

Healthy Eating, Active Play Project and Results

Since 2014, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) and Child Care Aware of North Dakota (CCAND) have partnered together to reach out to Early Care and Education facilities (ECEs) and provide technical assistance toward improving their nutrition and physical activity environments for the children they serve. This work has been funded under a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention titled “*State Public Health Actions to Prevent and Control Diabetes, Heart Disease, Obesity, and Associated Risk Factors and Promote School Health (1305)*”. This project is known by ECEs as the “Healthy Eating, Active Play” project.

Over the course of four years, CCAND consultants worked with a total of 105 ECEs to rate their program’s status on specific nutrition and physical activity best practices using the “*Let’s Move! Child Care Checklist*” (LMCC). After completing an initial LMCC, ECEs identified at least one nutrition and one physical activity best practice to work on over a few months’ time. ECEs completed a second LMCC to track changes made.

This project has had a positive impact on nutrition and physical activity environments in ND ECEs and the health behaviors of the children they serve. Of the 105 ECEs targeted, 103 ECEs made progress on 465 physical activity or nutrition best practices, 320 (69%) of which were fully implemented. Below is a table listing each item on the LMCC, how many ECEs had each best practice in place at baseline, how many made progress, and how many fully implemented these best practices.

Item on Let’s Move Childcare Checklist	ECEs who had this FULLY in place at baseline	ECEs who made progress	ECEs who FULLY implemented this
Drinking water is visible and available inside and outside for self-serve	59% (n = 62)	4% (n = 4)	28% (n = 29)
100% fruit juice is limited to no more than 4-6 oz. per day per child and parents are encouraged to support this limit	54% (n = 57)	5% (n = 5)	34% (n = 36)
Sugary drinks, including fruit drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea, and soda, are never offered	97% (n = 102)	0% (n = 0)	2% (n=2)
Children 2 years and older are served only 1% or skim/non-fat milk (unless otherwise directed by the child’s health provider)	84% (n = 88)	1% (n = 1)	10% (n = 11)
Fruit (not juice) and/or a vegetable is served to toddlers and preschoolers at every meal (French fries, tater tots, and hash browns don’t count as vegetables)	71% (n = 75)	8% (n = 8)	16% (n = 17)
French fries, tater tots, hash browns, potato chips, or other fried or pre-fried potatoes are offered to toddlers and preschoolers no more than once a month (Baked fries are okay)	40% (n = 42)	10% (n = 10)	30% (n = 31)
Chicken nuggets, fish sticks, and other fried or pre-fried forms of frozen and breaded meats or fish are offered to toddlers and preschoolers no more than once a month	44% (n = 46)	9% (n = 9)	21% (n = 22)

All meals to preschoolers are served family style so that children are encouraged to serve themselves with limited help	19% (n = 20)	31% (n = 33)	18% (n = 19)
Breastfeeding mothers are provided access to a private room for breastfeeding or pumping, other than a bathroom, with appropriate seating and privacy	84% (n = 88)	0% (n = 0)	4% (n = 4)
Preschoolers, including children with special needs, are provided with 120 minutes or more of active play time every day, both indoor and outdoor (for half-day programs, 60 minutes or more is provided for active play every day)	36% (n = 38)	10% (n = 10)	43% (n = 45)
We strive to limit total screen time (e.g., TV and DVD viewing, computer use) to no more than 30 minutes for preschoolers at child care per week or never, and we work with parents/caregivers to ensure that children have no more than 1-2 hours per day (for half-day programs, we strive to limit total screen time to no more than 15 minutes per week or never)	45% (n = 47)	18% (n = 19)	12% (n = 13)
Parents of preschoolers are provided screen time reduction and/or media literacy education such as special programs, newsletters, or information sheets, 2 or more times per year	5% (n = 5)	32% (n = 34)	48% (n = 50)
Toddlers, including children with special needs, are provided with 60-90 minutes or more of active play time every day, both indoor and outdoor (for half-day programs, 30 minutes or more is provided for active play every day)	70% (n = 73)	1% (n = 1)	22% (n = 23)
Screen time for toddlers and infants is limited to no more than 3-4 times per year or is never allowed	46% (n = 48)	10% (n = 11)	13% (n = 14)
Short supervised periods of tummy time are provided for all infants, including those with special needs several times each day	88% (n = 92)	0% (n = 0)	4% (n = 4)