Kentucky’s Vision for Early Care and Education

All children in Kentucky will have access to high quality healthy foods and beverages, screen time limits, physical activity opportunities and breastfeeding support in early care and education settings.
Early care and education (ECE) refers to any preschool, Head Start or child care program. Because most young children are spending many waking hours in care outside of their home, ECEs should be used as an opportunity to provide safe and healthy care.

How can healthy early care and education programs help our children?

Healthy habits established early in early childhood build the foundation for lifelong health.

Young children with poor diet and physical inactivity are at an increased risk for developing obesity, diabetes and heart disease as adults.¹

Half of obese children were overweight before entering kindergarten, suggesting we have missed the best opportunity for prevention, and their obesity trajectory has already been established.²

Exposing children to healthy foods, effective dietary patterns and appropriate portion sizes in response to internal hunger and fullness cues prevents overeating.³

Healthy environments in ECEs promote social, emotional and physical development.

Active play and supervised structured activities helps build strength, strong bones, flexibility, endurance and other gross and fine motor skills.⁴

Teaching table manners, cooperative play, independence, and sharing promotes positive emotional and social development.⁴

Too much screen time prohibits children’s ability to play creatively, complete tasks without distraction, and have social interactions with other children and adults.⁴

School readiness includes being healthy and physically prepared to grow, learn and succeed.

Children who are physically active have fewer behavioral and disciplinary problems, better attention spans, and perform better in school.¹,⁴

Children who are overweight or obese can be undernourished at the same time if the foods and beverages are not very nutritious. These deficiencies impair brain development and cognitive functioning, including learning.⁴

¹ CDC Vital Signs: Progress on Childhood Obesity (August 2013).
⁴ Let’s Move! Child Care
The opportunity exists for Kentucky ECE programs to improve the health of our children.

Nearly ONE IN THREE Kentucky children is obese or overweight before they enter kindergarten.  

Kentucky has 2203 licensed child care centers, licensed child care homes and certified homes in Kentucky.

Health Policy Indicators

Kentucky meets 3 of the 47 high-impact obesity prevention standards in licensing.

Kentucky’s Child and Adult Food Program does not provide specific obesity prevention interventions or trainings.

While Kentucky’s Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) was recently updated, healthy eating and physical activity standards were not included.

5 WIC State Agency Data (2014)
6 Child Care Aware Kentucky State Fact Sheet (2017)
7 Kentucky Legislature, Kentucky Administration Regulations “922 KAR 2:120”.
8 CDC (2016) Early Care and Education State Indicator Report
Kentucky regulations ensure basic needs are met, but our children deserve more.

**Infant Feeding**
- Provide onsite space for moms to breastfeed or pump
- Develop a written plan with the parents for the introduction of foods
- Serve no formula or breast milk mixed with cereal, juice or other food
- Serve no juice to infants younger than 12 months

**Physical Activity**
- Require physical activity in the daily schedule
- No use of screen media with children younger than 2 years of age
- Require 1 hour of moderate and vigorous activity (activity that increases the heart rate and breathing rate)
- Limit the use of infant equipment (swings, seats, bouncers) to no more than 15 minutes at a time unless the infant is eating or sleeping in a crib
- Provide daily supervised tummy time for all infants

**Nutrition**
- Include breast milk as allowable milk serving for children ages 12-24 months
- Remove juice from the meal plan OR limit juice to 4-6 ounces served no more than 1 time per week for children 1-6 years old and 8-12 ounces for children 7-12 years old
- Add clear definition to “freely accessible water” Children can access independently, without adult support, throughout the child care day including time spent outdoors
- No consumption of outside food by staff members or parents in the presence of children

**Professional Development**
- Require annual training on child nutrition and/or physical activity

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Kentucky is working on building healthy environments for all children to play and grow.

Nemours Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives (ECELC)

The ECELC project uses evidence-based training (Go NAP SACC and Let’s Move! Child Care) and technical assistance to support ECE centers in completing a self-assessment of health practices and implement obesity prevention policies and curriculum.

Kentucky’s 5-2-1-0 campaign encourages parents to adopt simple strategies to prevent obesity that are consistent with Let’s Move! Child Care and Caring for Our Children standards.

**FOOD – 5 or more fruits and vegetables**
Serve fruits or vegetables at every meal and snack, eat meals family style whenever possible, and don’t serve fried foods.

**SCREEN TIME – 2 or less hours**
For children 2 years and older, limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes per week during child care, and work with parents to ensure children have no more than 1-2 hours per day. No screen time for children under 2 years.

**PHYSICAL ACTIVITY – 1 or more hours**
Provide 1-2 hours of active play throughout the day.

**BEVERAGE – 0 sugary drinks**
Provide access to water during meals and throughout the day and no sugary drinks. For children age 2 and older, serve 1% or non-fat milk and limit 100% juice to no more than 4-6 ounces per day.

**BREASTFEEDING**
Support breastfeeding mothers by serving their milk during child care and providing resources for all infant feeding.

**CURRENT STATUS**

**HEALTHY NUMBERS FOR KENTUCKY FAMILIES**

Kentucky’s 5-2-1-0 campaign encourages parents to adopt simple strategies to prevent obesity that are consistent with Let’s Move! Child Care and Caring for Our Children standards.

**IMPACT OF PROJECT 2014 – 2017**

18,388 Children
234 ECE Programs
9 Regions
Let’s provide all Kentucky children with opportunities for healthy growth.

OUR VISION
All children in Kentucky will have access to high quality healthy foods and beverages, screen time limits, physical activity opportunities and breastfeeding support in early care and education settings.

STRATEGY 1
Extensive Training and Technical Assistance
Connecting providers so they can learn from one another and providing the necessary training, resources, and technical assistance that support obesity prevention policy changes will help guide them through these environmental improvements.

STRATEGY 2
Family Engagement
Encouraging families and communities to participate as partners in supporting the development of children’s healthy habits drives these changes.

STRATEGY 3
Consistent Policies
Promoting the alignment of Kentucky Child Care Regulations, STARS, and professional development to meet or exceed best practices for healthy foods and beverages, screen time limits, physical activity and breastfeeding will reinforce the consistent messaging.
Contributing Partners

American Heart Association
CHFS Division of Child Care
Children, Inc.
Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky
Four Sight Wellness
Governor’s Office of Early Childhood
Inspector General’s Office, Licensing
Kentucky Alliance of YMCAs
Kentucky Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Department for Public Health
  Child Care Health Consultation
Health Access Nurturing Development Services (HANDS)
Nutrition Services Branch – Breastfeeding; Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC)

Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Farm to School
Kentucky Department of Education
  Child Adult Food Program
  Coordinated School Health
School Readiness Branch
Shaping Kentucky’s Future Collaborative
Success By Six, United Way Boone County
University of Kentucky Human Development Institute, Child Care Aware
4C for Children
Prichard Committee
YMCA of Greater Louisville

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