



PennState

Center for Childhood
Obesity Research

CCOR ANNUAL OUTREACH REPORT



Penn State
Healthy Families 



Penn State
Healthy Kids 

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SNAP-Ed
Pennsylvania

Healthy Food.
Healthy Moves.
Healthy YOU.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the PA Department of Human Services (DHS).

Our Center

Mission

The overall mission of the Center for Childhood Obesity Research (CCOR) is to conduct interdisciplinary research that contributes to the evidence base needed to inform successful childhood obesity prevention programs that can then be disseminated to public health and clinical practice audiences.

Building and Strengthening Relationships Through Community Outreach

Meaningful change begins with a strong, trusting relationship. Our community outreach efforts are designed to build these connections, fostering collaboration and mutual support.

Our approach starts with giving. We provide education programs, materials, and supplies to support health initiatives, training for teachers and community agency staff, and participation in events that promote healthy behaviors.

Once strong, trusting partnerships are established, we move to the next phase: collaboration. We invite community agencies to participate in our research studies. By working together, we ensure that our research is grounded in real-world experiences and addresses the unique needs of the community.

This give-and-take approach creates a cycle of mutual benefits. Communities receive support and resources to improve their health outcomes, while we gain valuable insights and data to enhance our research. Together, we drive impactful change and improve the health of children and their families.



Our Team

WE ARE... a research center with a focus on child health. We are deeply committed to community outreach, aiming to combat childhood obesity through education and engagement.



Jennifer Savage Williams
Center Director



Lindsey Hess
Center Manager



Heather Kimble
Outreach Manager



Amber Vesnesky
Nutrition Educator



Allison Baney
Nutrition Educator



Matt Bugaj
Nutrition Educator

Our community partners know us as Penn State Healthy Kids or Penn State Healthy Families.



Our Work

We administer educational programming to children and their families in 12 counties in Pennsylvania. We also have a partnership with Pennsylvania Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) at the state level.



Much of our outreach for low-income audiences is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS). This funding allows us to provide essential resources and support to communities in need.

Through these diverse outreach initiatives, our team is making significant strides in promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing childhood obesity. Our Center's efforts are a testament to the power of community engagement and collaboration.

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Early Childhood Education (ECE) Programs



ECE Programs

Overview of Partnerships and Audiences

12 Counties throughout Pennsylvania

104 Classrooms

1,700 Children and Families

10,000 Food Tastings



ECE Programs



Harvest for Healthy Kids

Overview

Harvest for Healthy Kids helps children develop healthy eating habits by connecting them with fresh food grown close to home.

Procedures

Objectives are met through circle time, which allows the children to explore fruits and vegetables in their whole form, learn how the foods grow through a series of photos, and end with a storybook read aloud. Circle time is followed by a food tasting of the featured food.

Participants

Participants are 3-5-year-old children from 12 Pennsylvania counties who are enrolled in Head Start or PreK Counts programs within 7 agencies and districts.

Materials Provided:

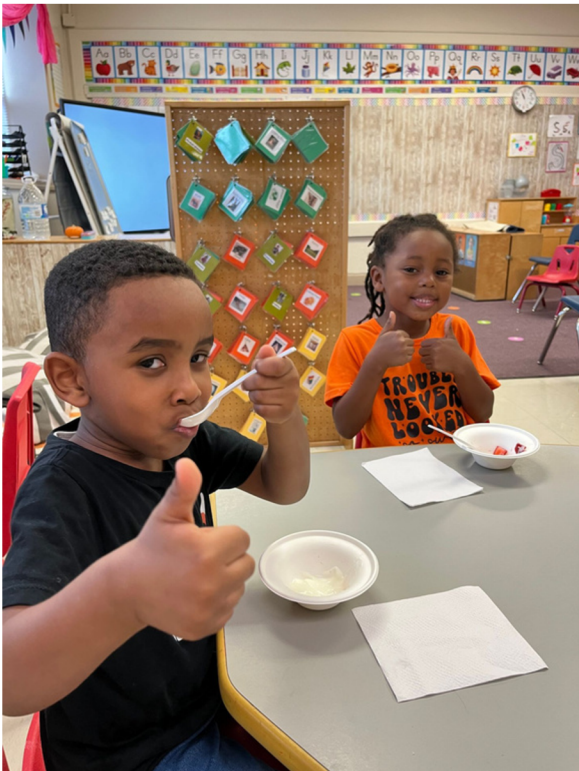
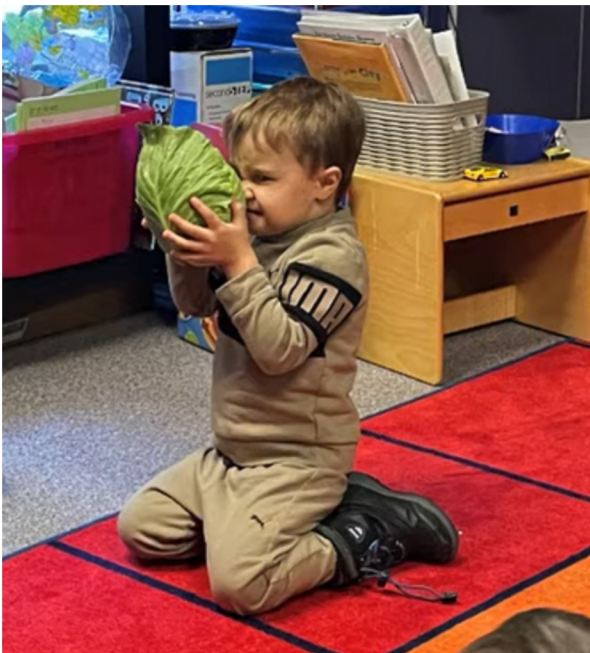


"I have never experienced a program like this, but I loved it! I thought the educator was well organized and interacted well with the kids."

The kids loved the lessons and made connections constantly to what they have learned throughout the year about fruits and vegetables."

ECE Programs

Harvest for Healthy Kids Curriculum



KEEP IT GROWING

WE ARE
From Start
Healthy Kids

BLACK BEAN STARTER PLANTS SEEDS TO SPROUTS FROM CLASS TO HOME

IN CLASS, YOUR CHILD LEARNED:

- that beans are planted in the ground to grow bean plants.
- about how beans grow throughout the year.
- about different types and colors of beans.
- about different ways to eat beans.



YOUR CHILD WORKED HARD TO:

- prepare the pots by filling them with soil.
- use fine-motor skills to make a "well" for the seed in the soil.
- ensure that the seeds were watered when needed.

HELP YOUR CHILD KEEP THE BEANS GROWING:

- Find a sunny patch of loose and stone-free dirt outside where the beans can grow into mature plants.
- Place the entire pot with the bean plants into the dirt.
- Loosely cover the pot with dirt.
- Keep the bean plants watered.
- Work to keep the area free of weeds.
- Harvest beans once the bean pods have turned yellow and dry. Use scissors to cut the ripened pods off the plant.

SNAP-Ed Healthy Snacks Healthy Schools Healthy Communities
This institution is an equal opportunity provider. This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) through the PA Department of Human Services (DHS).



School-Age Programs



School-Age Programs

Overview of Partnerships and Audiences

5 Counties in Pennsylvania

10 Kindergarten & 1st Grade Classrooms

5 After-School Program Locations

8 Summer Camp Program Locations

Over 300 Children and Families

Over 300 Food Tastings



School-Age Programs

Discover MyPlate



Overview

The USDA Team Nutrition Discover MyPlate curriculum is a comprehensive educational program designed to teach kindergarten students about healthy eating habits and the importance of nutrition.

Procedures

Delivered by Penn State Healthy Kids Nutrition Educator Matt Bugaj, this curriculum uses engaging lessons, activities, and food tastings to introduce children to the five food groups represented by the MyPlate icon.

Participants

In FY25, 4 lessons were delivered to 5 classrooms, reaching 68 children.

"This is great! We don't get to this stuff in our usual curriculum."
"I didn't think he would try that!"

-Teacher

"I liked all the fruits and vegetables you bring."

-Kindergartener

School-Age Programs

Discover MyPlate Curriculum



School-Age Programs

Serving Up MyPlate Curriculum



Overview

USDA Team Nutrition Serving Up MyPlate: A Yummy Curriculum is an engaging educational program designed for elementary school students, covering grades 1 through 6. This curriculum integrates nutrition education into core subjects like math, science, English language arts, and health.

Procedures

Delivered by Penn State Healthy Kids Nutrition Educator Matt Bugaj, this curriculum uses engaging lessons, activities, and food tastings to introduce children to the five food groups represented by the MyPlate icon.

Participants

In FY25, 2 lessons were delivered in 4 visits to 5 classrooms, reaching 91 children.

"I taught my mom about what a 'nutritional meal' means."

"Venison is my medicine!"

"I don't like things with pumpkin in them but I tried it."

"I'm in the (school's) running club. We ran a mile once!"

-School-aged Children

"They love to dance to the CD you gave us!"

-Teacher

School-Age Programs



Growing Healthy Habits Curriculum

Overview

“This curriculum engages students in garden-based lessons that build excitement around growing, as well as tasting a greater variety of fruits and vegetables.” The curriculum includes 9 units focusing on a range of topics including plant parts, soil & seed experiments, and garden value.

Procedures

Lessons often include a large group discussion often followed by hands-on experiments to better understand materials needed for a successful garden and why plants need what they do to grow.

Participants

Participants include students in grades Kindergarten through 6th grade in both summer and after-school programs within Snyder, Union, Mifflin, and Tioga counties.

Adult Programs



Adult Programs

We recruit parents and caregivers from the early childhood education and school-age programs that we deliver throughout the state. We also have a partnership with PA WIC to recruit clients for educational programs.



Adult Programs

Online Module Development

Overview

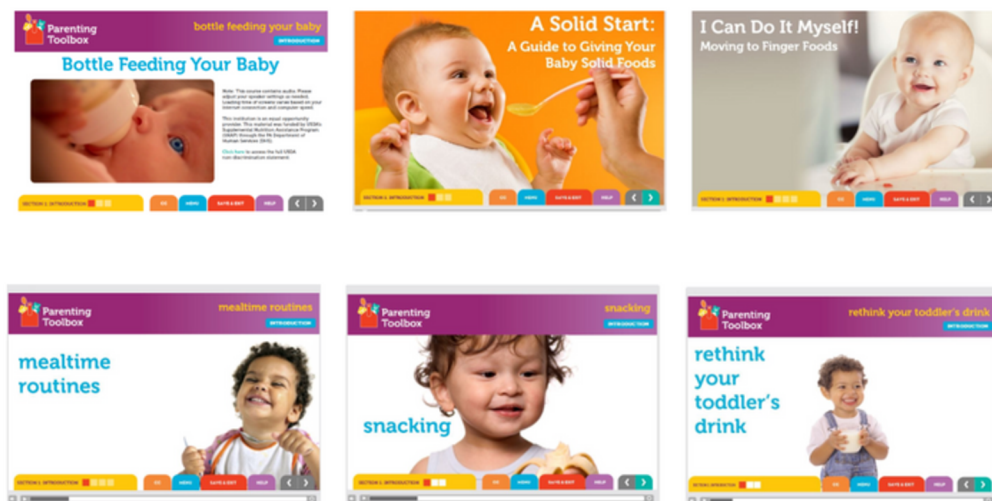
CCOR has developed a series of online interactive online modules that teach responsive feeding strategies to parents and caregivers of infants and young toddlers. We worked closely with Pennsylvania Women, Infants, and Children (PA WIC) to ensure that messaging aligned with statewide initiatives.

Procedures

The modules are self-paced, take 15-30 minutes each, and can be viewed on any electronic device.

Participants

Recruit via flyers, including PA WIC offices



Community Programs



Community Programs

Participating in Community Events

Overview

In addition to standard programming, CCOR participates in many community events and workgroups throughout the year.

2024-2025 Events

Grange Fair Kids Day

Healthy Blair County Coalition Let's Move Day

Summit Early Learning Advisory Council

Child Advocates of Blair County Advisory Council

Child Advocates of Blair County Delgrosso Park Family Day

