

State of Nevada

Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan

Nevada's Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan focuses on community strategies to help support a healthy start for children. The plan targets children from birth to eight years of age and promotes obesity preventive behaviors including: healthy eating; increasing physical activity; limiting sedentary time (especially screen/media); gaining adequate sleep; and providing breastfeeding support. Establishing healthy habits within the first five years of life is critical for a child's lifelong health and development.

In 2017, **32.6%** of Nevada children entering kindergarten were considered overweight or obese; furthermore, the percentage of obese youth in Nevada is steadily climbing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), obesity during childhood can have harmful effects on the body including greater risk for: cardiovascular disease (CVD); insulin resistance and diabetes mellitus; respiratory and joint problems; gastrointestinal issues; and anxiety and psychological disorders.

Research demonstrates **70%** of obese children and adolescents ages **5 to 17 years old (y.o.)** have at least one risk factor for CVD, and **39%** could have two or more. Therefore, **of the ~ 816,346 children in Nevada in 2017, it is likely ~ 571,442 (or 7 in 10 obese Nevada children)** may currently have one or more CVD risk factor such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, glucose impairment, etc. Finally, the estimated cost associated with treating obesity in Nevada is \$337 million annually.

Reducing and preventing childhood obesity in Nevada is achievable through consistent efforts introduced and supported by children's parents, guardians, caregivers, coaches, teachers, Early Care and Education (ECE) providers, health care providers, and community members. The *Nevada Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan* provides a valuable framework offering support for community leaders in promoting healthy behaviors and helping to build stronger communities.

For more information please contact Janet Osalvo, Obesity Prevention & Control Coordinator with the Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health at 775-684-2203 or jaosalvo@health.nv.gov.

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NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION PLAN

GOALS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal 1: Promote and Support Best Practices for Healthy Nutrition & Physical Activity in Early Childhood Education Facilities

- Provide technical assistance and support for the development of early childhood wellness plans.
- Provide training to early childhood providers on strategies for implementing best practice standards.
- Increase outreach and utilization of online toolkits by early childhood providers.
- Establish gardens in early childhood facilities with related curriculum for young children.
- Increase provider utilization of the Child and Adult Care Food Program.
- Align local and state policies and regulations regarding food handling in early childhood settings.

Goal 2: Increase Awareness of the Importance of Preventing Early Childhood Obesity Among Parents of Children Ages 0-8 y.o.

- Attend community events to share information and resources for the prevention of early childhood obesity.
- Increase outreach and utilization of the online obesity prevention toolkits for parents.
- Create a traditional media campaign with unified messaging around early childhood obesity prevention to engage parents.

Goal 3: Increase Awareness of the Importance of Preventing Early Childhood Obesity & Prevention Strategies Among Other Community Providers of Children Ages 0-8 y.o.

- Engage providers working directly with children ages 0-8 y.o. to increase awareness of issues and resources related to early childhood obesity prevention.
- Increase training opportunities and integration for physical activity and nutrition information for providers and community partners.

Goal 4: Establish Data Collection Systems to Enhance Knowledge of Issue and Effectiveness of Interventions

- Create Body Mass Index (BMI) data surveillance in order to identify trends to improve student health.
- Develop systems to track early childhood obesity prevention programs, efforts, resources and strategies statewide.
- Increase evaluation of programs and interventions to determine the effectiveness of local obesity prevention efforts.

Goal 5: Increase Knowledge of Best Practice & Current Research Regarding Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Strategies

- Attend national conferences and participate in relevant webinars to learn best practices, strategies, research and availability of resources to support effective interventions.
- Share information and resources among a network of public and private providers.

Goal 6: Improve Relevant Standards & Policies for Nutrition and Physical Activity for Early Childhood Providers

- Align Nevada early childhood policies regarding physical activity and nutrition, as well as Caring for Our Children national standards.
- Conduct analysis of Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) indicators to crosswalk with Caring for Our Children standards to create alignment between licensing, QRIS and national best practice standards.

Goal 7: Increase Sustainable Funding to Support Nevadan's Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Efforts

- Increase Nevada's capacity to become competitive for federal and/or national grant programs that would provide funding for early childhood obesity prevention programs.
- Create a grant template and team for grant development.

