



Health Services Newsletter

Healthy Active Living

About 1/3 of children who enter Head Start are overweight or obese. Health Managers can support and enhance the healthy active living initiatives Head Start programs provide children and their families. Many of the health specific Head Start Program Performance Standards are designed to encourage healthy active living habits such as family style meals, regular physical activity, and healthy nutrition.

Did you know children assume the eating habits of their family by the age of 2? Helping families eat healthier and move more can affect their physical health throughout their lifetime. Many of your responsibilities as a health manager already encourage families to adopt healthier lifestyles. Consider your current program activities and how you might bolster the support you provide children and their families to build healthier lives.

Things to consider:

Family style meals: Provide training for teachers about the importance of family style meals, appropriate serving sizes, and skills to effectively encourage children to try new foods. Encourage families to practice these skills at home.

Physical activity: Partner with program staff and parents to **find safe ways to add active play during their child's day. Help families find ways to play at home that don't involve screen time.**

Nutrition Assessment: Ensure your assessments are accurate by providing training to staff and families about appropriate serving sizes.

Nutrition Education: Does your nutrition education incorporate basic healthy active living strategies? Do you model healthy habits by serving healthy foods and drinks and creating movement breaks during trainings?



Preschoolers who are overweight or obese are 5 times more likely as normal weight children to be overweight or obese as adults. - CDC Vital Signs

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FOR YOUR FAMILY NEWSLETTER

YOU CAN TAILOR THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO INCLUDE IN YOUR FAMILY NEWSLETTER:

Healthy Active Living

It is important to help your child build healthy habits now to make sure they continue to grow healthy. Some simple ideas:

- **5 fruits and vegetables a day.** Go for the rainbow. Each month, pick a color from the rainbow and try to eat a new fruit or veggie of that color (green, purple, orange, yellow, red). It's a great way for little ones to learn colors while you're all eating healthy.
- **2 hours or less of screen time a day.** A great way to cut down on screen time is to make a "no television (or computer) while eating" rule.
- **1 hour or more of physical activity a day.** An hour of active play might seem like a lot but you don't have to do it all at one time. Try being active for 10–15 minutes several times each day.
- **Drink 0 sugar sweetened drinks.. Replace soda pop, sports drinks, and even 100% juice with milk or water.** Think plain water is too boring? Try adding a fruit slice (like orange) for natural flavor.

SUPPORTING STAFF

There is abundant data and research discussing the physical and psychological risks for overweight or obese children. However, the data can be overwhelming to families as well as staff. Instead, focus on simple strategies to encourage families to build healthy habits into their child's lives as early as possible. Encourage all Head Start staff to use the 5,2,1,0 framework when talking with families. These simple strategies have been shown to make the biggest health impact. Help families choose small, incremental health goals they can easily build into bigger ones. It is easy for families to feel overwhelmed but gradually building on small successes can create long term effects.



Eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day.



Keep screen time (like TV, video games, computer) down to 2 hour or less a day.

***Children younger than 2 should not be exposed to screen time.**



Get 1 hour or more of physical activity every day.



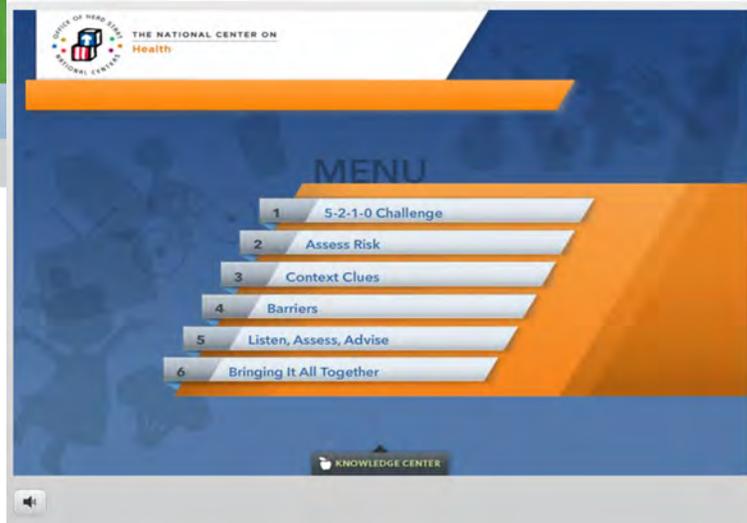
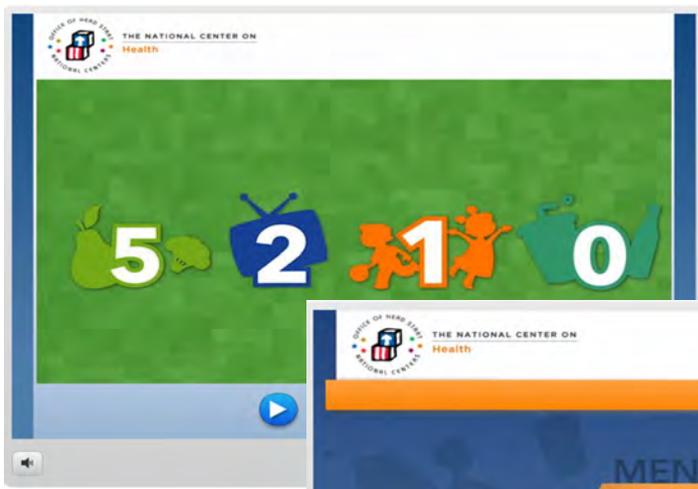
Drink 0 sugar-sweetened drinks. Replace soda pop, sports drinks, and even 100% juice with milk or water.

Age 0-5 is a critical window to shape healthy habits.

Contact National Center on Health staff to order your free copy of the Growing Healthy resources. The Growing Healthy Flipchart, Healthy Eating tipsheet, and 5,2,1,0 tearpad.

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ENGAGING FAMILIES

Families are integral to successful healthy active living program activities. Partner with families on menu planning, nutrition education, building nutrition assessments, and family partnership agreements. Provide training for families and parent committee members about 5,2,1,0 including basic nutrition and physical activities needs for children.

Remember, when partnering with families:

- Provide actionable strategies families can gradually implement into their lives at home.
- **Try avoiding words such as “obese” or “overweight” and instead use “healthy weight” or “growing healthy”.**
- **Respect each parent is an expert on their child. Try, “No one knows your child better than you”.**
- **Provide an explanation of the “why” behind your suggestions or recommendations.**
- Try to meet parents where they are. Small changes can create long term success.
- Most importantly, listen! Families want to understand they are not alone but also need to feel their individual struggles are important. Help families find a solution that works for them.

Coming Soon!

Strategies to Support and Encourage Healthy Active Living module. This online, interactive self-study course for Head Start and Early Head Start staff focuses on healthy active living. Learners will practice building skills to effectively communicate and engage with families around creating and maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle. The course provides 6 separate learning modules, a knowledge center for further resources, a staff wellness assessment, and an interactive pdf of the 5,2,1,0 framework. Interactions and scenarios are based on realistic situations you might encounter with families in a Head Start or Early Head Start setting. You can find this resource on the [National Center on Health Healthy Active Living](#) page.



RESOURCES

ECLKC RESOURCES:

National Center on Health- Healthy Active Living: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/healthy-active-living/healthy-active-living.html>

Healthy Eating- Tips for Families: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/health-literacy-family-engagement/family-education/healthy-eating-family-tips.pdf>

ABCs of Successful Menu Planning- Family Style Meals: http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/family/families/Safe%20and%20Healthy%20Family/Healthy%20Eating/parent_pub_12000_022107.html

OTHER RESOURCES:

American Academy of Pediatrics, *Healthy Active Living for Families* : www.healthychildren.org/growinghealthy

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Vital Signs Progress on Childhood Obesity:* <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/childhoodobesity/>

Fostering a culture of health and wellness for Head Start children, families, and staff.

NATIONAL CENTER ON HEALTH

Our Goal:

To help Head Start and Early Head Start programs implement best practices and effective approaches within medical and dental care access, health awareness, healthy active living, emergency preparedness, and environmental safety to support healthy outcomes and school readiness for young children and their families.

CONTACT US!

The National Center on Health welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to nchinfo@aap.org or call (888) 227-5125.

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<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center>

School readiness begins with health!

