

SHIP stories

The Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP) works to improve health through better nutrition, increased physical activity and decreased commercial tobacco use and exposure.

Across the state, one key to success for SHIP efforts is working with early childhood programs.

As of June 2011:

- SHIP has helped improve nutrition at 544 child care sites serving approximately 8,564 children across the state. At the same time, 751 child care sites serving approximately 20,096 children took steps to increase physical activity.



More physical activity and better nutrition for Minneapolis preschoolers

Over 6,600 Minneapolis toddlers now experience healthier food and more physical activity at their child care program. As part of SHIP, the Minneapolis Department of Health and Family Support contracted with Resources for Child Caring (RCC), the Twin Cities child care resource referral agency, to work with Parents in Community Action (PICA) Head Start, which serves low income children.

RCC reached nearly two-thirds of all Minneapolis licensed child care programs with eight hours of training and ongoing tips provided through monthly newsletters. RCC reaches a high proportion of English-Language-Learner child care providers, many of whom were previously unaware of portion size and physical activity recommendations for children. RCC developed parent engagement materials, including a lending library of parent-child activities and resources for healthy eating.

RCC worked with PICA, who has now made physical activity and nutrition changes throughout its nine sites. Teachers, cooks and other staff participated in nutrition and physical activity training, and cooks made changes to menus, adding more fruits and vegetables, low fat proteins and vegetarian entrees.

Because of these efforts, both PICA Head Start and RCC have adopted obesity prevention activities into their ongoing programming and training. Evaluation of the project found child care providers on average improved nutrition and physical activity practices. As a result, Minneapolis children are the winners.

SHIP is working to make the healthy choice the easy choice in Minnesota. Find out how at www.health.state.mn.us/ship