

# Early care and education policies and programs to support healthy eating and physical activity: Best practices and changes over time <sup>[1]</sup>

Healthy eating research building evidence to prevent childhood obesity

**Author:** Fox, T., Corbett, A., & Duffey, K.

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## AVAILABILITY

Full PDF online <sup>[2]</sup>

American researchers reviewed literature and policies pertaining to obesity prevention, healthy eating behaviours and screen time between 2010-2016, within the early years sector. Recommendations include multi-pronged interventions as well as partnering with parents, while authors also make suggestions for future research and policy development.

## Abstract

In 2011, a Healthy Eating Research/Active Living Research (HER/ALR) Research Synthesis: Preventing Obesity Among Preschool Children: How Can Childcare Settings Promote Healthy Eating and Physical Activity<sup>1</sup> primarily reviewed the research surrounding opportunities to promote a healthy diet and regular physical activity among preschool children. It also examined the outcomes of research interventions designed to prevent obesity in early care and education (ECE) settings.

However, over the last six years, efforts to strengthen policies, systems, and environments to promote health and prevent obesity have become more robust and widespread. With improvements to federal and state regulations, state licensing requirements and quality initiatives, and an increased focus on comprehensive local wellness policies, many child-care settings are strengthening their environments through practices and policies to promote health.

Furthermore, while rates of early childhood overweight and obesity have been decreasing over the past several years, they are still high, and significant health disparities remain across ethnic and income groups. The early childhood years are critical to the prevention of obesity and the development of healthy dietary and physical activity habits, and the role of the child-care setting is becoming increasingly important in fostering these healthy behaviors in young children.

Therefore, an updated research synthesis was needed. What follows is a comprehensive overview of changes to obesity-prevention policies and evidence-based guidance that have occurred over the past five years and a review of the impact that these policy, systems, and environmental interventions have had in the ECE setting on promoting a healthy diet, adequate physical activity, and reduced screen time.

## Related link:

**Region:** United States <sup>[3]</sup>

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**Source URL (modified on 27 Jan 2022):** <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/18/05/early-care-and-education-policies-and-programs-support>

## Links

[1] <https://childcarecanada.org/documents/research-policy-practice/18/05/early-care-and-education-policies-and-programs-support> <sup>[2]</sup>  
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