

Exploring early care and education policies and quality following training and technical assistance for the prevention of childhood obesity

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Background– With the prevalence of childhood obesity approaching 14% among children 2 to 5 years old, early intervention strategies within early care and education (ECE) settings have been identified as a targeted strategy. Accordingly, the Ohio Healthy Program (OHP) aims to reduce childhood obesity through training and technical assistance (TA) designed to support nutritional and physical activity policies among ECEs.

Methods– This study examines the novel implementation of the OHP program within an urban county in northeastern Ohio, exploring changes in policy and program quality ratings among ECEs that have been OHP designated for multiple years. The primary data for this study was collected during technical assistance from 2015-2019 and include: Wellness Child Care Assessment Tool (WellCCAT) policy scores before and after TA each year; demographics of the ECE; Step Up to Quality (SUTQ) ratings; and, the number of TA site visits.

Results– Preliminary findings reveal that ECEs with more than one year of TA (n=69) have a yearly increase of their WellCCAT policy scores. We anticipate findings that: there is no difference between the post-TA scores of year 1 and the pre-TA scores of year 2; and, the SUTQ TA sites increase at a greater rate than other ECEs in the county that do not have OHP designation.

Conclusion– Results support the efficacy of OHP designation in improving the quality and health of ECE policies across time. Future research should collect obesity outcome data from children in participating ECEs to demonstrate the impact of OHP in reducing childhood obesity.

Conduct evaluation related to programs, research, and other areas of practice Public health or related organizational policy, standards, or other guidelines Public health or related public policy Public health or related research

