



Alabama State Profile for Child Care Health, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention

| Healthy Child Care, Healthy Communities Partner with Child Care Aware® of America | Child Care and Development Fund State Administrator |
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Profile of Families, Children, and Potential Child Care Needs

| How many children and families are there? | Alabama | United States |
|--|-----------|---------------|
| Total residents | 4,817,624 | 313,861,723 |
| Children age birth to 4 years | 299,255 | 19,930,834 |
| Children age birth to 4 years living in poverty | 92,877 | 4,997,150 |
| Children age 5 to 11 | 431,201 | 28,719,013 |
| Total families with children | 506,026 | 33,589,629 |
| Single parent families | 184,693 | 11,121,083 |
| Families in poverty | 136,407 | 6,888,151 |

How Many Children Under Age 6 Potentially Need Child Care?

| | Alabama | United States |
|---|---------|---------------|
| Children in two-parent families, both parents in labor force | 114,635 | 8,538,727 |
| Children in single-parent families, parent in labor force | 107,962 | 6,486,355 |
| Total children under age 6 potentially needing child care | 222,597 | 15,025,082 |

Source: Child Care in America: 2015 State Fact Sheets

Rates of Obesity for Adults and Young Children

| | |
|--------------|-------|
| Adults | 33.5% |
| Children 2-4 | 14.1% |

Source: *State of Obesity, 2011 and 2014*

Access to Healthy Foods and Utilization of Federal Nutrition Programs

| Program | Average Annual Number of Participants |
|---------|---------------------------------------|
| WIC | 131,046 |
| SNAP | 902,073 |

Source: *USDA FNS Program Data*

Health, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention Factors in State Systems

Role of Child Care Health Consultants

Nurse health consultants work with child care providers to improve health and safety in child care environments. The state provides funding for child care health consultants from Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) quality set aside funds, and the nurse consultant program is run out of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Health, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention in Early Learning Standards

Nutrition is identified as an essential element of quality childcare programs.

The three following bullets indicate critical components that ensure quality nutrition practices:

- Caregivers have basic knowledge of nutrition and age-appropriate feeding practices.
- Nutritional needs of each child are met.
- Caregivers work closely with families to ensure appropriate amounts and types of foods are served in a consistent manner.

Guidelines also provide ideas on how to encourage healthy eating and ways to impact children's food preferences.

Health, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention in Quality Rating and Improvement Systems

The Alabama Quality STARS QRIS has been piloted. Forty-four programs participated and receive support around the areas assessed. The full roll out is pending the review of the QRIS evaluation.

Summary of Existing Initiatives

The Alabama Partnership for Children (APC) administers several components of the Alabama Project LAUNCH (Linking Actions for Unmet Needs in Children's Health) initiative.

With the state Departments of Mental Health and Public Health, APC coordinates the local initiative in west Alabama through Child Development Resources, the resource and referral agency that serves most of west Alabama. Addressing child health and wellness is the focus of the work; it is the state's first substantial effort to address early childhood mental wellness/social/emotional development. Project LAUNCH supported expansion of our state's Help Me Grow initiative into west Alabama.

The APC administers Help Me Grow Alabama in partnership with child development resources in west Alabama and with the initial site in partnership with United Way of Central Alabama in Birmingham. Help Me Grow Alabama ensures that more young children are screened for delays and concerns and that appropriate and effective referrals are made. The care coordination is successful in reducing the number of children who arrive at school with undiagnosed and untreated problems that start them off behind their peers. We are engaging early childhood programs, physicians, and other health care providers, home visiting programs, and broad community groups with outreach, professional development/resources, and guidance on how to implement the model.

The APC was recently awarded a grant from Nemours with funding from the CDC to participate in the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives project to address the growing health concerns associated with obesity and related health problems. Along with the national partners, APC will support child care (center- and home-based) programs through the collaborative to address nutrition, breast feeding, and physical activity in child care programs. Major partners for implementation are child development resources and child care resources in Birmingham.

The APC administers the Strengthening Families initiative, the T.E.A.C.H Scholarship program, the Don't Be in The Dark About Child Care campaign (in partnership with VOICES for Alabama's Children), and the Zero to Five Matters public awareness effort.

Health, Nutrition, and Obesity Prevention in Regulations

For a summary of state regulations on health, nutrition, and obesity prevention, please review the following summary page, as prepared by the [National Public Law Center](#).