

# **An Equitable Future for All Children: Beginning in Early Childcare Setting**

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# Overview

- Policy Recommendation
- Case Studies: Oklahoma and Texas
- Lessons Learned and Best Practices
- Resources and Questions

## Policy Recommendations for Obesity Prevention in Early Care and Education Settings

April 25, 2015

### Position

The American Heart Association advocates for strong obesity prevention programs in early childhood education settings. One such setting, child care, is an important environment for forming good health habits around children's dietary intake, physical activity, and energy balance, thus combating the childhood obesity epidemic.<sup>1</sup> Child care providers are in a unique position to educate parents about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity, while also supporting a healthy environment for children to learn and grow. The 2012 National Household Education Survey reports that 60% of all U.S. children five years and younger not yet in kindergarten were in some form of non-parental care. Of those children, 56% were in a center-based child care program, making this an ideal setting for obesity interventions.<sup>2</sup> Over one million children are served by the federal Head Start programs every year, including children in every U.S. state and territory.<sup>3</sup> This figure does not include the many children from infancy to age five who are in private and public day care and preschool programs. Furthermore, it has been reported that many children from low-income backgrounds consume 50% to 100% of their Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) in a child care setting.<sup>4</sup> Reaching young children and their families is an essential strategy for primary prevention of obesity, cardiovascular disease, and its associated risk factors.

### Background

Currently, nearly 17% of children in the United States ages 2-19 are obese and another 15% are overweight.<sup>5</sup> Childhood obesity disproportionately affects racial and ethnic minority populations.<sup>6</sup> Globally, an estimated 43 million preschool aged children are overweight or obese, a 60% increase from 1990.<sup>7</sup> In more recent years, nationally representative data has shown no significant change in obesity among youth, demonstrating obesity prevalence may be stabilizing.<sup>8</sup> This could be due in part to large, broad scale nutrition and physical activity efforts. The Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System (PedNSS), a child-based public health surveillance system that describes the nutritional status of low-income children, shows that the incidence of obesity in low-income children under five years old has been slightly decreasing since 2009.<sup>9</sup> Continued effort and surveillance is needed to ensure this downward momentum continues.

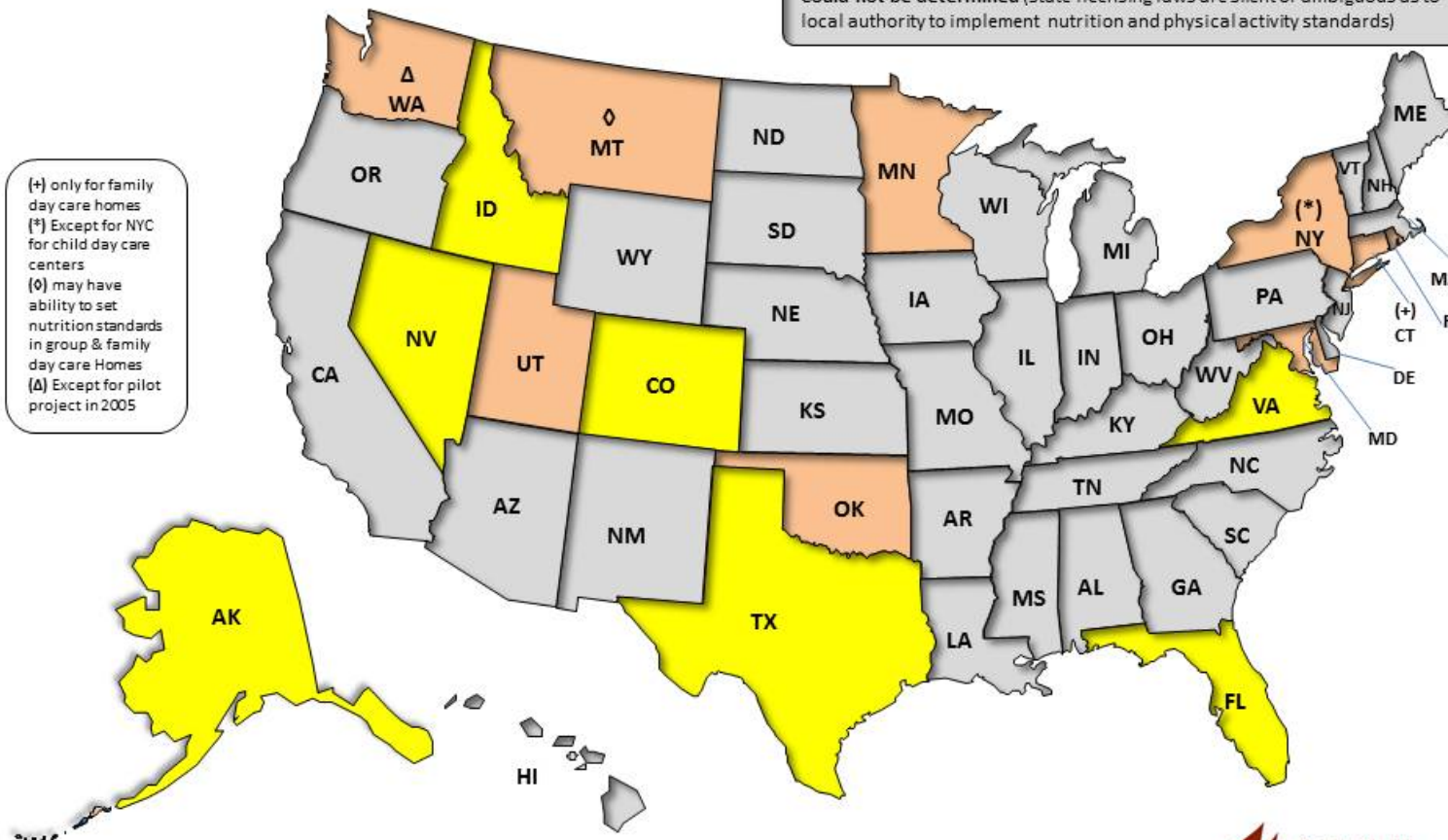
# Healthy Child Care and Local Control

**Potential local authority** (local jurisdictions can implement nutrition and physical activity standards in some circumstances)

**No local authority** (state licensing laws expressly limit local authority to implement nutrition and physical activity standards)

**Could not be determined** (state licensing laws are silent or ambiguous as to local authority to implement nutrition and physical activity standards)

(+) only for family day care homes  
(\*) Except for NYC for child day care centers  
(◊) may have ability to set nutrition standards in group & family day care homes  
(Δ) Except for pilot project in 2005





- Department of Human Services or Department of Family and Protective Services
- Establishes and oversees Childcare Center Compliance Requirements
- Focus of protecting the health, safety, and well-being of children in care.



Establish statewide nutrition, physical activity, sugary drink, and screen time standards for early childcare providers (Center or Home-Based).

## Growing a Healthier Future With the CACFP

Every day, more than 4 million children get meals and snacks through USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Thanks to recent updates to the CACFP meal patterns, you now have even more opportunities to help kids get the nutrition they need to **learn, grow, and play**.

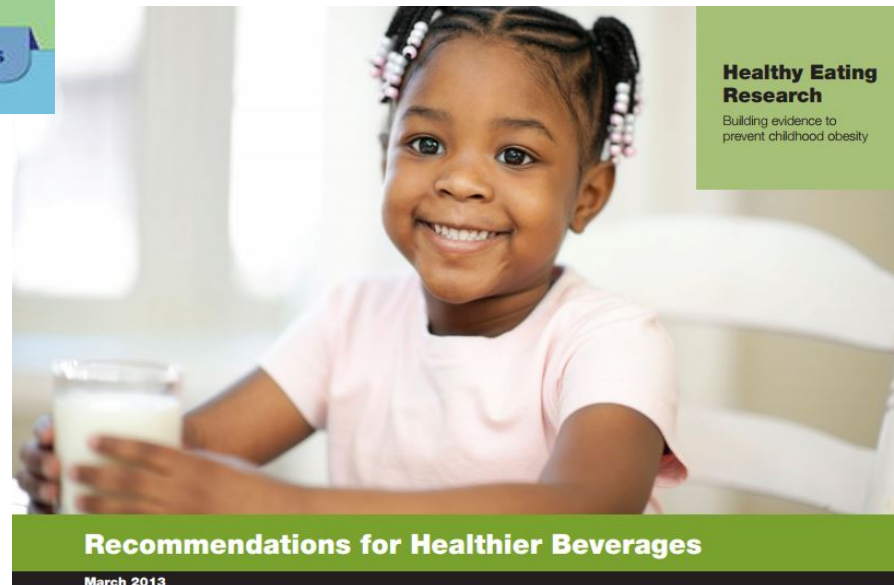


# MEET HEPA

## MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES EASY CHOICES

### INTRODUCING HEPA

We have expanded our longtime commitment to supporting healthy living by adopting a set of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity (HEPA) standards. These standards will ensure that we are making the healthy choice the easy and accessible choice.



**Healthy Eating Research**  
Building evidence to prevent childhood obesity

**Recommendations for Healthier Beverages**

March 2013





Let's give them the best possible start with quality nutrition and physical activity so they can be heart-healthy superheroes!


 American Heart Association
 
 American Stroke Association®

life is why™

**you're the cure**

## Support Healthy Texas Children

HB 2664 by Rick Miller




 American Heart Association
 
 American Stroke Association®

life is why™

**you're the cure**



- Engage Providers and Agencies
- Cultivate Champions
- Mobilize Constituencies
- Hone your Message



- <http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org/topics/healthy-eating/child-care>
- <http://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/HER-Healthier-Bev-Rec-FINAL-3-25-13.pdf>
- <http://www.ymca.net/hepa/standards>
- <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>
- <https://earlycare.voicesforhealthykids.org/>