

Strategy #4 - Early Care and Education Nutrition Standards

Expected Outcomes:

1. Increased number of ECEs that implement nutrition standards
2. Increased ECE nutrition standards

Priority Population: Low socioeconomic status

The Community and Clinical Connections for Prevention and Health Branch will collaborate with state and local partners to **implement and integrate nutrition standards into state-wide ECE systems** by:

- A. Become a NC Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Designated Program,
- B. Implement referral policies to help families connect with nutrition assistance programs (e.g., WIC, SNAP),
- C. Implement Farm to ECE,
- D. Support state efforts to mitigate the impacts of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on healthy behaviors related to nutrition,
- E. Engage in training, TA and coaching models to support the implementation of NC child care regulations related to nutrition,
- F. Distribute nutrition resources for ECE

Target Settings: Child care centers and family child care homes enrolled in NC's subsidized child care program

Recommended Partners:

smart start partnerships for children • head start programs (early, regional, migrant/seasonal, American Indian) • child care health consultants • health organizations (e.g. hospitals, pediatric offices) • mental health professionals • NC Child Care Resource and Referral Council • ECE technical assistance providers • women, infants and children (WIC) programs • department of social services (DSS) • Children's Developmental Services Agency (CDSA) • Go NAP SACC Coordinators • Prevent Child Abuse NC • family child care homes • child care centers • academic institutions (colleges and or universities) • nutrition professionals • lactation consultants •

Health Equity Planning Principals: Disparities in healthy development start early in life, and far too many are the result of social and economic inequities that are disproportionately experienced by children. Healthy equity within ECE settings requires concerted and intentional activity to address issues of diversity and disparity. It requires the engagement and support of families and young children and includes their voices in design and delivery of services and supports. ECE applicable projects should address health equity through:

1. Build or enhance early childhood systems
2. Expand health's role in wellness and prevention and population health
3. Close disparities in health and well-being by race, place, and income
4. Develop more culturally and linguistically responsive and inclusive systems
5. Educate and advocate and mobilize to produce policy change

ECE Milestones:

1. Convene a coalition
2. Complete ECE assessment
3. Develop an Action Plan
4. Accomplish activities proposed in Action Plan
5. Produce or use existing promotional materials and messages to support coalition.
6. Follow up assessment

Examples of the types of specific activities that can be used to implement Nutrition Strategy #4:

- A. A child care center worked with home improvement store Lowes, who provided supplies and labor to build gardens in the child care center. The child care center and Lowes designed garden areas that were appropriate for all children in the program. Food from the garden were used in taste-tests, art and science projects, and even developed a mini-farmers market. People from the local hospital would visit the center to purchase vegetables. The money raised was used to supply the gardens with plants and seeds for the following year.
- B. To assure parents were provided with numerous opportunities to gain nutrition knowledge in a center where 35 different languages are spoken, a child care center put in place bilingual staff and a contract with a local interpretation organization so that nutrition counseling could be made available to all families. This included the referral of families to nutrition assistance programs.

Resources:

- A. ACEs Too High - acestoohigh.com
- B. Breastfeeding-Friendly Designation - nutritionnc.com/breastfeeding/bf-childcare.htm
- C. Caring for Our Children: Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education Programs - nrckids.org/CFOC/Childhood_Obesity
- D. Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) - cefs.ncsu.edu
- E. Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University - developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress
- F. Child and Adult Care Food Program: Farm to CACFP - nutritionnc.com/snp/farm.htm
- G. Child and Adult Care Food Program Training Tools - fns.usda.gov/cacfp-training-tools
- H. Division of Child Development and Early Education - ncchildcare.ncdhhs.gov
- I. First 2000 Days - first2000days.org
- J. Go NAP SACC - gonapsacc.org
- K. Health Kids, Health Future - healthykidshealthyfuture.org
- L. NC Child Care Health and Safety Resource Center - healthychildcarenc.org
- M. Shape NC - smartstart.org/shape-nc-home
- N. The Center for Training and Research Translation (Center TRT) - centertrt.org/?p=find_strategies