

# National ECELC Newsletter



## Action Planning for Healthy Changes in Early Care and Education

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### 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](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)

Action planning is important for creating healthy change in ECE programs. Action plans help to keep programs on track and focused on their goals by setting objectives and timelines. They help programs monitor progress and lay out a clear vision of the expected steps and outcomes that will lead to successful change.

When developing an action plan, programs should start by identifying the goal or goals they want to achieve. The goal should explain what the program wishes to accomplish and plot a long term outcome. For programs participating in the learning collaboratives, programs are asked to make policy change their long term outcome. Having written policies that support healthy eating and physical activity in your program can make these healthy changes sustainable.

When working with programs to create their Action Plan goals, be sure to use the "SMART" goals framework:

**S** – specific ("who," "what," "when," "where," and "how" hit the high points, but you don't need every detail)

**M** – measurable (dates, number of tasks, feedback, visual changes)

**A** – attainable (consider available resources, can you achieve this goal?)

**R** – realistic (can this be done? Use caution, don't set goals that are too easy or too lofty)

**T** – time-bound (set a target date for completion)

## Success Story from San Diego

In early 2016, the YMCA of San Diego implemented learning collaboratives within their Wellness Champions Program, aiming to improve wellness best practices in the child care setting.

On December 5<sup>th</sup> a graduation celebration (shown in the photo to the right) was held honoring the newest crop of Wellness Champions. Seven faith-based childcare centers in the Chula Vista area completed an eight month program that included four workshops and ongoing technical assistance.

This was truly a celebration of their hard work. Pre and post surveys were administered to track changes and the data clearly shows their hard work paid off as scores improved by an average of 23%.

Examples of their efforts include serving family-style meals, adopting and following a wellness policy and making environmental changes to improve nutrition and physical activity. During this process children became more willing to try new foods through food demonstrations and taste testings. Parents responded positively to changes in the child care environment and, as a result, report making healthier changes in the home. Teachers made positive changes also by making healthier food choices, eliminating soda and becoming more physically active.

Additional resources can be found on the *Let's Move!* Child Care website:  
[www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)



## Sample Program Policies

The following sample policies come from the Arizona Empower Guidebook. These are examples of policies that programs can choose to work towards for their long term Action Plan goals.

### Physical Activity

- Infants will participate in tummy time and age-appropriate activity daily as enjoyed by the child and as appropriate for children with special health care needs
- Staff members and child care providers encourage both moderate and vigorous levels of physical activity and as adapted for children with special health care needs
- Every child has the opportunity to participate in both outdoor and indoor physical activity and as appropriate for children with special health care needs
- Children are encouraged to be active throughout the day by exploring their environment.
- Physical activity is never used or withheld as punishment.

### Breastfeeding

- Reassure nursing mothers that they are welcome by displaying breastfeeding promotion information. This could be done by placing a “Welcome to our breastfeeding-friendly facility” sign, on your doors or windows so that the parents can see it. This will encourage mothers to initiate and continue breastfeeding after returning to work or school.

### CACFP

- We at (name of child care facility) are committed to the health of all of our children. CACFP supports child care facilities by making child care more affordable for many low-income families while promoting good eating habits that support a child’s individual needs. Eligibility for CACFP is determined by federal standards based on family income within established geographic boundaries. Our facility will check and document eligibility for CACFP.

### Healthy Eating

- Staff members and child care providers model behaviors for healthy eating and positive body image in the presence of children.
- Staff members and child care providers do not use food as a reward or punishment.

## References

<http://www.eceobesityprevention.org/developing-an-action-plan-to-implement-and-evaluate-obesity-prevention-efforts-in-early-care-and-education/>

<http://azdhs.gov/documents/prevention/nutrition-physical-activity/empower/resources-policies/empower-guidebook.pdf>

## Questions?

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

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