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Children's Health System

Healthy Way to Grow recognizes excellence in obesity prevention policies for young children

Six early childcare and education centers receive Healthy Way to Grow recognition awards for significant strides to create healthy environments for children, families and staff

DALLAS, October 29, 2020 — Healthy Way to Grow, a joint program of the American Heart Association, the world's leading nonprofit organization focused on heart and brain health, and [Nemours Children's Health System](#), announces six early childcare and education centers as the 2020-2021 recipients of the annual recognition awards for successful implementation of healthy programs and policies for young children.

[Healthy Way to Grow](#), a national, science-based, early childhood technical assistance program, provides educational resources to help communities, educators and caregivers improve practices and policies for obesity prevention. The program helps children from birth to five years old get off to a healthy start.

The 2020-2021 awardees developed and followed center wellness policies, offered training to staff about children's health and taught children and their caregivers about healthy habits. The program recognizes centers on a gold, silver or bronze level based on implementation of best practices in the areas of nutrition, physical activity, screen time and

infant feeding standards developed by a panel of childhood health experts and leaders in the field.

The Gold awardee:

- Flance Early Learning Center – St. Louis, Mo.

The Silver awardee:

- Unleashing Potential At Caroline Mission – St. Louis, Mo.

The Bronze awardees:

- Franklin Phonetic Primary School – Sunnyslope Preschool – Phoenix, Ariz.
- The Children's College – West Barnstable, Mass.
- Kids Klub Child Care Center – Mashpee, Mass.
- Sacred Heart Villa – St. Louis, Mo.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, childhood obesity impacts 40% of children between the ages of 2-5, increasing their risk for Type 2 diabetes, asthma and depression. However, preventative steps taken in early childhood can help reduce this risk. Wellness programs like Healthy Way to Grow are working to combat this issue.

"One third of U.S. children are overweight or have obesity which puts them at higher risk of type 2 diabetes and high blood pressure as children as well as higher risk of heart disease and stroke in adulthood," said Eduardo Sanchez, M.D., MPH, chief medical officer for prevention for the American Heart Association. "The Healthy Way to Grow program, a joint program with Nemours, provides accessible resources for early childcare and education centers to implement science-based solutions to ensure young child adopt healthy lifestyle behaviors from the start. The program strives to reverse adverse health outcomes caused by childhood obesity."

“At Nemours Children’s Health System, we believe Healthy Way to Grow continues to provide the perfect opportunity to shape healthy habits in ways that will benefit children throughout their lives,” said Allison Gertel-Rosenberg, Operating Vice President, Nemours National Office of Policy and Practice. “We congratulate all the centers for achieving recognition for the care they provide to children.”

The American Heart Association is dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities and is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. Nemours is a nonprofit pediatric health system dedicated to life-changing medical care and research — helping kids grow up healthy and advocating for kids nationally.

Learn more about protecting the health and wellness of children in your community at healthywaytogrow.org.

Additional Resources:

- [Evaluation of “Healthy Way to Grow”: An Obesity Prevention Program in Early Care and Education Centers](#)
- [25 Ways to Move at Home](#)
- [Kid-friendly recipes](#)

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About the American Heart Association

The American Heart Association is a relentless force for a world of longer, healthier lives. We are dedicated to ensuring equitable health in all communities. Through collaboration with numerous organizations, and powered by millions of volunteers, we fund innovative research, advocate for the public’s health and share lifesaving resources. The Dallas-based organization

has been a leading source of health information for nearly a century. Connect with us on heart.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or by calling 1-800-AHA-USA1.

About Nemours Children's Health System

Nemours is an internationally recognized children's health system that owns and operates the Nemours/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., and Nemours Children's Hospital in Orlando, Fla., along with outpatient facilities in five states, delivering pediatric primary, specialty and urgent care. Nemours also powers the world's most-visited website for information on the health of children and teens, KidsHealth.org and offers on-demand, online video patient visits through Nemours CareConnect.

Established as The Nemours Foundation through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, Nemours provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to families in the communities it serves.

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