

National ECELC Newsletter



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Staff Wellness: Promoting Health & Wellness with Early Care & Education Staff

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Imagine that you woke up this morning feeling strong, energetic, alert, happy and ready for your day – whatever it brings! What do you think contributed to that feeling of well-being? The World Health Organization has defined wellness as “. . . a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

As adults, we can consciously choose to think positively, pay attention to our nutritional choices, invest time in physical activity balanced with rest and know that our choices in thought, words and action have a ripple effect on the children we care for, our colleagues and families. When we follow healthy eating habits, increase our physical activity, choose alternatives to screen time and reduce stress in our lives, we are likely to be more productive at work, have fewer health crises, be better able to support others and experience a sense of contentment and well-being.

Here are some tips to keep in mind as you invest in your own health and well-being:

Healthy Eating Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2020

- Enjoy your foods, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Choose lower sodium foods
- Switch to fat-free or 1% milk.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

Eating Out

- Use menu labels
- Ask for half portions
- Share with a friend
- Ask for dressing on the side
- Order grilled/baked instead of fried
- Avoid buffets

Physical Activity Recommendations for adults:

- 2 hours + 30 minutes a week of moderate-intensity, or
- 1 hour + 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity, or
- a combination.
- Muscle strengthening exercises 2x/ week
- Episodes should last at least 10 minutes

Ways to Reduce Screen Time

- Keep track of screen time using a log – set goals to cut down!
- Take the TV out of the bedroom
- Turn off the TV during mealtimes
- Focus on other activities
- Discover different ways to unwind (e.g., listening to music)

The National ECELC

Welcome to the National Early Care and Education Collaboratives Project (ECELC) Newsletter! We hope this newsletter is helpful as we offer supplemental information to help you prepare for the Learning Sessions and provide technical assistance to early care and education (ECE) providers. Topics within each newsletter will emphasize areas outlined in the *Let's Move!* Child Care goals including healthy eating, physical activity, screen time, and breastfeeding support. We hope you enjoy it!

-The National ECELC Team

Visit the *Let's Move!* Child Care website:

www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org

Staff Wellness References & Resources

What is Worksite Wellness?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJDsa12fQMA>

Helpful Tips to Start a Worksite Wellness Program

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOSrsLhaHJQ>

My Life Check

The American Heart Association's **My Life Check** empowers adults to take a big step toward a healthier life. In just a few minutes, you can get your personal heart score and a custom plan with the 7 simple steps you need to start living your best life

<http://bit.ly/9Ff50m>

Moda Health 101 Low-cost ideas for Worksite Wellness

https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/media-resources/ECELC/C4/LS1/Participants/ModaHealth_101Lowcostideasforworksitewellness.pdf

108 Easy Yoga Practices

Six Dimensions of
Yoga Sparks: 108 Easy Practices for Stress Relief in a Minute, Carol Krukoff, E-RYT, New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 2013

Additional resources can be found on the *Let's Move! Child Care* website:

www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org

Questions?

Please contact your State/Local Project Coordinator or ECELC at Nemours

ecelc@nemours.org



Worksite Wellness Tackles Work Stress

One of the most challenging areas that contributes to a lack of wellness is stress, both short term and chronic. Ways to alleviate stress include re-directing thoughts by focusing on the work or situation at hand, taking a physical activity break, joining a class, talking to a trusted friend or colleague, breathing and meditation practices or listening to music.

Ask colleagues, friends, or family members to support you and treat yourself to 'me' time, in order to keep your perspective and develop resilience throughout each day.

Take the lead in establishing a staff wellness committee at your center and initiate staff wellness activity breaks such as neighborhood walks, cooking parties, yoga, zumba, healthy snacks and a staff rejuvenation area. Seek local partners who can offer health and fitness evaluations, as well as health coaching.

Center directors and families can join with staff to participate in community walks, such as the March of Dimes or American Heart Association National Walking Day. Outdoor and indoor walking trails that are accessible to varying degrees of ability can be mapped and volunteers designated to sponsor those who wish to contribute.

Yoga

The most basic standing posture, **Mountain Pose**, teaches us, literally, how to stand on our own two feet. Many common aches and pains, including back and neck pains, are often linked to poor posture. Practicing the healthy alignment of Mountain Pose, can offer profound relief.

To begin:

Place your feet hip-width apart and plant your weight evenly on both legs. Feel the ground under your feet. Feel the support as you activate your leg muscles and stand tall. Arms are relaxed at the side of the body. Extend the top of your head up toward the sky. Keep your chin parallel to the ground. Relax your shoulders down away from your ears. (*I see some people wearing their shoulders as earrings!*) Release any tension in your face – around your eyes, mouth and jaws and throat. Stack your joints so that your ears are over your shoulders, shoulders are over your hips, hips are over your knees and your knees are over your ankles. Take a few, full, easy breaths. Fill and empty your lungs so your entire rib cage expands as you inhale and relaxes as you exhale.

You can practice The Mountain Pose throughout the day, when you are standing at home, in your classroom, on the playground, or waiting in line at the grocery store! You can even teach this pose to your toddlers and preschoolers. In less than a minute, you can adjust your posture, take a few full breaths and decrease your stress.

(Adapted from *Yoga Sparks: 108 Easy Practices for Stress Relief in a Minute*, by Carol Krukoff, 2013v)



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