



Early Childhood Working Group Charter

Current Situation:

There is a sense of urgency to focus our efforts and help young children and their families lay foundation for healthy weight given the critical stage of development occurring for children under five. The childhood obesity epidemic threatens our children's future health and we must scale up our collective approach.

Vision:

Children enjoy optimal growth and development in the Kansas City area where active living and healthy eating is supported for all.

Mission:

The Early Childhood Working Group provides a community forum to plan and implement viable approaches in a deliberate, thoughtful manner to prevent obesity in children under five years of age.

Long Term Goals:

- Increase proportion of children under five at a healthy weight.
- Improve planned and coordinated services that support healthy weight in children.
- Increase the proportion of children with at least one hour of play and activity per day.
- Increase the proportion of children with healthy eating practices.
- Increase the number of child care facilities with policy, practices and environments that support appropriate feeding practices, nutrition and physical activity.

Short-Term Outcomes

- Assessment of child care practices, policies and environments. (Completed 2013)
- Kansas City action plan to enhance child care policies, practices and environments. (In progress 2013)
- Strengthened community partnerships to provide and maximize use of resources to achieve goals.
- Integrated approaches to achieve healthy weight across the primary care, public health and community sectors.

Primary Audience:

- Community agencies serving children less than 5 years of age, including, but not limited to, child care and health care providers.
- Parents and families with children up to five years of age.

Guiding Principles

- Focus on evidence based strategies.
- Innovate and embrace promising practices where evidence is lacking.
- Focus on use and redirection of existing resources.
- Create transparent process and track progress.
- Build system approach to tackle the complicated issue that obesity presents.
- Strive for synergy, collaboration and alignment of resources to support priority strategies.

Geographic Area:

The Early Childhood Working Group focuses on the six-county Greater Kansas City area—Jackson, Platte, Clay, and Cass in Missouri and Wyandotte and Johnson County in Kansas and is open to future expansion.

Working Group Participation:

Participation is open to individuals or representatives of organizations that share and support the Early Childhood Working Group's vision, mission, and goals.

Meetings:

Working Group meetings are held three to four (3-4) times a year. Additional meetings to support professional development, planning or special projects may be hosted as needed.

Resources:

The work of the Early Childhood Working Group receives support from Weighing In, a program based at Children's Mercy Hospitals and Clinics.