

ENSURING YOUNG CHILDREN GROW UP AT A HEALTHY WEIGHT: *POLICY OPPORTUNITIES TO PREVENT OBESITY IN CONNECTICUT*

Farmington, CT - The most effective approach to addressing childhood obesity is to prevent it in the first place, according to a new policy brief released today by [the Child Health and Development Institute of Connecticut](#) (CHDI). One in three Connecticut kindergartners are either overweight or obese. Recent research shows that obesity may be very difficult to reverse if children are obese by 5 years of age. Preventing childhood obesity requires action in a child’s earliest years—from birth to age two.

“Healthy lifelong weight begins at birth,” said Judith Meyers, President and CEO of CHDI and its parent organization the Children’s Fund of Connecticut. “Investing in obesity prevention policies makes sense for Connecticut. Smart prevention policies will foster a healthier population and reduce obesity-related health care costs over time.”

The new policy brief: [“Ensuring Young Children Grow Up at a Healthy Weight: Policy Opportunities to Prevent Obesity”](#) was prepared for CHDI by Roberta Friedman as part of a grant to the [UConn Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](#). The brief reviews the issue of childhood obesity, highlights opportunities for prevention, and recommends five ways Connecticut’s child care settings and hospitals can help our youngest children grow up at a healthy weight:

1. Support breastfeeding in hospitals and in child care centers and group child care homes.
2. Serve only healthy beverages in all child care settings.
3. Help child care centers and group child care homes follow good nutrition guidelines.
4. Increase physical activity time for infants and toddlers in all child care settings.
5. Protect infants and toddlers in all child care settings from “screen time.”



This issue is particularly timely, as the State Legislature is currently considering [Raised H.B. No. 5303 - An Act Concerning Childhood Obesity](#).

CHDI began focusing on strategies to promote healthy weight in children from birth to age two after publishing the [IMPACT “Preventing Childhood Obesity: Maternal-Child Life Course Approach”](#) in 2014. The report reviewed scientific research on the causes of obesity and explored implications for prevention and early intervention. In 2015, the Children’s Fund of Connecticut funded four obesity prevention projects in Connecticut that addressed health messaging, data development, policy development and baby-friendly hospitals.

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