

Every child deserves to grow up healthy. Unfortunately some experts believe that, for the first time, the current generation of children may have shorter lives than their parents.

Recognizing that Washington's future depends on the health of our children, Governor Jay Inslee launched the Healthiest Next Generation Initiative to help make our next generation the healthiest ever. The goal is to help our children maintain a healthy weight, enjoy active lives and eat and drink healthy foods and beverages by making changes in early learning settings, schools and communities

Focus Areas

- **Breastfeeding:** Supporting breastfeeding friendly places, policies and practices
- **Healthy Eating:** Assuring that children have access to healthy food and beverages
- **Physical Activity:** Increasing opportunities for children to be physically active

Focus Environments

- **Early Learning Settings:** child care, preschools, family friend and neighbor care
- **Schools:** public and private schools
- **Communities:** where we live, work and play

Cross Agency Team

- Department of Early Learning
- Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)
- Department of Health

States that are making progress in improving the health of children have found that there is not one solution but many solutions, by many people, in the places where children spend their time--- in early learning settings, schools, and communities. The Healthiest Next Generation Initiative engages businesses, community leaders and state agencies to take actions that support children's health.

Fast facts

32% of low-income 2-5 year olds in Washington State are overweight or obese

Only 35% of providers serve a non-starchy vegetable twice daily

50% make drinking water available both indoors and outdoors

Only 18% serve meals and snacks family style

Only 18% of preschoolers get 120 minutes or more of physical activity daily

54% limit children's screen time to less than 1 hour per week

Data from 2011 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System and 2013 Washington State Survey of Nutrition and Physical Activity in Licensed Child Care. Data is for both child care centers and family child care home providers respondents.

The Governor created an innovative public-private partnership called the Governor's Council for the Healthiest Next Generation. This group will recommend action steps that will direct the work on the Initiative.

Areas of Focus for Early Learning Environments:

Strategies to create healthy early learning environments are centered on these areas:

Physical Activity: Increasing opportunities for children to be physically active throughout the day. Striving to meet the best practice recommendations of 120 minutes per day for preschoolers and 90 minutes per day for toddlers as well as more "tummy time" for infants.

Healthy Eating: Promoting healthier food and beverages in early learning settings. This includes serving lower fat milk to children over age 2, serving a wider variety of fruit and vegetables, serving more whole grains, and fewer processed and high fat meats, potatoes and baked goods.

Screen Time Reduction: Limiting screen time to no more than 1 hour per week of educational, commercial free programming.

Breastfeeding: Supporting breast feeding moms and babies by making them welcome and meeting their needs.

Current HNG Initiative Action Steps for DEL

- Support comprehensive breastfeeding policies in early learning facilities
- Promote and expand programs that work in early learning environments statewide
- Provide toolkits with strategies to ensure that all children are active and consume nutritious food and clean water in early learning facilities
- Create a mentoring program to help early learning teachers and caregivers implement these strategies
- Promote healthful eating and active living goals in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program Performance Standards
- Develop a system to award MERIT/STARS credits to early learning teachers and caregivers for completing the online obesity prevention course

HNG Initiative Recommended Action Steps for DEL for the Next 3 Years

- Update the rules and regulations for licensed child care centers to address the latest version of national standards on nutrition, physical activity and screen time and include required training for providers (initial, ongoing, and professional development) on these topics
- Increase training on nutrition, physical activity and screen time in Early Achievers
- Fund regional Early Learning Collaboratives to help increase the capacity of licensed child care centers to meet updated rules and regulations