



Worksite Wellness in Child Care Centers Promotes Healthy Habits in Staff, Children, and Families

Happy, Healthy & Well was developed for use with child care and early childhood education staff to bring information and support for adopting healthy nutrition and physical activity behaviors in the child care work environment. Research has shown that staff is more likely promote healthy habits for the children and families they work with, if they have adopted these behaviors themselves. Because many young children spend a significant part of each day in a preschool and/or child care setting, there is rich opportunity for their caretakers and teachers to model healthy nutrition and physical activity attitudes and behaviors throughout the day. This project was funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Nutrition Program. Core components of the year-long Happy, Healthy & Well program for child care and early childhood education staff include:

Newsletters for Staff and Parents

Twelve print-ready newsletters for Staff and for Parents, packed with nutrition and physical activity information and tips, available in English and Spanish.

Paycheck Stuffers

Twelve simple action-oriented health tips and reminders to print and include in paycheck envelopes.

Walking Challenge

A popular motivational activity, this pedometer-based program supports staff who wish to increase their daily physical activity, and record individual or team progress along a route through California.

Health Fair Option

In addition to the basic program above, large multi-center child care agencies and/or child care wellness collaboratives may wish to consider offering a health fair option as a kick-off event for this program.

Program Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the project is to promote healthy eating patterns and regular physical activity, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Specific project goals include:

- Fostering the adoption of positive health behaviors in child care providers to increase self-efficacy in promoting these behaviors with families, and increase the likelihood of more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains served to children in their care.
- Improving the activity level and food environment for children in the project.
- Improving the ability and frequency of child care providers to reinforce healthy eating and active living with parents.

Background Information and Supporting Research

- Research indicates there may be a relationship between engaging in physical activity behaviors and the subsequent readiness to adopt healthy eating behaviors among adults. The Happy, Healthy & Well program uses a pedometer-based walking challenge as a backbone, with experiential, food-based nutrition education activities inserted to enhance and support staff's active engagement with wellness at their child care sites.
- Literature suggests that the nutritional quality of meals and snacks may be poor in child care centers, and activity levels among the children who attend these centers may be inadequate. Child care providers who become more active and experienced with increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains may be more likely to model and adopt these actions in their child care duties.
- Research reports associations between a person's health habits and their educational practices with low-income clients. When child care providers adopt healthy eating and active lifestyle practices themselves, they tend to share nutrition and health information with families more confidently and readily

What resources are needed to implement this program?

Pick your organization's level of involvement... Basic, Enhanced, or Premier!

	Newsletters	Paycheck Stuffers	Walking Challenge	Food-based Nutrition Education	Health Fair
Basic	✓	✓			
Enhanced	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Premier	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audience	Staff, Families	Staff	Staff	Staff, Children, Families	Staff, Children, Families
Implementation	Download, print, and distribute	Download, print, and distribute in staff paycheck envelopes	Download and print materials, introduce and facilitate program	Print materials, set-up and facilitate food demonstrations for staff and families	Collaborative effort with child/family services organizations
Suggested Schedule	Monthly (Sept-Aug)	Monthly (Sept-Aug)	New Year's (Jan-Feb)	New Year's (Jan-Feb)	One day (Sept or Oct)
Staffing Needs (approximate)	1 hour per month	30 min per month	1 hour per week during 8 week program	1 hour per week during 8 week Walking Challenge	Variable

Walking Challenge

Motivate staff to increase their daily physical activity! The Walking Challenge uses pedometers to record the number of steps each staff member takes. The entire staff's number of steps will be summed, and the staff's progress marked on a map of California. Reaching certain regions is rewarded with a food tasting corresponding to the local produce of that region (see food tasting module of this program).

The Walking Challenge program, in English and Spanish, features the following:

- Walking Challenge Recruitment Flier
- Walking Challenge Map of California (English only)
- Walking Challenge Orientation Script (English only)
- Walking Challenge Step Count
- Walking Challenge Log Booklet

Health Fair

Start your school year off right, or kick off the Walking Challenge with a health fair for staff and families. A health fair generates enthusiasm and provides activities that address personal and family health, such as cholesterol screenings, and demonstrations of active play with children. The Health Fair overview is available in English and Spanish.