



2020 Early Childhood Nutrition and Physical Activity Statewide Survey Report

Executive Summary

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Obesity Prevention Program (OPP) is currently implementing the Texas State Physical Activity and Nutrition (TXSPAN) program. One of the TXSPAN strategies includes implementing and integrating nutrition and physical activity (PA) standards into statewide early care and education (ECE) systems.

To accomplish this, OPP designed a recognition program called Texas Healthy Building Blocks (THBB). THBB recognizes ECEs focused on improving nutrition and PA by reviewing progress in using best practices. The DSHS Chronic Disease Epidemiology Branch conducted a survey of Texas ECEs to better understand their current nutrition, PA and screen time practices. The results of this survey are being used by OPP and partners to measure the impact of THBB on ECE's use of best practices.

Methods

A total of 6,446 ECE providers were emailed a link to this survey. The response rate was 16.5 percent. These results are based on 1,061 complete or partially complete survey responses. The survey was open from October 1, 2020 until October 28, 2020.

Results

The survey consisted of eight sections that asked about three age groups: preschoolers (2-5 years), toddlers (age 13-23 months) and infants (0-12 months).

Section 1: About You and Your facility

- **89.9%** of respondents served preschool aged children
- **73.7%** consisted of privately owned, faith based and/or non-profit ECE facilities
- **90.1%** provided full-day care and **27%** provided half-day care
- **31.9%** of facilities participated in the Texas Rising Star program
- **51%** of facilities did not participate in any PA program

Section 2: Outdoor Space

- **98.8%** of facilities' outdoor learning environments featured at least one best practice indicator for a model learning environment including, but not limited to:
 - 82.8%** types of physical activities
 - 75.0%** different types of wheeled toys
 - 76.7%** open-grassy area for games
 - 63.5%** shade structures

Results (continued)

Section 3: Outdoor play

- **72.6%** of respondents' facilities had outdoor active play two or more times per day, meeting Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standard (CFOC)
- **93.1%** of respondents' teachers or caregivers "Always" or "Sometimes" joined children during unstructured playtime

Section 4: Physical Activity (PA)

The PA section examined practices for infants, toddlers and preschoolers. A majority of facilities met CFOC.

- **74.7%** of facilities offered tummy time for infants facilitated at least three times per day
- **90.8%** of respondents provided toddlers 61 minutes or more of PA per day
- **50.4%** of respondents provided preschoolers 90 minutes or more of PA per day

Section 5: Screen Time

The CFOC for screen time for ages two and younger is zero minutes and the standard for preschool children is one hour per day or less.

- Infants averaged **3.5** minutes educational and **2.3** minutes recreational screen time
- Toddlers averaged **11.2** minutes educational and **6.7** minutes recreational screen time
- Preschoolers averaged **38.2** minutes educational and **22.3** minutes recreational screen time

Section 6: Physical Activity/Screen Time Policy and Curriculum

- **64.6%** of respondents had a written PA policy
- **83%** of PA policies addressed amount of time provided per day for indoor and outdoor PA
- COVID-19 impacted children's PA by limiting touch and increased social distancing

Section 7: Nutrition

- **61.5%** of children did not bring their own snack or meal every day
- **69.2%** used Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards for food offerings
- COVID-19 impacted children's nutrition by limiting budget and availability of certain foods

Section 8: Professional Development (PD) Throughout Employment

- **45.9%** of respondents indicated PD was provided once in nutrition
- **42.1%** of respondents indicated PD was provided once in screen time
- **44.8%** of respondents indicated PD was provided two or more times for PA
- **"Did not know where to find this training"** was the most cited barrier that prevented teachers or staff from receiving professional development

Limitations

These responses do not include all Texas childcare facilities and cannot be generalized to all ECEs.

Supplemental Data

To request the full report of survey results, email OPP at bringinghealthyback@dshs.texas.gov.