

Best Practices for Increasing Physical Activity in Child Care Settings

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Physical Activity at Child Care

- Parents influence activity at child care*
 - No coat/hat/gloves in winter
 - Flip flops or sandals in summer
 - Dressy clothes worn to school
- Centers can make a difference
 - Finn et al. 2002; Dowda et al. (2004 & 2009); Bower et al. 2008
 - Temple (2009) found level of physical activity much lower in family child care homes



*Copeland et al. International J of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity, 2009

Children Want and Need Activity

- Being active is fundamental to children
- Adults often create environments where activity is discouraged or limited
- Environments at child care should be developed to provide generous opportunities for activity across the child care day



NAP SACC



Nutrition
And
Physical Activity
Self
Assessment for
Child
Care

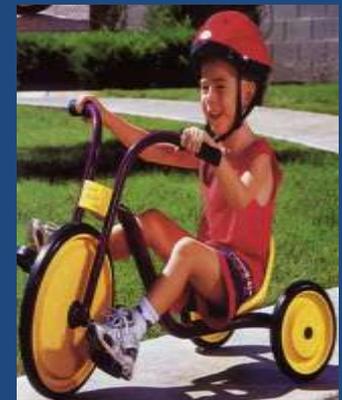
NAP SACC Steps

1. Self-Assessment
2. Action Planning
3. Workshop Delivery
4. Targeted Technical Assistance
5. Evaluate, revise and repeat

NAP SACC is delivered to interested child care facilities through a trained NAP SACC Consultant, commonly a public health professional who works with child care

Physical Activity Best Practice Areas

1. Active opportunities
2. Fixed equipment
3. Portable equipment
4. Sedentary opportunities
5. Sedentary environment
6. Staff behavior
7. Training and education
8. PA policies



Benefits of a Physical Activity Program at Childcare

Increase physical activity

Decrease sedentary behaviors

Develop gross motor skills

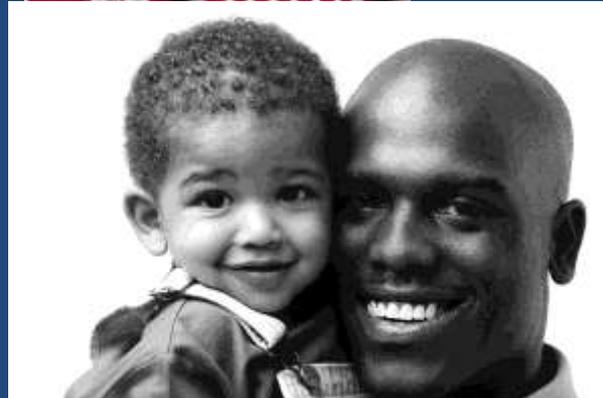
Expose to natural environment

Have fun moving

Enhance child learning: mental, social, emotional



Teachers – Gatekeepers of Physical Activity



Teachers or Other Staff Can Be Links to Children's Physical Activity at Child Care Settings



Teacher as gatekeeper

Physical Environment

- Outside
- Inside
- Portable and fixed equipment
- Engage with natural elements on play yard

Instructional Environment

- Structured
 - Facilitate
 - Integrate
 - Motor skills
- Unstructured
- Transitions and management

Behavioral Environment

- Encouragement
- Joining in
- Positive prompts or redirection
- Reward not punishment

Teachers as Links to Activity

Teacher as
gatekeeper

Physical Environment

- Facilitate
- Integrate
- Motor skills
- Unstructured
- Transitions
and
management

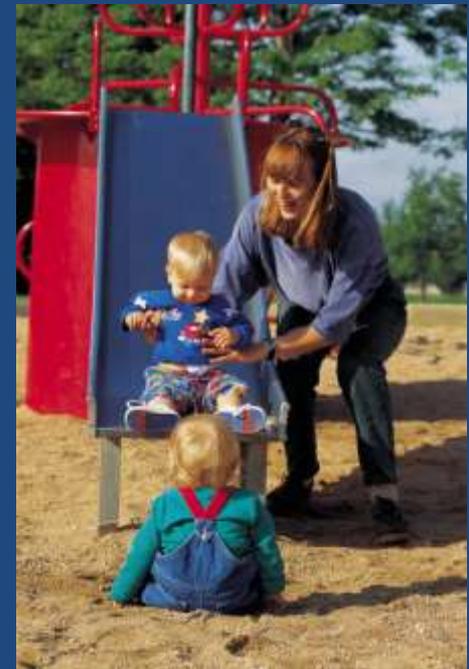


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How do teachers fare?

BEST PRACTICES

Tested Best Practices

- 94 child care centers in North Carolina
- Day-long observations conducted
- Used standard assessment tool (EPAO)



Staff Behaviors

- Staff should join children in active play
 - In 61% of centers, staff did not join in or did so modestly
- Staff should encourage children to be active
 - In nearly 50% of centers, staff did not prompt (≤ 1 time/total day)
- Not restrict play time as punishment
 - 40% of centers restricted active play as punishment
 - Increasing active play as a reward was observed at only 2 centers.

Physical Activity Education

- Provided formal lessons ≥ 1 /wk using standardized curriculum
 - Only 18% of centers had evidence of a curriculum
- Offer parents PA education at least 2x per year
 - Only 4% of centers documented PA parent education
- PA training (not playground safety) provided for staff at least 2x per year
 - Only 25% of the centers had documentation showing at least one staff member had obtained some PA training

Promotion of Activity at Child Care

- Provide Activity Daily (try for 120 min)
 - Add activity to circle time, centers time, or other lessons
 - Make active transitions between activities
 - Provide physical activity education lessons at least 1/wk (use curriculum)
- Active Play Outdoors
 - Make sure to go outside EVERY DAY
 - Use portable equipment and change up regularly
 - Enhance the outdoor setting with natural elements (trees, rocks, plantings, paths)



Promotion of Activity at Child Care

- Teachers Contribute
 - By using positive reinforcement
 - By joining in (sometimes)
 - By not withholding activity as punishment
- Education Needed
 - Teachers need training
 - Parents need education
- Policies Promote
 - What children should wear
 - Going outside everyday
 - How much time
 - Support of active play



Contact Us

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