the Month Curriculum

http://www.farmpreschool.org/documents/FarmpreK_Curriculum_1Year_2013.pdf

The Farm to Preschool program is designed for preschool-age children in any type of early care and education setting. The program is designed to teach children where our food comes from and why gardening and locally grown food is important. The lessons can be used to connect parents to what their children are learning and how these experiences can be continued at home.

Food for Thought (developed by the California Department of Education)

<http://www.californiahealthykids.org/product/8523>

Food for Thought is a nutrition education curriculum for preschoolers, structured around five units-Fall Fruits and Vegetables, Winter Fruits and Vegetables, Go-Grains, Power up with Proteins, and Spring Snacking. There are 32 lessons in the curriculum, each featuring a nutrition activity and integrating educational domains such as language arts, mathematics and science concepts.

Grow Up Healthy and Active

<http://www.cocokids.org/child-health-nutrition/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/11/cc-healthnutrition-growuphealthyandactive.pdf>

The “I Want to Grow Up Healthy and Active, So Please...” handout gives parents and other care providers physical activity guidelines for children from a child’s perspective.

Harvest of the Month

<http://www.harvestofthemonth.cdph.ca.gov/>

Harvest of the Month is an initiative of the California Department of Public Health that features ready-to-go tools and resources to support healthy lifestyle habits like eating fruits and vegetables every day. Resources include educator, family and community newsletters, and menu slicks all organized by month, listing seasonal fruits and vegetables.

Helping Kids Eat Well and Be Active

<http://www.cocokids.org/child-health-nutrition/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2013/11/Bulletin-Board-Toolkit.pdf>

This early childhood bulletin board resource contains information on important points to consider for the creation of bulletin boards; it includes nine sample themes, with ideas for handouts and discussion points to use with parents.

Neat Solutions*

<http://www.neatsolutions.com/free-lessons.html>

Free nutrition and health education materials for parents and educators.

USDA Discover My Plate Nutrition Education for Kindergarten

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate>

Discover *My Plate* is fun and inquiry-based nutrition education that fosters the development of healthy food choices and physically active lifestyles during a critical developmental and learning period for children in kindergarten.

USDA Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring My Plate

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it>

Grow It, Try It, Like It! Nutrition Education Kit Featuring My Plate is a garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to: three fruits - peaches, strawberries, and cantaloupe, and three vegetables - spinach, sweet potatoes, and crookneck squash.

USDA My Plate for Preschoolers

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html>

My Plate for Preschoolers is a section of the My Plate website that assists parents and early care and education professionals in helping preschoolers eat well, be active, and be healthy. Topics covered include developing healthy eating habits, picky eating, food safety, meal patterns, and more.

USDA Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-and-wellness-tips-young-children-provider-handbook-child-and-adult-care-food-program>

This handbook was developed by USDA to help child care providers. It addresses wellness recommendations for children ages 2 - 6. The handbook contains a series of tip sheets with ideas for hands-on activities and practical application covering a variety of relevant topics including, but not limited to, ways to build a healthy plate, promoting water consumption, limiting screen time, and physical activity.

USDA SNAP-Ed Connection Resource Library

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov/resource-library-0>

This online library includes links to quality information to aid in delivering SNAP-Ed, including resources, referrals and recipes.

Evaluate or Re-Assess

Evaluation or re-assessment can provide information about what's working, what's not working, and the extent to which desired changes have taken hold. In many cases a basic re-assessment can be completed using the same tools used during the initial assessment (See resources identified in the Asses and Plan, as well as the Other Resources segment of this toolkit).

Other Resources

Best Practices in Nutrition Education for Low Income Audiences (developed by Colorado State University)

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov/snap/CSUBestPractices.pdf>

Addresses best practices within five domains: Program Design, Program Delivery, Educator Characteristics, and Educator Training and Evaluation.

California Preschool Curriculum Framework Volume 2

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psframeworkvol2.pdf>

The framework takes an integrated approach to early learning and describes how curriculum planning considers the connections between different domains as children engage in teacher-guided learning activities (see Chapter 3-Physical Development and Chapter 4-Health).

California Preschool Learning Foundations Volume 2

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/cd/re/documents/psfoundationsvol2.pdf>

The foundations outline key knowledge and skills that most children can achieve when provided with the kinds of interactions, instruction, and environments shown by research to promote early learning and development (see Foundations in Physical Development and Health).

Let's Move Child Care

<http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/welcome.html>

The website of the Let's Move Initiative for early care and education, which focuses on the following goal categories: physical activity, screen time, food, beverages, and infant feeding.

SNAP-Ed Interventions Toolkit for States

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov/snap/SNAP-EdInterventionsToolkit.pdf>

The SNAP-Ed Strategies and Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for states to provide evidence-based policy, systems, and environmental change resources for child care, school, community, and family settings and describes how to evaluate them. The child care section is on p. 8-13.

Recommended strategies for child care settings (excerpt, p.8):

Nutrition

- *Develop, implement, and evaluate food and beverage policies for child care settings that meet United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Let's Move! Child Care (LMCC), or American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) standards*
- Encourage child care center and student participation in Federal food and nutrition assistance programs (CACFP, WIC, and SNAP)
- Support breastfeeding in child care
- Improve capacity of child care providers and food service staff in nutrition education and healthy meal planning and food preparation
- Develop, implement, and evaluate child care gardens
- Start and expand Farm to Child Care programs
- Promote access to drinking water
- Establish strong child care wellness and education programs and policies consistent with LMCC
- Support development of wellness councils
- Provide parent education through the setting
- Encourage parent engagement and involvement in menu planning, field trips, and classroom activities that support and encourage healthy eating

Physical Activity

- Develop, implement, and evaluate physical activity policies and environments that meet USDA, CDC, LMCC, or AAP standards
- Limit screen time
- Develop, implement, and evaluate active transport programs
- Establish strong child care wellness educational programs and policies consistent with LMCC
- Improve capacity of child care providers to provide children with opportunities for physical activity throughout the day, including outside play when possible

- Support development of child care wellness councils
- Provide parent education through the child care setting
- Encourage partnerships with community organizations (YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs) to bring more structured and unstructured physical activities into the environment
- Organize family activity days or celebrations that encourage physical activity
- Support child care providers to become more active through staff wellness policies and activities

*SNAP-Ed funded Local Health Departments should contact their assigned NEOPB Project Officer for approval prior to using resources from this site.

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