



Executive Summary

OBESITY PREVENTION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD: STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT AND ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT



The responsibility of childhood obesity prevention is complex and involves multiple stakeholders including the early care and education (ECE) settings, multiple government sectors, administrators, policy makers, health-care professionals, community-based organizations, private companies, state and local health departments, child care licensing bodies, food assistance programs, organizations providing education and training to ECE providers, as well as parents and schools.

In Oklahoma, collaborative networks between ECE obesity prevention stakeholders have yet to be fully established and solidified. Furthermore, obesity prevention efforts of individual stakeholders are not comprehensively shared or disseminated to others in the state that could benefit from such information. For this purpose, the identification of stakeholders and the development of a state action plan will provide a network of invested, interdisciplinary stakeholders working towards a shared goal, as well as an avenue to translate research findings into practice at the state-level, in a cooperative and comprehensive manner to maximize scarce resources.

The purpose of this study is to assess current obesity prevention efforts implemented by ECE stakeholders as well as to coordinate strategies and enhance communication across stakeholders to improve quality and efficiency of these efforts within Oklahoma.

Aim 1: Identify key stakeholders and existing collaborations pertaining to obesity prevention for preschool-aged children in the ECE environment and to also understand the relationships of potential stakeholders through the creation of a network analysis to identify key contributors.

Aim 2: Assess current obesity prevention efforts being implemented and disseminate the gathered knowledge to invested stakeholders.

Aim 3: Utilize the knowledge from Aim 2 to create a statewide action plan in order to guide the stakeholders ECE obesity prevention efforts within Oklahoma

- The timeline of this project can be found at the end of the document

Addressing Aim 1: (COMPLETE)

Stakeholders were identified through agency websites, networking with different people involved in obesity prevention, and utilizing prior/existing stakeholder connections. Once the names of the stakeholders were gathered, the first meeting (Stakeholder Assessment Meeting) took place June 22, which served the purpose of filling out the assessment worksheet, informing other stakeholders about who is doing what in regards to obesity prevention for preschool-aged children, and to foster stakeholder commitment and communication.

To understand the existing collaborations between stakeholders, individuals were asked to name others within their organization as well as outside of it that could be beneficial to this process. From these referrals, a stakeholder network analysis (SNA) was created to map and measure the relationships between invested parties and identify key entities. This study has identified 20 out of 127 individuals as key stakeholders that connect various people and agencies. In addition, 6 agencies were identified as core

groups and 3 agencies that stand alone. Core agencies include: 1) BNPAL-NS-OUHSC, 2) CAW-OSDH, 3) CCS-OKDHS, 4) CECPD-OU, 5) ECEI-OUHSC, 6) OTCCA. (See Stakeholder Network Analysis Key for Agency Abbreviation Translations).

Addressing Aim 2: (COMPLETE)

Information on the obesity prevention efforts in Oklahoma was collected through qualitative reviews of publically available materials as well as qualitative interviews with ECE involved stakeholders over the phone, through email or in person to provide clarification and complete worksheets.



A modified partnership assessment worksheet from the *Let's Move! Child Care* website designed for state and local leaders was used to obtain the information. This worksheet helped to narrow down who the administrators and leaders are, what coalitions and partnerships exist what are the agencies priorities, what are their obesity prevention initiatives, what curricula and programs are being utilized, what is their capacity for involvement in the states ECE obesity prevention efforts, what they feel are obesity prevention issues/obstacles, and any ideas for future.

The partnership assessment worksheets were then gathered from different entities, compiled, and then cleaned to develop one cohesive document. This 72-page partnership assessment packet contains an Additional Information section to provide more detail about the curricula and resources as well as the programs, initiatives, and projects discussed in the worksheets. A Stakeholder Directory was also included listing the names, positions, and contact information of all the stakeholders that are related to obesity prevention for preschool-aged children with in ECE settings in Oklahoma. Once finalized, this compiled document was electronically sent out to all of the stakeholders so that so that programs, ideas, and connections will be easier to share and cultivate in the future.

Addressing Aim 3: (UPCOMING)

During the evaluation of these partnership assessment worksheets, various themes have emerged that demonstrate the similarities as well as the disparities in the varying efforts and initiatives of different stakeholders. These findings will be further discussed at this State Action Plan Meeting. The purpose of this State Action Plan Meeting will be to discuss the findings thus far, go over gaps that have emerged, and to set goals and action steps for the future.

Expected Outcomes: This study will identify pivotal stakeholders regarding obesity prevention in ECE settings within Oklahoma. It will also help create a more inclusive, intertwined network to foster the greatest interaction and connectivity between groups from multiple professions and disciplines. Due to the interconnected nature of this project, various initiatives, programs, and training opportunities will be more easily accessed and shared leading to the increased application of obesity prevention efforts. Through this assessment, gaps in policies, practices, and programs have also been ascertained, which can lead way to the development of a unified action plan to advance ECE obesity prevention efforts and minimize redundancy. This Action Plan Meeting will provide clear, coordinated directions in meeting ECE obesity prevention best practices in hopes of improving environmental quality and facilitating healthy lifestyle behaviors in children in Oklahoma.



PROJECT FINDINGS

Primary Obesity Prevention Initiatives

1. Strengthen Current ECE Environment Practices
2. Enhance ECE Staff/Provider/ Training
3. Increase Access to Fruit & Vegetables/Gardening Resources
4. Develop and Implement More Family Outreach/Education
5. Support ECE Obesity Prevention Policy/Advocacy Work



Predominant Curricula/Resources Utilized in Oklahoma:

1. Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC)
2. Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH)
3. I am Moving, I am Learning (IMIL)

**Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) and I am Moving, I am Learning (IMIL) were both recognized by the White House Obesity Task Force in 2014.



Predominant Programs/Projects/Initiatives Ongoing in Oklahoma:

1. Certified Healthy Oklahoma (CHO) Early Childhood Program (ECP)
2. TSET Healthy Living Program (HLP)
3. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)
4. The Oklahoma Health Improvement Plan (OHIP) 2020
5. Reaching for the Stars (QRIS)
6. Fit Kids of Southwest Oklahoma Coalition (FKSWO)

Priorities:

Most agencies primary priorities related to obesity prevention focused on improving nutrition, increasing physical activity opportunities, reducing screen time, increasing school readiness, providing health trainings and improving environmental policies, outreach, safety and education.



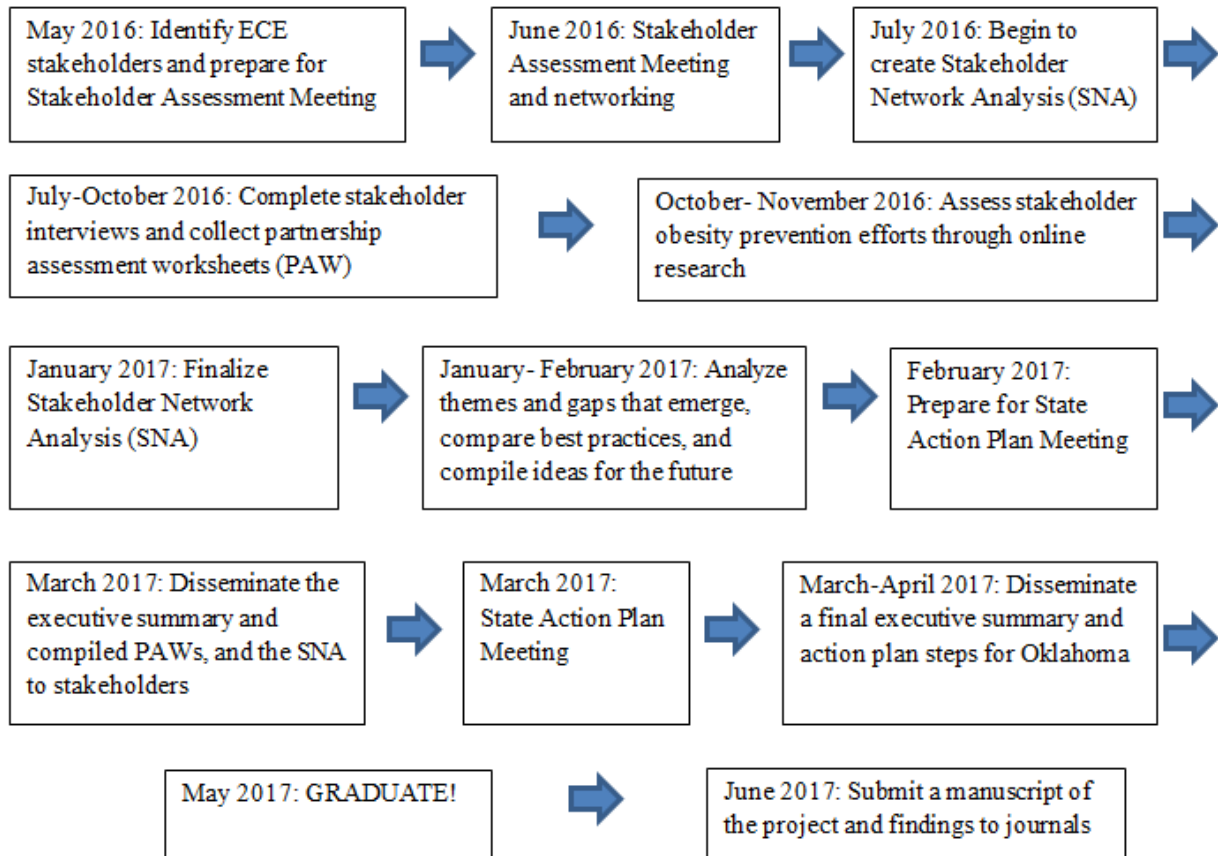
Obstacles and Issues:

The predominate issues include decreases in funding, limited parent/teacher awareness or education about health and health-related programs, agencies lack of awareness regarding other available programs and resources, little family/community involvement, and fear of overburdening already busy providers.

Ideas for the Future:

Numerous ideas for the future were mentioned; some of which include continued/increased involvement and collaboration among agency and community partners; partnership with organizations that already have training materials, educational tools, and child resources in place; utilization of more evaluation services to supply the most effective curricula and programs; further collaboration with grants from higher education affiliations; more feedback from families in regards to what will work best for them; and an increase public awareness about health related topics/available resources.

TIMELINE OF PROJECT



**PREVENTION
WORKS!**

This report was prepared on March 5, 2017 by Devon Walker, Masters of Nutritional Sciences and Graduate Research Assistant for the Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity Laboratory directed by Dr. Susan B. Sisson. If you have questions or comments, please contact us at nutritionandactivitylab@ouhsc.edu or Devon-Walker@ouhsc.edu or 405.271.8001 x 41173.