

Issue

Child care licensing standards must be improved to ensure kids achieve and maintain a healthy weight and lifestyle.

Early care and education programs play a **critical role in helping kids eat healthy, stay active, and maintain a healthy weight.**

The state already requires child care providers to comply with minimum standards for nutrition, physical activity, and screen time. However, these **minimum standards are not aligned with nationally-recognized best practices for child health.**

Background

About **75% of kids under age 6 spend much of their day in child care outside the home**, meaning that child care programs are the places where kids are forming nutrition and physical activity habits. In fact, **nearly 1 million young kids in Texas are cared for in licensed or regulated child care programs (child care centers or homes).**

Since 1971, Texas has regulated minimum standards for child care licensing. Parents place trust in the state to set the bar at a level that aligns with best practices and updates to the standards are overdue. For example, **current standards allow for 2-5 year olds to have two hours of screen time per day—double the recommended amount for a 24-hour period in this age group.**

Recommendations

- 1) Update minimum standards for nutrition to align with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) administered by the Texas Department of Agriculture.**
 - CACFP provides clear, scientifically-backed, age-appropriate guidance that is regularly reviewed and updated; research shows children in CACFP programs receive foods of higher nutritional value.
- 2) Direct Childcare Licensing to update minimum standards for active play and screen time to align with the AAP and Caring for our Children best practices for early education.**

About Us

The Partnership for a Healthy Texas, a coalition of over 50 organizations, began in 2006, when several health-focused organizations banded together to take action. The Partnership for a Healthy Texas is now the most recognized and valued advocacy voice in the fight to end obesity in Texas.

References available at partnershipforahealthytexas.org/childcare

Issue at a glance

31%

of 2-5 year olds from low-income families in TX are overweight or obese.

5x

Overweight or obese preschoolers are **5x more likely** to be overweight or obese in adulthood.

1 million

kids in TX are cared for in licensed or regulated child care programs.

31

states & the District of Columbia have aligned their nutrition standards with CACFP.



The Partnership for a Healthy Texas began in 2006 and has grown to a coalition of more than 50 organizations. We serve to improve the public health as a valued partner in the fight against obesity and continue to have a concerted influence on Texas policy. We believe that by working together we can maximize our impact on the health of Texans and drive economic productivity by reducing the burden of chronic disease.

Mission

To develop and promote state policies that prevent and reduce obesity in Texas.



Find what works for Texans



Set priorities for the Legislature



Follow through and track success

Leadership

Chair: David Lakey, MD

Chief Medical Officer and Vice Chancellor for Health Affairs, The University of Texas System

Vice-Chair & Legislative Committee Chair: Clayton Travis

Director of Advocacy and Health Policy, Texas Pediatric Society

Communications Chair: Michelle Smith

Texas State Coordinator, Action for Healthy Kids

Program Chair: Donna Nichols, MEd, CHES

Faculty Associate, Michael & Susan Dell Center for Healthy Living, UTHealth School of Public Health

Steering Committee Organization Members

