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Wellness Champion Survey Results

YMCA Childcare Resource Service (CRS) partners with early care and education (ECE) providers across San Diego County to create healthier spaces for kids to learn and grow. Through its *Wellness Champion* program, YMCA CRS has supported over 150 ECE providers in following best practices for nutrition, screen time, physical activity, and healthy beverages.

ECE providers become *Wellness Champions* by participating in trainings, consulting with a Health Educator, assessing their program environment, and ultimately, following best practices for healthy eating and active living. *Wellness Champions* use the 5-2-1-0 Principles as a guiding framework for building healthy habits every day.



Survey Methods

YMCA CRS partnered with Child Care Aware of America to evaluate the *Wellness Champion* program. We asked over 250 ECE providers to complete a survey to see how well current and former *Wellness Champions* followed the 5-2-1-0 Principles compared to providers that were *Non-Wellness Champions*. We also surveyed parents to see if *Wellness Champion* parents were more likely to adhere to the 5-2-1-0 Principles.

Results

Most of the ECE providers surveyed are following best practices for nutrition, screen time, physical activity, and beverages. However, *Wellness Champions* out-performed *Non-Wellness Champions* on most of the best practices.

Parent respondents fell into two groups: those with children enrolled in *Wellness Champion* providers and those who were unsure of their provider's *Wellness Champion* status.

None of the parents said definitively that their provider was not a *Wellness Champion*. Parents utilizing *Wellness Champion* providers followed the 5-2-1-0 Principles more often than other parents. Overall, all parents need more support when it comes to serving fruits and vegetables, eliminating sugary drinks, and making sure their children had at least one hour of active play every day.

Participants in Wellness Champion Survey

19 parents	3 in Spanish 16 in English	11 WC parents 8 unknown WC
79 providers	29 in Spanish 50 in English	52 previous/current WC providers 27 non-WC providers

Table 1
Providers Always Meeting Best Practice

	WC	Non WC
Screen Time		
Recreational screen time for preschoolers is less than one hour per day.	88%	81%
Infants and toddlers never have recreational screen time.	65%	52%
Active Play		
Your daily schedule always includes both indoor and outdoor play.	84%	67%
Children, including those with disabilities, get at least one hour of active play time each day.	77%	73%
Teachers/Providers always join in active play with children.	58%	59%
Sugary Drinks		
Sugary drinks are never served.	96%	74%
Children under one are rarely/never served fruit juice.	93%	81%
Drinking water is always available inside and outside.	88%	78%
Nutrition		
Children are rarely/never punished for not eating.	100%	100%
Food is rarely/never offered as a reward or denied as punishment.	98%	100%
Fruits and vegetables are always served at least once per day.	88%	93%
Providers/teachers always eat the same food as children during meals.	67%	59%

Table 2
Parents Always Meeting Best Practice

	WC	Unsure WC
Screen Time		
Infants and toddlers never use recreational screen time.	50%	40%
In a typical day, your child uses less than one hour of recreational screen time.	36%	14%
Active Play		
You always encourage children to run, climb, dance, or jump.	55%	43%
Children, including those with disabilities, get at least one hour of active play time each day.	36%	67%
Sugary Drinks		
You never serve 100% fruit juice to children under one.	100%	40%
You rarely/never serve 100% juice.	64%	29%
You never give children sugary drinks.	45%	14%
Nutrition		
Food is rarely/never offered as a reward or denied as punishment.	91%	86%
You rarely/never punish children for not eating.	91%	57%
You always eat the same food as your children during meals.	55%	14%
You always give children fruits and/or vegetables at every meal.	45%	33%

While the sample size was small, the results suggest that the *Wellness Champion* program may be contributing to healthier practices in ECE and at home. The provider survey showed that the *Wellness Champion* program may have the biggest impact on the beverages ECE providers serve to children. In other areas, such as time allocated for physical activity and the frequency of serving fruits and vegetables, the *Wellness Champion* program may need to build in additional training, support, or resources to help providers fully meet the 5-2-1-0 Principles.

The results for parents were somewhat surprising. While *Wellness Champions* are not required to teach parents about the 5-2-1-0 Principles, parents still seem to be learning them, either through their children or through their regular interactions with providers. Adapting the *Wellness Champion* program to include additional support for family engagement around healthy eating and active living could boost the program's impact and ensure that kids are following healthy habits wherever they live, learn, and play.