

Overview

The South Dakota CACFP agency under the South Dakota Department of Education, Health and Social Services and other partners have developed the Fit from the Start Initiative to improve nutrition and physical activity practice, policy and environment in child care facilities throughout South Dakota. The initiative aims to reduce childhood obesity and children's risk for developing obesity by encouraging a healthy child care environment through targeting child care providers. The initiative is designed to provide low-cost, no cost strategies and resources to child care providers to promote physical activity and healthy eating in children



2-5 years of age in their care. The Fit from the Start Initiative also seeks to educate child care providers about the importance of healthy living to support positive role modeling and their individual wellness. The initiative is primarily funded by a grant from the Wellmark Foundation.

Fit From the Start Components

- Fit from the Start Training Program – Including Self-Assessment and Action Plan
 - Assessment training adapted from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. The training provides strategies and resources for child care providers to self-assess and improve their child care facility's nutrition and physical activity practice, policy and environment training components include:
 - Preventing Childhood Obesity
 - Healthy Eating
 - Physical Activity
 - Nutrition and Physical Activity to Fit Busy Lifestyle

- Healthy Kids for Childcare Providers
 - A series of classes adapted from the Sanford Children's Hospital that offers participants insight and materials to assist in combating childhood obesity.
 - Classes include:
 - Healthy Kids = Healthy Adults
 - Learning and Movement Go Together
 - Turn Off the Screen
 - Healthy Food Choices Matter
 - Participants receive:
 - Games and Activities for children
 - Classroom Posters
 - Parent Messages
 - Home Connection Activities
 - Home Connection Posters
 - South Dakota Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children Resource Cards
 - Healthy South Dakota incentives
 - Access to resources and equipment to support nutrition and physical activity
- Technical assistance
 - Reinforced training and kept track of how centers were doing

Who is Involved

- This initiative was designed, implemented, and evaluated with the South Dakota Department of Health partnered with the Department of Social Services, Early Childhood Enrichment Centers, SDSU Cooperative Extension, Department of Education– Child & Adult Food Program Sponsors, and Sanford Children's Hospital– Growing Healthy.
- Active Early Childhood Enrichment Training Specialists received training from the Department of Health to conduct the Fit from the Start Training to Cooperative Extension educators, family daycare sponsors, and childcare providers
- This initiative aligns with the state Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan priorities.

Funding for the Initiative

- Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings and accompanying South Dakota Physical Activity and Healthy Snacks for Young Children were adapted from Iowa materials using a USDA Team Nutrition grant.
- Funding for the Fit from the Start initiative was originally to be provided as a planned intervention with the Centers for Disease Control. When South Dakota was cut from the CDC intervention funding they sought private money from the Wellmark Foundation of Blue Cross Blue Shield Maternal and Child Health Block Grants.

Resources

Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings and accompanying South Dakota Physical Activity and Healthy Snacks for Young Children can be found at: http://www.frac.org/pdf/sd_policies_best_practices_nutrition_physical_activity_early_childhood_settings.pdf

South Dakota Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children Resource Cards can be found at: http://www.frac.org/pdf/sd_physical_activities_healthy_snacks_young_children.pdf

Overcoming Challenges

- Lost time making major changes in project because of funding changes
- There is a lot of turnover in childcare providers

Future

- Will contract with outside provider to conduct a survey which will measure behavioral change but need more funding