



Strong Foundations in Mental Health
for Social & Emotional Well-Being



NATIONAL CENTER ON
Early Childhood Health and Wellness

Strong Foundations in Mental Health for Social and Emotional Well-Being Newsletter

Wellness



Contents

Wellness 1

Resources for Practitioners 2

Resources for Families 3

Other Resources..... 3

Make Sure to Check out these Multi-Media Resources Focused on Wellness 4

My Peers Collaborative Information..... 5

Wellness is an active process. It requires awareness and directed, thoughtful attention to the choices we make.¹ The beginning of a new year is a time when much attention is focused on setting resolutions related to health and wellness. Early learning programs can play a critical role in helping children, families and staff commit to and implement healthy lifestyle changes that promote both physical and mental well-being. The two, in fact, are closely linked. Our feelings, thoughts, and behaviors directly impact our health. Similarly, our health status has a direct impact on our feelings, thoughts and behaviors. In this issue of the Mental Health Services Newsletter, we provide you with tools to help create a culture of wellness for young children and the adults that care for them.

¹ The National Wellness Institute. http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id_tier=2&id_c=26
Retrieved December 14, 2012.



What's Relevant on ECLKC

For Practitioners

These resources are developed for staff and consultants working in early childhood settings. Some resources may also be useful to families.

Classroom Posters to Increase Positive Social-Emotional Interactions in English

En Español

These posters are designed to help support mental wellness by encouraging routines based positive social emotional interactions.

Growing Healthy Flipchart [PDF, 3.1MB]

Healthy habits start early in life. Encouraging and supporting very young children to enjoy active play and choose healthy foods can set a lifelong pattern of healthy active living. The featured 5-2-1-0 message provides suggestions for building healthy, active lives for everyone. Staff can share this information with parents as a reminder to make healthy choices every day. Available in [Spanish \(español\)](#) [PDF, 3.2MB]

I Am Moving, I Am Learning Interactive Tool

The I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) tool is filled with quick and easy ideas for integrating movement, nutrition, and healthy habits into everyday life. It may be useful to home visitors, classroom teachers, and other caregivers.

Let's Go! Healthy Workplaces toolkit

The Let's Go! Healthy Workplaces toolkit was designed to help employers and employees integrate movement and healthy eating into the work day. This toolkit is a part of Let's Go!, a program designed to help children and their families increase healthy eating and active living. Let's Go! is working in schools, child care centers, after school programs, workplaces, and health care practices to ensure that healthy choices are the easiest choices.

Let's Move! Child Care

Let's Move! Child Care (LMCC) invites child care providers throughout the country, including Head Start and Early Head Start programs, to adopt healthy policies and practices around physical activity and nutrition for children. The initiative aligns with both the Head Start Child Development and Early Learning Framework and the Head Start Program Performance Standards. The five goals of LMCC include increased physical activity, reduced screen time, eating healthy foods, reducing the consumption of sugary beverages and encouraging breastfeeding for infants. Discover how LMCC strategies and materials can support the healthy, active living goals in your program.

Little Voices for Healthy Choices

The Little Voices for Healthy Choices (LVHC) is a national initiative for Early Head Start (EHS) and Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS) programs. It was developed to promote wellness in infants, toddlers, and expectant families. The initiative includes training and resources with strategies designed to address healthy nutrition, physical activity, brain development, and sleep for children birth to 3, their families, and communities.

Relaxation Exercises

These relaxation exercises, recorded in English and Spanish, may be used by early education staff and families to promote wellness and reduce stress.





[Relaxation Bookmarks](#)

These bookmarks highlight tips on deep breathing to promote wellness. They can be downloaded and printed to distribute to families, early childhood staff, administrators, and mental health consultants.

[Strategies to Support and Encourage Healthy Active Living Course](#)

The Strategies to Support and Encourage Healthy Active Living course is an online, interactive self-study course for early care and education staff focused on healthy active living. Learners will practice building skills to effectively communicate and engage with families around creating and maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle.

[For Families](#)

These resources are specifically developed for families with young children and are ready to print and distribute.

[A Healthy Baby Begins with You](#)

An infant's survival and long-term health is influenced by many factors, including the mother's age, health status and behavior during and after pregnancy. This brochure provides practical tips for a healthy start for mothers and babies.

[Active Play: Tips for Families](#) [\[PDF, 368KB\]](#)

Early learning program staff can use this fact sheet to share information with families on the NCECHW priority, active play. It includes tips families can use to help young children develop positive active play behaviors. Available in [Spanish \(español\)](#) [PDF, 93KB]

[Growing Healthy Family Postcard](#)

The message featured in this postcard provides suggestions for building healthy, active lives for everyone in the family. Staff can share this resource with parents to put on the refrigerator as a reminder to make healthy choices every day.

[Growing Healthy Family Goals Worksheet](#)

Most parents know the benefit of teaching their children to eat healthy foods and encouraging them to exercise. However, that can be hard to do, especially when it feels like everything about your current lifestyle needs to change. Early learning program staff may use this worksheet with families to help them start behaviors that will improve the health and wellness of everyone at home. The 5-2-1-0 message provides suggestions for building healthy, active lives for everyone in the family.

[Other Resources](#)

[For Practitioners](#)

These mental health resources from other websites are developed for staff and consultants working in early childhood settings.

[For Families](#)

These mental health resources from other websites are specifically developed for families with young children and are ready to print and distribute

[Making Life Easier: Bedtime and Naptime](#)

Many families find bedtime and naptime to be a challenge for them and their children. Sleep problems can make infants and young children moody, short tempered and unable to engage well in interactions with others. Sleep problems can also impact learning. Parents also need to feel rested in order to be nurturing and responsive to their growing and active young children. This first installment of the Making Life Easier series, developed by the Technical Assistance Center on Social Emotional Intervention for Young Children, provides a few proven tips for making bedtimes and naptimes easier for both parents and children.



[Parent Posters to Increase Positive Social-Emotional Interactions in English](#)

[En Español](#)

These posters are designed to help support family mental wellness by encouraging routines-based positive social emotional interactions.

[Make Sure to Watch this Video and Webinar Focused on Reducing Toxic Stress and Promoting Wellness](#)

[Breaking Through: Video and User's Guide to Understand and Address Toxic Stress](#)

View this 20-minute educational video to learn how toxic stress can impact a child's lifelong health and well-being. Also, find out how early care and education programs as well health care professionals can support children and families to help prevent toxic stress. The user-friendly guide shows how best to use this resource. It also includes a breakdown of the video segments by topic area.

[What's Sleep Got to Do with It? Exploring Sleep and Wellness for Infants and Toddlers](#)

View this webinar, developed as part of the Little Voices for Healthy Choices Initiative, to find out about the importance of sleep for infants and very young children. Learn how children's sleep can have an impact on their families, caregivers, and communities. Dr. Barry Marx, a pediatrician and sleep expert, shares his knowledge. The webinar also includes the Teaching Artists from Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts.



MyPeers: A Collaborative Platform for the Early Care and Education Community

MyPeers is an online social and learning network for Head Start and Early Head Start program staff and partners to dialogue and share thoughts. This is a virtual community for exchanging ideas, sharing resources, and lending support to the early childhood community.



Register for
MyPeers

Currently, the NCECHW have the following open communities on MyPeers:

1. Child Care Health Consultants
2. Health, Safety and Wellness
3. I am Moving I am Learning (IMIL)
4. Staff Wellness
5. and two state-specific early childhood health communities for Oregon and South Dakota.
6. Mental Health Consultation Community (soon to open)



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To join one of these communities, register at <http://www.123contactform.com/form-2230355/My-Peers>. Once registered, you will be able to join new communities to meet your specific needs.

Please watch your email for announcements from the National Centers or others as they initiate new communities.

The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness welcomes your feedback on this newsletter issue, as well as your suggestions for topics for future issues. Please forward your comments to The National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness Feedback health@ecetta.info or call 866-227-5125.

Subscribe or view all issues of the Mental Health Services Newsletter on the Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center at <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/newsletters/newsletters.html>.

School readiness begins with health!