

CATCH Early Childhood



We're pleased to announce the launch of The CATCH Early Childhood (CEC) Program, modeled after the internationally acclaimed CATCH program. CEC employs a holistic approach to child health by targeting multiple aspects of the preschool community, involving teachers, children and parents in a wide range of health promoting activities.

CATCH Early Childhood is designed to promote physical activity and healthy food choices among preschool children ages 3-5. CEC was piloted in Head Start centers in Houston, Texas and preliminary evaluations of the program have demonstrated good feasibility and acceptability among children ages 3-5 as well as with their teachers and parents.

The CEC lesson plans, which include hands-on activities, are designed to encourage healthy eating patterns by increasing children's knowledge and skills towards eating healthy foods. Spanish-English parent tip sheets complement the lesson plans and provide parents with the information necessary to help their children and families make healthy food and physical activity choices.

CEC PE activities provide children with fun, physical education/activities, specifically aimed at increasing their moderate-to-vigorous physical activity while at preschool. The lesson plans and PE activities, combined with spirited music, colorful hand puppets and other stimulating visuals, create an environment where physical activity, health education, and healthy eating behaviors are valued and taught.

Through CEC, little ones are motivated to walk, run, jump, dance, and move their whole bodies while playing and having fun, as a solid foundation for healthy living is established.



"The CATCH Early Childhood program is unique because the classroom curriculum includes stories with puppets and activities that really resonate with 3, 4 and 5 year old children. Lessons share important nutrition concepts and are crafted so that they can be used in any preschool learning center. Children have fun as they learn about healthy eating; and the PE activities, which come with music, keep kids and teachers moving and singing."

— SHREELA SHARMA, PHD, RD, LD, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, DIETETIC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM, MICHAEL & SUSAN DELL CENTER FOR ADVANCEMENT OF HEALTHY LIVING, THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, HOUSTON, TX