EARLY CHILDHOOD OBESITY IN NEVADA

In Nevada, 32.4% of children entering kindergarten in 2019 were considered overweight or obese — a 2.53% increase from the year prior (NICRP, 2020). Likewise, the percentage of obese youth in Nevada has steadily climbed among some of its most vulnerable populations. Specifically, 30.6% of African American/Black, 29.9% of Hispanic, and 22.0% of Asian/Pacific Islander kindergarten students were obese in the 2019 – 2020 school year. Finally, according to the Nevada Child Height and Weight Annual Report (2018), 43.1% of Nevada children within grades 4, 7, and 10 were considered overweight or obese based on their body mass index (BMI).

As childhood obesity can lead to lifelong health challenges, the Nevada Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Workgroup is a collaboration to combat the ever-growing numbers of overweight and obesity in young children. Led by the Nevada Institute of Children’s Research and Policy (NICRP), the workgroup is a coalition of individuals and organizations from across Nevada who are committed to reducing rates of childhood obesity by promoting education and outreach, implementing policy and data-driven programs, providing support to early childhood providers, and ensuring that appropriate resources are available to assist children and families in making healthy choices.

WORKGROUP MEMBERS

| Children’s Advocacy Alliance | Nevada Institute for Children’s Research & Policy at UNLV | The Nevada Registry |
| The Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics | Nevada Minority Health & Equity Coalition | Southern Nevada Health District |
| The Children’s Cabinet | Nevada State Division of Public and Behavioral Health | University of Nevada, Reno Extension |
| Nevada Department of Education – Office of Early Learning & Development | Nevada State Division of Welfare and Supportive Services | UNLV School of Public Health |
| Nevada Department of Agriculture | | Washoe County Health District |

THE NEVADA EARLY CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION STATE PLAN

Nevada’s Early Childhood Obesity Prevention State Plan (“State 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.

Reducing and preventing childhood obesity in Nevada is achievable through consistent efforts introduced and supported by parents, guardians, caregivers, coaches, teachers, early care and education providers, health care providers, and community members. The State Plan provides a valuable framework offering support for community leaders in promoting healthy behaviors and helping to build stronger communities.

The State Plan incorporates statewide community organizations, programs, and stakeholders to reach outcomes associated with each of the Plan’s action goals:

1. Promote and support best practices for healthy nutrition and physical activity in Early Childhood Education facilities
2. Increase awareness of the importance of preventing early childhood obesity among parents of children ages 0-8 years
3. Increase awareness of the importance of preventing early childhood obesity and prevention strategies among other community providers of children ages 0-8 years
4. Establish data collection systems to enhance knowledge of the issue and effectiveness of interventions
5. Increase knowledge of best practice and current research regarding early childhood obesity prevention strategies
6. Improve relevant standards and policies for nutrition and physical activity for early childhood providers
7. Increase sustainable funding to support Nevada’s Early Childhood Obesity Prevention Plan efforts