

Priority Number One: Childhood Obesity Prevention

It is widely recognized that there are more overweight children today than ever before. As we know, excess weight can have a profound effect on both physical and emotional health. In Delaware, about 37% of our children are overweight.

NHPS is examining the issues that contribute to childhood obesity and devising strategies to help combat it, centered on:

- Promoting healthy eating and a diet that includes abundant fruits and vegetables;
- Encouraging physical activity throughout the day, every day;
- Promoting alternatives to sedentary activity, particularly screen time; and
- Promoting healthy weight.

Live the 5-2-1-Almost None Healthy Lifestyle



The best scientific evidence points to the following behaviors as having the greatest potential impact on achieving or maintaining a healthy weight:

- 5:** Eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
- 2:** Spend no more than two hours per day in front of a screen (television/recreational computer time).
- 1:** Get at least one hour of physical activity per day.
- Almost None:** Drink almost no sugary beverages, like soda and sports drinks.

On the Horizon: Emotional and Behavioral Health

The second area of focus for NHPS is emotional and behavioral health—essential to a child’s well-being and successful functioning at home, in child care, at school and in the community. To help promote optimal emotional and behavioral health among children in collaboration with community partners, NHPS will first concentrate on:

- Approaches that build children’s competencies and resilience;
- Training, toolkits and materials for child care and primary care providers;
- Parent education and support; and
- Screening for early recognition of behavioral concerns.

Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS), a non-profit organization based in Newark, Delaware, works with families and community partners to help children grow up healthy. Its goal is to effect long-term changes in policies and practices that promote child health and to leverage community strengths and resources to have the greatest impact on the most children.

NHPS sees its role as one of catalyst, “planting the seeds for better health” by working with community partners to reach children in a variety of settings. One of its initial areas of emphasis is childhood obesity prevention through promotion of healthy lifestyles, the centerpiece of which is the *5-2-1-Almost None* campaign.

NHPS is a division of Nemours, one of the nation’s largest pediatric health systems, operating the Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children and outpatient facilities throughout the Delaware Valley and northern and central Florida. NHPS expands Nemours’ reach beyond clinical care to consider the health of the whole child within his or her family and community.



Planting the seeds  for better health



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A Healthier Future for Delaware's Children

Nemours Health and Prevention Services (NHPS) is dedicated to helping children lead healthier lives by:

- Working hand-in-hand with Delaware communities to emphasize child health promotion in all the places where children live, learn and grow;
- Supporting implementation of health promotion policies and practices and evaluating them to learn what is working best;
- Sharing findings and contributing to the knowledge base in the field of child health promotion and disease prevention; and
- Advocating for social, environmental and behavioral change that will lead to healthier generations of children to come.

Partners in Prevention

To achieve the greatest impact, NHPS considers the many different places where children and families spend their time: schools, child care facilities, health care settings, community centers and neighborhoods. The goal is to reinforce consistent messages in each setting to help children make healthy food and lifestyle choices and to stay physically active.

In **school** settings, NHPS works with teams of administrators, teachers, counselors, school nurses, parents and the students themselves to provide training and educational tools, and to support policy and environmental changes that encourage healthier eating and more physical activity on school campuses.

In the **child care** setting, NHPS provides training and educational tools to help child care providers promote and model healthy behaviors for young children. In addition, NHPS advocates for adoption of *5-2-1-Almost None* principles as part of state quality rating and improvement systems for child care providers.

In the **primary care** setting, Nemours convenes pediatric primary care providers from across the state to participate in study groups focused on improving office-based weight management and health promotion skills. Practitioners learn about new interventions and receive tools for use in the office setting, as well as take-home materials for families.

In the **community**, NHPS works with youth-serving organizations, such as the YMCA of Delaware, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and 4-H, to promote *5-2-1-Almost None* and to develop a corps of champions who will model the behavior and help spread the message.



Community Engagement

A concentrated effort to promote child health in all settings is underway in Sussex County, Delaware. More than 100 organizations make up the Sussex Child Health Promotion Coalition including a broad range of business, government, nonprofit, educational and faith-based participants.

Coalition members learn about *5-2-1-Almost None* and ways to incorporate it into their daily activities. They receive training and toolkits to enable them to change policies and practices and to share the message in a meaningful way with the children and families they serve. Among the coalition's achievements: hosting community walk events; starting or expanding wellness programs; planning new or enhanced parks, playgrounds and walking trails; and changing food and beverage offerings in child-focused venues.

A concentrated effort to involve grassroots leadership in child health promotion is underway in the City of Wilmington, where more than 20 community organizations are engaged.



The Campaign to Make Delaware's Kids the Healthiest in the Nation

NHPS and its community partners envision a healthier state where children and their families are motivated and able to make healthy choices. To spur both motivation and change, Nemours has launched a campaign designed to shed light on the barriers to making healthy choices, as well as the means to start working on solutions. For more about the campaign, go to www.GrowUpHealthy.org.

Seeking a Cultural Shift

Ideally, NHPS seeks to transform the climate in Delaware to one that places the highest value on child health promotion and disease prevention.

- The immediate objective is to sound the alarm, explain the issues, and stimulate interest and enthusiasm in child health promotion and disease prevention.
- The mid-range goal is to catalyze communities to make changes that reflect the best interests of children's physical and emotional health.
- The long-term goal is to improve the health of children and the likelihood that they will grow up to be healthy adults.