

Overview

In Colorado, addressing health in CACFP is part of a larger state initiative through The Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition. Their mission is to prevent obesity and related chronic diseases, and to promote healthy lifestyles for all Coloradans. The Early Childhood Task Force of this coalition represents collaborations and partnerships with government, public health, and private organizations throughout the state. This includes CACFP under the Nutrition Services of the Colorado Health Department. With this partnership, the Early Childhood Task Force has developed an Early Childhood Resource Kit and the Child Care Champions Best Practices book. They have also offered trainings and mini-grants to childcare sponsors to improve the physical activity and nutrition environment.

Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition State Plan 2010, Early Childhood Strategies:

- Raise awareness of the benefits of health eating and developmentally appropriate activity in children birth to age five and their families.
- Provide educational opportunities that will improve parents' and other caregivers' abilities to meet recommendations for healthy eating and developmentally appropriate physical activity.
- Provide educational opportunities and resources in nutrition and physical activity for healthcare professionals.
- Promote an environment that encourages healthy eating and active lifestyles as the norm rather than the exception.

Resources

Childcare Champions Best Practices

- A tool of measurement to encourage the best possible environment for the health and well being of the children in your care. Accompanied by online self-assessment that delivers assessment reports and suggested resources tailored to the results.
 - Best Practice #1: Model Healthy Eating Behaviors
 - Best Practice #2: Integrate nutrition and physical activity into all curricula so that these practices are persistent throughout teaching and the childcare environment.
 - Best Practice #3: Practice the "Division of Responsibility" in feeding.

- Best Practice #4: Provide the best start for infant feeding, including breastfeeding, developmentally appropriate first foods, and recognition of hunger and satiety.
- Best Practice #5: Become partners in prevention – caregiver and parent involvement, education and guidance.
- Best Practice #6: Use the environment effectively to promote physical activity and free play.
- Best Practice #7: Plan menus and meals with the child's nutritional needs in mind, therefore, promoting physical, social, and emotional and cognitive development.
- Can be found at:
 - <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/earlychildhood/BestPracticesBook.pdf>

Early Childhood Resource Kit

- Divided into four sections
 - Raising awareness
 - Educational opportunities for caregivers
 - Educational opportunities for healthcare professionals
 - Environment
- Can be found at:
 - <http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/COPAN/resourcekits/EarlyChildhoodResourceKit.pdf>

Program Implementation

- Regional trainings to introduce, reinforce, and encourage implementation of strategies and actions steps from the Early Childhood Resource Kits.
- Child Care Champions Best Practices guidebook given to child care centers and day care homes.
- Incorporated Child Care Best Practices into community college curricula.
- Mini-grants to centers
 - Grants in amounts up to \$2,000 were given to implement nutrition and physical activity education, events and programs within centers, homes and after school programs. Interventions range from curricula development and physical education equipment to garden projects and cooking classes. Each grant recipient is required to evaluate the outcomes to demonstrate the effectiveness of their program.

Who is Involved?

- Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition
 - Early Childhood Task Force Member Organizations
 - Colorado State University
 - Colorado Nutrition Network
 - Qualistar – (Resource Referral Agency)
 - Colorado Association for Education of Young Children
 - Tri-County Health Dept
 - University of Colorado Health Sciences Center
 - CACFP under the Colorado Dept. of Public Health and Environment
 - Headstart
 - Women, Infants and Children.

Funding

- The Colorado Physical Activity and Nutrition Coalition are able to pool their resources to achieve their streamlined goals.
- Money from the state tobacco tax was specifically used to fund the mini-grants.
- Money from Maternal and Child Health under the Department of Health also helped fund a conference in which sponsors and centers participated and learned about health and physical activity topics.

Lessons Learned

Combining efforts and resources is important for success. CACFP should connect to other pieces of childcare. This allows for greater financial support and consistent, effective messaging.

Future of Childcare Champions

- The Early Childhood Taskforce will validate the self-assessment tool.
- Want to secure foundation money as a funding source
- Institute a Quality Rating System that includes nutrition and physical activity