

# Policy Options to Promote Physical Activity in Child Care: Active Living Research

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# Active Living Research

- Support research on policy environmental solutions to physical inactivity and childhood obesity
- Contribute to RWJF's goal of reversing the childhood obesity epidemic by 2015
- Focus on groups at highest risk
  - African American, Latino, Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, lower income
- Build the evidence base
  - \$27 million in grants through 2012
  - 180+ grants awarded so far
- Use research to inform policy and practice

# Child Care Policies

## Multiple Opportunities for Influence

- Federal
  - Head Start. Guidelines under development.
- State licensing laws
- Local
  - New York City is a model
- Need to consider
  - breadth of policy
  - funding & resources
  - enforcement & accountability
  - evaluation

# Survey of Healthy Activity and Eating Practices and Environments in Head Start (SHAPES)

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**Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine**  
**December 2009**

# About Head Start

- Nation's largest public preschool program
- Almost one million low-income children
- Incorporates nutrition and physical activity
- Well positioned to address obesity prevention
- No national data describing practices and environments related to obesity prevention

# Practices and Environments Related to Physical Activity

	<u>%</u>
1. <u>Structured</u> gross motor activity $\geq 30$ min/day	74
2. <u>Unstructured</u> gross motor activity $\geq 60$ min/day	73
3. <u>Not kept sitting</u> $> 30$ min	96
4. <u>TV and video</u> limited to $< 60$ min/day	90
8. Use an available <u>curriculum</u> on gross motor activity	54

# Practices and Environments Related to Physical Activity

	<u>%</u>
9. <b><u>On-site outdoor play area</u></b> at every center	<b>89</b>
<i>The “average” outdoor play area had...</i>	
10. <b><u>large open area</u></b> for group games	<b>98</b>
11. <b><u>natural elements</u></b> , such as trees or slopes	<b>58</b>
12. <b><u>large shaded space</u></b> for group games	<b>70</b>
13. enough <b><u>fixed play equipment</u></b>	<b>93</b>
14. enough <b><u>portable play equipment</u></b>	<b>94</b>
15. enough <b><u>wheeled toys</u></b>	<b>81</b>

# Conclusions

- The majority of Head Start programs have implemented practices and environments for encouraging physical activity that go beyond what is required by federal regulations
- Next step is to actually observe practices, environments, and physical activity in Head Start centers

# **Evaluated NYC Policy: Article 47**

**L Beth Dixon, PhD, MPH**

**Dept of Nutrition, Food Studies, and Public Health  
New York University**

- In January 2007, the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene added new physical activity, screen time, and nutrition policies to the NYC Health Code for licensed group daycare centers

# Physical Activity & Screen Time Policies

- Daycare centers are encouraged to
  - Provide  $\geq 60$  min/day of physical activity to children  $\geq 1$  year of age
  - Ensure that 30 of the 60 minutes are structured and guided physical activities for children  $\geq 3$  years of age
  - Limit sedentary activities to no more than 60 min/day
  - Avoid use of TV for children  $< 2$  years of age
  - Limit use of TV to  $\leq 60$  min/day of educational programs or programs that promote physical activity for children  $\geq 2$  years of age

# Accelerometry Substudy: Preliminary Findings

- 12 centers; 176 children
- Accelerometers worn from drop-off to pick-up time on 1 day
  - Average time:  $6 \pm 1$  hour
- 49% of children met the recommended  $\geq 60$  min/day of physical activity

# Conclusions

- Directors thought they were in compliance with the new physical activity policies, but results indicate that only half of children meet the recommended  $\geq 60$  min/d of physical activity.
- Directors said their major barrier for physical activity was limited outdoor space.

# Resource

- From Nemours: “A Guide To Help Children Grow Up Healthy *For Organizations Serving Children and Youth*”
- <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/PA-Guidelines-2009-sm.pdf>

# Resources from [www.activelivingresearch.org](http://www.activelivingresearch.org)

