



# Wellness in Alaska Child Care



## Best Practices



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# overview

The Wellness in Alaska Child Care (WIACC) grant was a comprehensive project designed to provide child care staff with training that would result in children adopting lifelong habits of healthy eating and physical activity. The grant promoted these healthy habits to meet the need for interventions focused on childhood obesity in Alaska. The Alaska Department of Education & Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs, and the Alaska Department of Agriculture, Farm to School Program worked in conjunction with Alaska's Child Care Licensing offices, Child Care Assistance offices, and various child care center professionals, Head Start agencies, and sponsoring organizations of family day care homes to promote, implement and facilitate this unique grant opportunity.

The Department of Education & Early Development, Child Nutrition Programs provided three regional trainings in the spring of 2011 in Juneau, Anchorage, and Fairbanks. Attendees received training from Dr. Diane Craft, developer of the *Active Play!* activity book, which focuses on physical activity that can be conducted indoors and outdoors, in both large and small spaces. The training also included presenters from the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) on *More Than Mud Pies*, a full year's worth of thematic curriculum that includes recipes, games, songs, and other nutrition-related activities, and *Happy Mealtimes for Healthy Kids* provided training on family-style dining in the child care setting. Each training participant received a take-home copy of each of the three resources. Upon completion of the training each participant had the opportunity to apply for mini-grants that allowed them to purchase supplies to fully implement the activities from the three training modules.

This grant enabled Child Nutrition Programs to pilot the Farm to Child Care Mini-Grant. Child



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Nutrition Programs worked with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources, Division of Agriculture using information from the Alaska Farm to School grant to formulate grant objectives and requirements. The main focus was to promote activities that connected students, teachers, food service staff, community members, and parents with products grown or produced in Alaska. Many WIACC participants put great emphasis on the farm-to-table aspect, providing another avenue to further promote healthy food choices and increase Alaska youths' understanding of how food in its original form gets to their plates.

Grant awardees were responsible for submitting a variety of reporting documents throughout the grant period in order for Child Nutrition Program staff to monitor their implementation process. Through these reporting documents Child Nutrition Program staff were able to gather an assortment of information in regard to physical activity, healthy eating, and family-style dining.

