

Western Maternal and Child Health Nutrition Partners – Washington Application for Nutrition Leadership Network RFP for Training and Technical Assistance Opportunity

Current Activities

Health Connections (Trainings for Quality Rating and Improvement System Coaches in Nutrition and Physical Activity Best Practice Standards): Health Connections aims to increase opportunities for young children to eat healthy and be physically active by aligning nutrition and physical activity best practice standards with Washington’s Quality Rating and Improvement Systems criteria - called “Early Achievers” in Washington - for licensed child care centers (Centers) and family home child care (FHCC) programs. From 2017-2018, we partnered with local health jurisdictions (LHJs), Seattle Children’s Hospital (SCH), The University of Washington’s Center for Public Health Nutrition (CPHN), the Washington Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to develop a series of tools that show alignment between family-style meals and physical activity practices with Environment Rating Scale and CLASS assessment tools for Early Achievers (EA). For the physical activity portion, we also developed “activity cards” to give providers quick and easy access to this information.

In the summer of 2018, we conducted three trainings across Washington on this work. EA coaches were introduced to the tools and activity cards. They were also given family style dining and portable play equipment to share with early learning staff to promote the adoption of mealtime and physical activity standards. One month after each training session, we followed up with coaches to obtain feedback on the usefulness of the tools, trainings and activity cards. The feedback is being used to revise the tools and make updates for future trainings.

Revision of Washington State Licensing Regulations for Early Learning: Since 2015, DCYF has been working to create a single set of licensing requirements for Centers and FHCC programs. Throughout this process, we have sponsored and participated in a workgroup led by the Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition (COPC) that has pushed for better alignment with best practice standards for nutrition, physical activity and screen time practices. DCYF passed the new licensing standards in August which show significant improvements in nutrition, physical activity and screen time requirements.

Proposed Activities

Health Connections: We plan to continue revising the Health Connections materials and trainings based on feedback from EA coaches, with the hope of disseminating the information statewide. In the next year, we will fund 2-4 local communities as part of the CDC State Physical Activity and Nutrition (SPAN) grant. We will convene community partners to discuss improving

nutrition, physical activity and breastfeeding through systems change, and will provide communities the revised trainings, tools and materials to distribute to EA coaches through their LHJs. We will also work with CPHN to develop and pilot a placemat for mealtime activities based off the alignment tools that will function similarly to the activity cards for physical activity. Linkages between best practice standards and EA criteria will be integrated into our free, online state-accredited trainings for early learning providers, which have been taken over 21,000 times. These efforts target both the EA coaches' community, as well as the providers they train and those who take the state-accredited trainings, to enhance knowledge and skills about providing nutrition and physical activity best practices to meet EA criteria.

I+PSE Levels: Foster coalitions and networks, promote community education, and educate providers

Success Measures: Successes will be measured by the number of coaches reached, the number of potential providers and children reached by trained coaches, the successful completion of a pilot for mealtime materials, the number of materials (activity cards, placemats) disseminated, and the number of updated online trainings taken by providers.

Licensing Standards Revision: We have a signed contract with DCYF to assist with trainings on the new licensing standards for nutrition, physical activity and screen time. From now until January 2019, we will be helping to incorporate updates in these areas into existing health and safety trainings for licensers and providers to ensure a smooth transition to the updated regulations. Once the new standards are implemented (August 2019), DCYF plans to create a new curriculum of advanced state-accredited trainings for providers with advanced degrees or those looking for increased knowledge in certain areas. We will serve as subject matter experts for trainings related to nutrition, physical activity, breastfeeding and screen time to ensure information is evidence-based and consistent with best practice standards.

I+PSE Levels: Promote community education, educate providers, change organizational practices, and inform policy & regulations

Success Measures: Success will be determined by completion of updated health and safety trainings and the number of new advanced trainings developed in these key areas.

Community Partners: For this work, we will continue to partner with LHJs, SCH, CPHN, DCYF, and COPC - all of whom we have worked with extensively on this and other projects in the past. We will also work with Child Care Aware (CCA), a non-profit that supports Early Achievers coaches in Washington, to disseminate trainings and materials for both the licensing standards and Health Connections work. All of these organizations except LHJs and SCH have statewide reach, and LHJs in selected communities as well as COPC will be funded through the SPAN grant to continue this work.

Scope: By taking a systems-level approach, including updates to licensing standards and training for EA coaches, we hope to reach all licensed Centers and FHCC programs in Washington. This includes over 5,400 Centers and programs which serve approximately 130,000 children.