

Shape NC: Healthy Starts in Early Care and Education Webinar Series

Shape NC is sponsoring the *Healthy Starts in Early Childhood Care and Education Training Series*, a 10-hour, online professional development opportunity designed for early educators interested in creating learning environments that promote healthy practices for young children and role modeling best practices for the children in their care. Participants will receive 1.0 CEUs (10 hours) from UNC Wilmington upon completion of the series. Two hundred fifty early childhood professionals have enrolled. Their feedback has been positive with many of the educators expressing their enthusiasm for new techniques in offering healthy foods, increasing activity and establishing outdoor learning. Here is an example of some of the feedback that we have received:

"I don't even know where to start. This was a great class. I learned so much from what I need to eat to what my children should be eating. My director has seen a big change in me. I go outside everyday with my children, even on rainy days. I can tell a huge difference in my children. Since I have been going outside more and being more actively involved with them they are actually eating more at lunch time. They actually want to try new things on their plate and they are finishing their milk. I have also changed at home, buying more fruits and vegetables. I spend more time with my family doing things instead of watching TV. I really appreciate the class that you offered to us. I would love to take more in the future if you offer any. I also have ordered and received the information from choose my plate website. This will be used in my curriculum that I will soon be doing with my class. I hope that this will help my parents get more involved at home with their children in what they need to eat. I have also started taking more equipment outside to keep the kids more active. I keep thinking of things as I write. Like I said this was a great class and I really appreciate that I was able to be a part of it. Thank you!!!!!"

– Tamra, Randolph County

"I first want to thank you all for making available such a wonderful, well thought out and put together schedule of course of information. I participate in a CACFP program and am thankful that I do because it helps remind me as a childcare provider how important nutrition is and that we should teach families and children how to develop healthy eating patterns, make sure to exercise, as well as learn other necessary lifestyle changes that can help them live with less medical problems. My eyes have always been "open" about the issue of obesity. It has been an uphill battle for me in fighting against it. When I viewed the "Weight of the Nation" and then had a chance to see first hand the study's results held with individuals in Bogalusa, La, it made me think about my own situation. I have made lifestyle changes when it comes to my eating habits and patterns. I always eat with the children in my FCCH family style, as well as with my own family; but now I'm controlling my portion size to begin to maintain a healthier BMI. There are many other things that was wonderful about the courses selected I could just go on and on. Thanks again for making this program so easily accessible, accomplishable, informative, and understandable. Keisha Freeman and Melody's Playground Home Daycare of Northampton County. I look forward to more program's like yours."

- Keisha Freeman, Northampton County

Shape NC Staff Wellness

Shape NC is offering a wellness program to staff working in Shape NC Model Early Learning Centers. The program was designed to address priority topics identified in a survey of 145 child care providers in NC, in which 66% reported that they were “very interested” in participating in a staff wellness program (30% were “somewhat interested”). Most often selected and prioritized topics:

- Dealing with stress
- Weight management techniques
- Small steps to changing nutrition/nutritious cooking tips and recipes with fruits and vegetables
- Tips for increasing physical activity/starting a walking or activity program

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Director interview prior to workshop
- Health fairs for center staff
 - Including various assessments: Height and Weight, Blood Pressure, Step Test, Fruit and Vegetable Screener, Beverages and Smoking Screener
- The 6 week challenge – tracking behavior and receiving feedback and tips
- Evaluation of results

GOALS:

Take more steps per day

Drink 3 or fewer sugar sweetened beverages per day

Strive for or maintain a healthy weight

Eat 2 servings of fruits and vegetables per day

Continue not smoking, or limit to less than 10 cigarettes per day

LOOKING AHEAD

The program will conclude at the end of June. We congratulate the centers and staff for their participation and look forward to sharing the accomplishments of the participants! It is our intention to learn how to improve the program and make it more widely available in the future.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please note that Alyssa Michel is now developing the newsletters each month. We will continue to keep you posted on the happenings of Shape NC and current news and resources regarding physical activity, dietary practices, and outdoor learning environments in child care.

Please share your stories, successes and/or challenges with improving the health of young children by contacting AMichel@ncsmartstart.org or (919)287-7012.