



Community Plan-Health

Physically Healthy Children

Strategic Area Result:

- Infants and young children will exhibit healthy development in the areas of physical activity, nutrition, and healthy sleep habits.
- All children have access to health and dental services.

Why is this Important:

- Good physical health (including physical activity and good nutrition) correlates to overall well-being and academic success.
- Children who start healthy habits early are more likely to establish healthy habits for life.
- It is easier and more effective to prevent becoming overweight and obese than it is to reverse trends later.
- Children who are overweight or obese are likely to be overweight or obese as adults.
- Hungry children are sick more often; more likely to be hospitalized, suffer growth impairment and incur developmental impairments.
- Illness (often caused & spread by improper or lack of hand washing) and dental disease cause school absences.
- Research has shown a positive association between physical activity and academic performance and better classroom behavior.
- Active children:
 - Set lifelong health benefits of stronger muscles and bones and leaner bodies controlling body fat.
 - Are less likely to become overweight or obese and to develop Type 2 Diabetes.
 - Have a lower risk for high blood pressure or high cholesterol levels.
- Physical activity and being physically fit positively impacts personal body image, self esteem, and stress management.
- High BMI in children is correlated with higher risk for health problems such as heart disease, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, stroke, asthma and osteoarthritis- during childhood and as they age.
- Chronic undernutrition/food insecurity in children ages 0-3 years old is directly linked to cognitive development during a critical period of rapid brain growth; these children do more poorly in school. They:
 - have lower academic achievement
 - have more social and behavioral problems
 - have less energy for complex social interactions,
 - cannot adapt as effectively to environmental stresses.

Learn more and find references at <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH-2015...>

What works:

- Children should initiate breastfeeding within the first hour of birth and be exclusively breastfed for the first 6 months of life – meaning no other foods or liquids are provided, including water. From the age of 6 months, children should begin eating safe and adequate complementary foods while continuing to breastfeed for up to 2 years and beyond. WHO.
- Eliminate food deserts by providing opportunities for families to purchase healthy foods and beverages that are culturally appropriate in their community.
- Follow a healthy diet.
 - Eat sufficient fruits and vegetables.
 - Minimize consumption of sugar, including sugar-sweetened beverages for children 0-5
- Improve access to healthy choices in schools and childcare environments.
- Create and sustain policies that help all children maintain a healthy weight
- Make physical activity a part of the everyday experience for children.
- Increase physical activity before, during, and after school.
- Follow national recommendations for physical activity.
 - 2 to 3 years old: 30 minutes of adult-led structure physical activity and at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity (free play); not inactive for more than 1 hour at a time (except for sleeping) NASPE.
 - Ages 6-15: 1 hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity every day.
- Affordable and well-run before & after care school programs with programming that is mindful of the health and well-being of school aged children.

Current Conditions: TBD

Strategies:

- Encourage participation in SNAP and WIC for those who are eligible.
- Provide ongoing consistent information on physical activity, fitness, related community events, & activities basis via Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, email) & C3 Website.
- Promote physical activity at home and in school.
- Explore ways to get children motivated to partake in physical activity.
- Promote health insurance enrollment periods and processes/connect families to enrollment assistance

Selected Actions:

- Collect Healthy Indicator Data: BMI & 4th Grade Fitness
- Contact medical providers & encourage participation in EPIC Trainings with CHDI
- Host SNAP Parent Workshops related to Nutrition
- Develop Pre-K physical activity for winter
- Promote and maintain Story Walk
- Encourage/Promote ACES Day (Exercise US) @School
- Encourage/Promote PACES Day @Home
- Share info via website on the Colchester Farmer's Market
- Explore No Child Left Inside Program
- Disseminate information to area programs for the CT Farm to School Program
- Host a Lactation Consultant to provide workshop related to breastfeeding

Resources:

Learn more and find references at: <http://healthyamericans.org/assets/files/TFAH-2015...>