



Strengthening Childhood Health: How Go NAPSACC Supports Federal Goals

Executive Summary

Childhood obesity, poor nutrition, and rising mental health concerns threaten the well-being of America's children and the nation's future. The Make America Healthy Again initiative prioritizes cost-effective strategies to address these challenges.

Go NAPSACC, a proven program, arms child care providers with tools that improve nutrition, physical activity, and emotional well-being. Already implemented in 24 states, it has reached 783,000 children and demonstrated measurable health improvements.

Go NAPSACC is a cost-effective, scalable policy solution that aligns directly with federal priorities. Expanding federal support for Go NAPSACC through funding and state-level implementation will advance national child health goals, reduce healthcare costs, and establish a healthier future for all.

Introduction

Securing the health and well-being of America's children is essential for the future of our nation. Childhood is a crucial time when nutrition, physical activity, and emotional well-being shape lifelong health and growth. However, children today face significant challenges, including poor nutrition, rising obesity levels, and escalating mental health concerns. Without intervention, these issues will result in excessive healthcare costs, lower productivity, and a country that struggles to thrive.

Recognizing these concerns, the current administration has prioritized child health through its Make America Health Again initiative. As outlined in the Executive Order titled **Establishing the President's Make America Healthy Again Commission**, this country must support initiatives to improve childhood nutrition, physical activity, and mental health.¹

In alignment with these priorities, Go NAPSACC (Nutritional & Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) offers a research-based, cost-effective solution to improve childhood health. Go NAPSACC helps early care programs create healthier environments that support nutrition, physical activity, mental well-being, and beyond. By supporting Go NAPSACC through federal initiatives and funding, policymakers can secure a healthy future for America's children.

What is at Stake?

America's children are facing a health crisis that demands action. Obesity, mental well-being, and inadequate physical activity extend beyond individual impact and can strain the nation's healthcare system and economy. Without action, these difficulties will promote higher healthcare costs, lower educational attainment, and reduced workforce productivity, weakening America's long-term growth.²

The Facts

- Childhood obesity has **more than doubled** over the past 30 years, raising the risk of chronic diseases and leading to long-term physical and mental health challenges.^{3,4}
- Additionally, national surveys have shown **rising mental health concerns** among children, including higher rates of depression and anxiety.^{5,6}
- Nearly **20% of children aged 3-17 years** experience a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder, putting them at greater risk for academic struggles, social difficulties, and long-term mental health challenges.⁷
- **Less than 30% of children** meet the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines' recommendation of 60 minutes of daily exercise.⁸

Additionally, the overall well-being of American children lags behind peer nations. A 2020 report found that the United States ranked 31st out of 36 developed countries on a Child Flourishing Index. This alarming ranking stems from measurements of health, education, and nutrition.⁹

Without early intervention, many children will require expensive medical and social services throughout their lives.²

Policy Recommendation

Go NAPSACC provides a comprehensive solution to address America's growing childhood health challenges by equipping child care providers with the tools to improve health practices for children ages 0-5. Go NAPSACC focuses on seven key areas to enhance these critical health practices:

- Child Nutrition
- Breastfeeding & Infant Feeding
- Farm to Early Care & Education
- Oral Health
- Infant & Child Physical Activity
- Outdoor Play & Learning
- Screen Time Reduction



Go NAPSACC offers online self-assessment, action planning, and educational tools to help child care providers implement evidence-based practices through a five-step cycle.

With over 20 years of success, Go NAPSACC has proven to be an impactful, cost-effective, and valuable tool for improving childhood health.

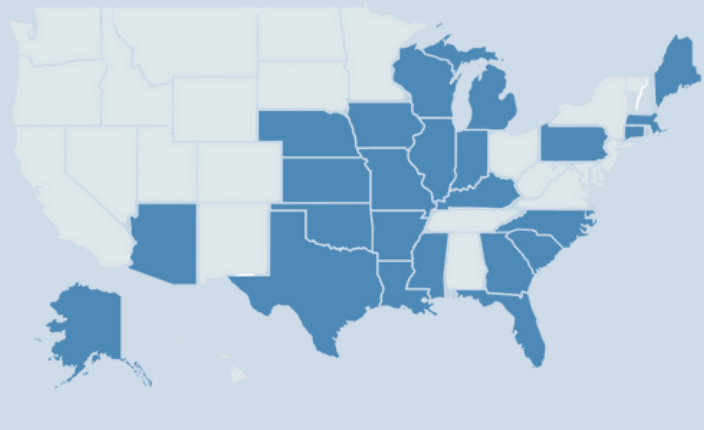
It has been recognized as having the best evidence for reducing early childhood obesity risk, with the potential to prevent 38,000 cases and save \$30 million in healthcare costs over 10 years.¹¹

Research has also shown improvements in children's BMI, as well as strengthened knowledge among parents regarding nutrition and physical activity recommendations.¹⁰ Additionally, child development research has cited 0-5 years as the ideal time to intervene due to the rate of development.²

Go NAPSACC's Impact

As of January 2025, Go NAPSACC has made a measurable impact:

- **13,161** programs served
- **783,000** children reached
- A **14% growth in evidence-based practices** among child care centers after completing one cycle



Additionally, a key strength of Go NAPSACC is its adaptability to diverse state needs. Currently, there are 24 states utilizing Go NAPSACC to improve child care and child health. States have the flexibility to implement the program in ways that align with their existing early childhood policies and structures, and public health initiatives. Some states have integrated Go NAPSACC into child care licensing standards or into their Quality Rating and Improvement Systems (QRIS) to incentivize high-quality child care practices.

This flexibility establishes Go NAPSACC as an ideal federal initiative that respects state control while also furthering federal health priorities.

The administration's Make America Healthy Again initiative prioritizes **evidence-based, cost-effective** strategies to improve childhood health and well-being. Go NAPSACC aligns with these goals by equipping child care providers with practical tools to enhance nutrition, physical activity, and emotional health practices.

Recognizing Go NAPSACC as a proven strategy, providing **funding mechanisms**, and **encouraging state-level implementation** are key actions to support its success.

Expanding federal support for Go NAPSACC offers a **strategic, cost-effective approach to improving the health and well-being of America's youngest children, fostering a healthier, more productive future for all.**

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