

Healthy Children's Initiative



Description

The Healthy Children's Initiative (HCI) is funded by the NSW Government and is part of a long term commitment to overcome the growing epidemic of overweight and obesity in children. HealthStats NSW identified overweight or obesity in children aged 5-16 has increased to 27.1% in 2015. The HCI programs delivered in the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District (NBMLHD) such as Munch and Move (M&M), Live Life Well @ School (LLW@S) and Go4Fun work to address this trend.

M&M is a fun-play based program targeting children aged 0-5 years who attend one of the 174 Early Child Care Services with our region. The program promotes healthy eating and physical activity and aims to reduce small screen recreation time.

LLW@S is a collaboration between NSW Health, the NSW Department of Education (DoE), Catholic and Independent school sectors. Along with the Crunch & Sip program LLW@S provides support, training and resources to assist teachers across the 129 primary schools with the LHD to promote healthy eating and physical activity of children via the school curriculum within the school setting.

Go4Fun is a fun, interactive healthy lifestyle program for children aged 7-13 years who are above a healthy weight. Programs are delivered by qualified health professionals once per week for 10 weeks to children and their parents after school.

Aims

- The overall aim of HCI programs is to reduce the prevalence of overweight and obesity among children and young people by improving nutrition, increasing levels of physical activity and reducing recreational screen time.
- Early Child Care Services (Munch & Move) aim to achieve 15 desirable practices, including policy development, ensure healthy menus and lunchboxes, promotion of breastfeeding, providing healthy learning experiences, providing information to families and ensuring active play for 1-5 year olds and tummy time for 0-1 year olds. Health Promotion aims to have 80% of these services meeting 12 of the 15 desirable practices.
- Primary Schools (LLW@S) have 10 desirable practices including providing curriculum learning experiences on healthy eating, teaching fundamental movement skills, ensuring the school canteen is compliant with the Fresh Tastes @ School Strategy and providing information to families. Health Promotion aims to have 80% of schools meeting 8 of the 10 desirable practices.

Fast Facts – Healthy Children's Initiative

- NBMLHD Healthy Children's Network Facebook page was created to provide additional support to educators, primary school teachers and the wider community
- Local canteen/cooks networks have been established in M&M and LLW@S programs
- Local workshops on healthy eating and physical activity are provided to Educators and primary school staff
- Incentives and equipment are provided to Early Child Care Services and Primary Schools to support the adoption of programs



- 325 children have enrolled in the have completed the Go4Fun program (since July 2011)
- 87% of enrolled participants have completed the Go4Fun program
- Increases in knowledge, skills and confidence of early childhood educators and primary school staff to promote healthy eating, physical activity and reduced screen time for children have been reported



- The Go4Fun program aims to improve health, fitness and confidence of participants by providing theory and practical sessions on nutrition and exercise. Children's Body Mass Index (BMI) and waist circumference are measured to determine pre and post program changes. Go4Fun is measured on the number of participants who enrol and complete the program.

Achievements

Achievements are measured on a cumulative basis from the commencement of the program. To date the Health Promotion team has exceeded targets with:

- 91.95% of Early Childhood Education Centres have been trained in Munch and Move
- 74.6% of Early Childcare Services have adopted 70% or more practices
- 80% of Primary Schools across the LHD have been trained in Live Life Well @ School
- 74.5% of Live Life Well Schools have adopted 70% or more practices
- 36 Go4Fun programs have been delivered in NBMLHD (since 2011)

Go4Fun

Healthy • Active • Happy • Kids

Future Directions

Continue to deliver HCI programs with a focus on:

- Meeting and exceeding targets set by the NSW Ministry of Health
- Promotion of online tools and professional development training for primary school teachers and Early Child Care Educators
- Health and Community Professionals training to increase clinical referral pathways to the Go4Fun program



Live Life Well @ School

