

AB 627 (Brownley): Improving Nutrition in Child Care

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»» ISSUE

In California, almost 25 percent of children aged 2 to 5 are overweight or obese and at risk of a host of severe chronic health conditions and poor social and developmental outcomes. These chronic diseases yield a heavy impact on the state's rapidly escalating health care costs. Nationally, obesity among preschoolers has tripled in the past 30 years with little sign of slowing. While policymakers have focused on improving school meals, many children are showing up to school already at an unhealthy weight or with poor dietary habits. Child care then becomes the ideal place to shape young children's eating habits and lay a foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating.

»» NEED

Licensing requirements for child care currently do not include much by way of nutrition and physical activity standards. In addition, many child care sites participate in the federally-funded Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) whose nutrition standards were formulated decades ago without any attention to obesity prevention.

»» REQUEST

CFPA requests the Legislature to take the following actions to improve nutrition and physical activity environments in licensed child care:

1. Establish these basic nutrition and activity requirements as a condition of child care licensure:

- Follow the CACFP meal pattern.
- Serve only lowfat or nonfat milk to children 2 years or older.
- Limit juice to one serving of 100% juice per day.
- Serve at least one vegetable at lunch and supper.
- Eliminate deep fat frying.
- Limit sugar to 6 grams per serving for both hot and cold cereals.
- Limit screen time to 1 hour, including, but not limited to, television, video games, and computer.
- Ensure accessible and available water throughout the day.

2. Link additional state reimbursement for CACFP to the following stronger nutrition standards:

- Limit fried potatoes to a maximum of one time per week.
- Limit sweet grains (muffins, pastries, etc.) to no more than 2x/week only at snack time.
- Serve at least one whole grain product per day
- Limit processed meats (hot dogs, SPAM, luncheon meats, etc) to 3x/week maximum.
- Eliminate sugar-sweetened or artificially sweetened beverages.
- Limit fruits canned in syrup.

»» HISTORY

Legislation to improve the school food environment has passed in recent years. There has been no recent legislation aimed at improving nutrition and physical activity in child care.

»» OUTCOMES

Successful efforts at improving nutrition and activity environments in child care can help create a lifetime of healthy habits. Such efforts will also support existing and future improvements in school food by reaching kids at even younger ages and shaping healthier taste and diet preferences.