

# UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Division of Community Health

## Healthy Early Childhood

### Overview

Healthy Early Childhood (HEC) is a program of UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh in partnership with local early childcare and family support centers. UPMC Children's utilizes GO NAPSACC's evidence-based tools and resources to help early childhood providers establish policies and practices that promote the health and wellbeing of young children ages 0 – 5. Through collaboration with staff and families on policy, system, and environmental change, HEC enables early childhood providers to create healthier settings for the young children and families they serve.

### Why Healthy Early Childhood Is Important

Early care and family support centers play a critical role in introducing and reinforcing healthy behaviors and lifestyles for young children and their caregivers. These settings are uniquely situated to work collaboratively with families to ensure that children have the best possible start in life. Healthy children are more likely to succeed academically and attain positive health outcomes as they grow.<sup>1</sup>

### How Children's Supports Early Childhood

- Provides technical assistance and training to help centers initiate best practices
- Offers education and training to children, parents, and staff
- Identifies hospital resources to address children's specific health needs
- Engages community partners to elevate centers' health and wellness efforts

### Impact

Healthy Early Childhood encourages improvements in center-based policies and practices that promote early childhood and family health – breastfeeding and infant feeding, child nutrition, oral health, infant and child physical activity, outdoor play and learning, and screen time.

### About UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Community Health

Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh Community Health works together with hospital, other healthcare, and community partners to improve health outcomes, reduce health disparities, and elevate quality of life for children and families in the communities where they live, learn, work and play.

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<sup>1</sup> Hair, E., Halle, T., Terry-Humen, E., Lavelle, B., & Calkins, J. (2006). Children's school readiness in the ECLS-K: Predictions to academic, health, and social outcomes in first grade. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21(4), 431-454. doi:10.1016/j.ecresq.2006.09.005