

SHIP Child Care Training and Technical Assistance Evaluation

SUMMARY FINDINGS FROM FAMILY AND INDEPENDENT CHILD CARE PROVIDERS

Purpose

Creating child care environments that support healthy habits is a critical strategy for preventing obesity among young children. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the impact of SHIP's child care training and technical assistance strategy on the adoption and implementation of nationally recommended practices¹ and written policies that promote healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding in child care settings.

Design

Who: Family child care providers and small, independent child care centers were recruited by SHIP staff to participate in SHIP training and technical assistance on healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding support practices. These providers serve a disproportionate number of lower income and rural children.

What: Providers attended a 3-hour training workshop held in 36 locations across the state. Following the training, providers received follow-up support and technical assistance through in-person site visits, emails, telephone calls, direct mailings, and online resources. Providers completed surveys assessing healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding support practices and policies before and after receiving training and technical assistance.

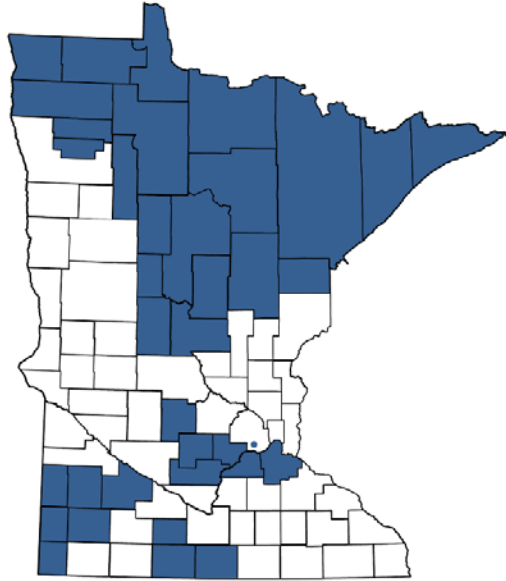
When: Training workshops were held between July and December 2014. Surveys were administered during registration for the 3-hour workshop and again 6-months after the workshop.

Where: Providers were located in 13 SHIP regions across the state (see map).

Number of participants: 242 providers completed the survey at both time points.

¹ American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. *Caring for our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition*. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; Washington, DC: American Public Health Association; 2011.

SHIP CHILD CARE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE EVALUATION

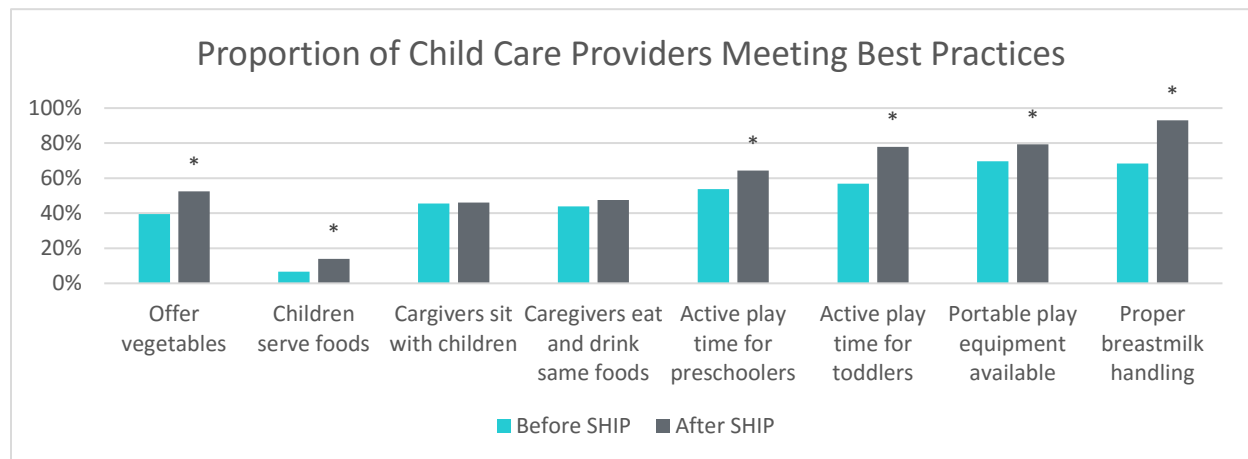


SHIP Regions included in the evaluation were: Brown-Nicollet-LeSueur-Waseca Counties; Southwest (Lincoln, Lyon, Redwood, Pipestone, Murray, Rock Counties); Faribault-Martin-Watonwan Counties; Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Counties; Carver County; Scott County; Bloomington-Edina-Richfield; North Country (Lake of the Woods, Beltrami, Clearwater, Hubbard Counties); Dakota County; Healthy Northland (Aitkin, Carlton, Cook, Itasca, Koochiching, Lake, St. Louis Counties); Crow Wing County; Health 4 Life (Morrison, Todd, Wadena, Cass); Quin (Kittson, Marshall, Roseau, Pennington, Red Lake)

Results

More Providers Followed Recommended Practices

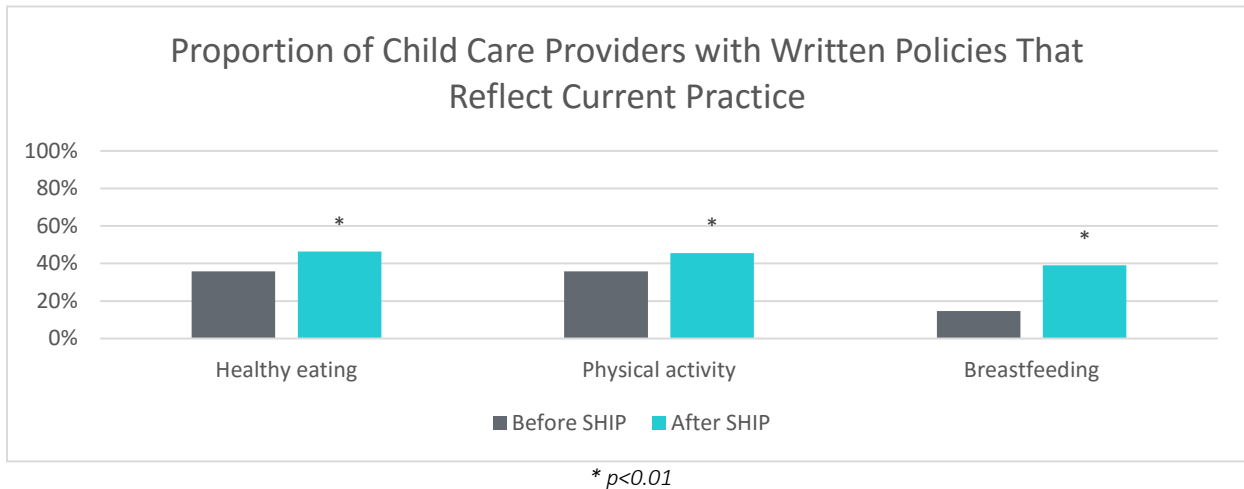
After attending SHIP training and receiving six months of technical assistance, child care providers were significantly more likely to engage in healthy eating, physical activity and breastfeeding support practices that align with nationally recommended best practices. The change was statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) for six out of the eight practices.



* $p < 0.01$

More Providers Adopted Written Policies

In addition, there were significant increases in the proportion of providers that had written policies that reflected current practice on healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding ($p < 0.01$). Unlike larger institutional settings where practice change follows policy adoption, in the family child care setting, written policies are generally used as a way of formalizing practice changes that have already taken place.



Conclusion

Healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding in early childhood put young children on a path to healthy weight as they grow. Results from this evaluation suggest that the SHIP child care strategy of providing training and technical assistance is an effective way to increase adoption of policies and practices that may protect against obesity in early childhood. Given that over two-thirds of Minnesota's young children are enrolled in child care, investing in training and technical assistance to improve healthy eating, physical activity, and breastfeeding support in child care is an important and effective investment in the current and future health of the youngest generation of Minnesotans.

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