



Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (DNPAO)

Who We Are and What We Do

Improving Environments to Support Healthy Eating and Active Living

Early Care and Education

DNPAO provides subject matter expertise and guidance on the integration of nutrition and physical activity best practice recommendations into early care and education systems. By working through the established systems to improve nutrition and physical activity practices in the child care environment, all current and future children attending these facilities are positively impacted. Providing environments that support healthy behaviors at this young age helps to build a foundation for healthy living.

Schools

DNPAO provides subject matter expertise and guidance on creating healthier school environments using best practice recommendations for nutrition and physical activity. By convening partners from national, state, and local levels, DNPAO garners support and resources to empower

education leaders to improve nutrition and physical activity environments in schools. DNPAO coordinates the SC FitnessGram System, a statewide web-based health-related fitness testing and data management system, to enhance the ability of public schools to monitor and improve student health.

Partner Engagement

To impact population nutrition and physical activity in the state of South Carolina, a multi-sector, collaborative approach is necessary. DNPAO co-leads the Healthy Palmetto Leadership Council which serves as the state lead coalition of organizations responsible for collectively addressing healthy eating, active living, and healthy weight within the Live Healthy SC State Health Improvement Plan chronic health conditions priority area. The purpose of Healthy Palmetto is to unify and mobilize organizations working on healthy eating and active living efforts in South Carolina. We envision a South Carolina where quality of life is a priority, and everyone has an equitable opportunity to thrive.



Our Mission

The Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Prevention (DNPAO) aims to support equitable opportunities for healthy eating and active living statewide through the facilitation of collective state-level actions. You can learn more at scdhec.gov/DNPAO.

Our Strategies

- Improve early care and education environments to support healthy eating and active living
- Improve school environments to support healthy eating and active living
- Improve student health through the implementation of a statewide, web-based FitnessGram system
- Engage partners to guide state-wide healthy eating, active living, and healthy weight efforts



Did You Know?



Poor diet and physical inactivity (combined) are the second actual cause of death (JAMA, 2004), contributing to South Carolina's leading chronic conditions including some cancers, heart disease, stroke, and diabetes.



SC is one of 19 states that has an adult obesity rate above 35 percent (Trust for America's Health: The State of Obesity 2022).



According to measured data of SC's public school students, 42.0% of students are overweight or obese and 57.0% of students do not meet cardiorespiratory fitness requirements for good health (SC FitnessGram 2021-2022).

Program Highlights

Early Care and Education

- [Improving the Nutrition and Physical Activity Environments of ABC Quality Child Care Centers in SC: A Five Year Review](#), summarizes the successful implementation of nutrition and physical activity standards by ABC Quality child care centers. With guidance from DNPAO, ABC Quality continues to update and include nutrition and physical activity indicators in program standards as components of quality care. A recognition program is under development to highlight providers that have shown a commitment to improving the nutrition and physical activity environment of their facility by meeting established criteria.
- DNPAO collaborated with the SC Department of Social Services (DSS), Division of Early Care and Education, and the Yvonne and Schuyler Moore Child Development Research Center at the University of South Carolina (UofSC) to create a [story map of Child and Adult Care Food Program \(CACFP\) participation in SC](#).
- A joint effort of DNPAO and ABC Quality, Grow Outdoors South Carolina (GO SC) is an initiative to transform early childhood outdoor spaces into naturalized environments that spark play and learning. Child care providers are supported to improve their outdoor space using a learn, design, implement framework. Professional development opportunities on outdoor play and learning environments are provided to landscape architects, early care and education regulatory staff, technical assistance providers, and coaches.

Schools

- Through a partnership with the SC Department of Education, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, and the Boeing Center for Children's Wellness, the [Local Wellness Policy State Technical Assistance Team \(LWP STAT\)](#) was formed to support USDA's Final Rule of the Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. The interagency team provides professional development opportunities to school district administrators on how to adopt, implement, and monitor the SC School Boards Association's model Local Wellness Policy to support the sustainability of healthy eating and active living opportunities in schools.
- [SC FitnessGram](#), a statewide web-based health-related fitness testing and data management system, is being used in 67 of 75 public school districts and has brought together leaders and experts to support efforts to improve health-related fitness among public school students. At the local level, the SC FitnessGram system provides ways to manage and report data to assist parents, teachers, and administrators in providing information that can strengthen fitness education, testing, and improve student health and academic achievement. Three school districts are serving as FitnessGram Influencer Districts to implement best practices to improve physical activity before, during, and after school. SC FitnessGram will continue expanding efforts through exploring longitudinal analyses of the data and implementing communication and professional development strategies at the school, community, and state level.
- [Breaking Physical Activity Barriers Through Open Community Use](#) was developed to encourage school districts to adopt the SC School Boards Association's model Open Community Use of School Recreational Areas policy to provide safe, convenient, and free places for physical activity during non-school hours. As of 2023, 15 school districts have adopted the model policy. Qualifying schools that complete the DHEC Open Community Use survey are offered free signs to promote the use of their outdoor recreational facilities for community use.

Partner Engagement

- The Healthy Palmetto Leadership Council was officially launched in 2020 and has over 20 engaged partner organizations. For more information, please visit the [Healthy Palmetto page](#) on the Live Healthy SC website. The Healthy Palmetto Leadership Council has selected six priority areas on which to focus its state-wide efforts. By elevating the collective expertise of these unique partners, we will lay the groundwork for a sustainable model that other priorities can be added to over time.