

# Physical Activity

In the U. S., the number of children who are obese has doubled in recent years. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), children who are obese can experience decreased health, lower self-esteem, fewer friends, and depression. All of these can lead to children's poor academic performance. The AAP recommends that child care programs create policies and practices that help children maintain a healthy weight.

Your child care center is partnering with ABC Grow Healthy to promote your child's health and well-being through physical activity. ABC Child Care, South Carolina's Quality Improvement System at SCDSS, has new Grow Healthy standards for all child care programs participating in the ABC system.

Following are practices that you will see in your child's program:

- Children age 2 and under will not view media (tv, videos, DVDs, etc.) or use computers
- Infants and toddlers will not be placed in restrictive equipment (bouncy seats, infant swings, infant carriers, etc.) while attending child care.
- Children will be encouraged to be physically active both indoors and outdoors.
- Physical activity will not be used as punishment, nor will it be withheld as punishment.
- Children will participate in planned physical activity at least 2 times per day.

You will also notice:

- Children ages 1-12 will play outdoors daily, weather permitting. If weather does not permit outdoor play, children will play actively indoors instead.
- A variety of materials will be provided to encourage active play both indoors (e.g., scarves, beanbags, balls, ribbons) and outdoors (e.g., balls, wheeled toys, hoops, obstacle cones).

In addition to the physical activity guidelines described above, your child's program will also:

- ask you to dress your child in clothes and shoes that allow them to be physically active.
- create safe places for infants and toddlers to play outside, including mats or blankets for infants who are not yet walking.
- develop a written physical activity policy that will be available to all families.
- ensure that teachers and staff attend training on promoting children's movement and physical activity.



While in child care, your child has important opportunities to practice skills that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. Together we can implement practices that will help your child maintain a healthy weight and develop healthy physical activity that will last a lifetime!