

Washington County Child Care Provider Survey Report

June 2018



Acknowledgements

- Funding for this study was provided by the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP), Minnesota Department of Health. This funding included ten \$25 Visa gift cards as a lottery-style incentive for providers to complete the survey.
- Washington County Community Services Child Care Licensors and Parent Aware Coaches made significant contributions to this study by reviewing the survey and providing feedback and distributing the survey to their child care networks.
- Data collection, analysis, and reporting was provided by *arcadia research & evaluation*.

About the study

In April 2018, Living Healthy in Washington County conducted a countywide survey of child care providers to learn about their current healthy eating and physical activity practices, as well as their level of interest in expanding their work in these areas.

The survey tool was adapted from the child care self-assessment for Statewide Health Improvement Partnership grantees, available through the Minnesota Department of Health. Selected practices related to healthy eating, healthy beverages, healthy meals, breastfeeding and physical activity were included in the study.

Licensed in-home child care providers were invited to take the survey through a monthly newsletter distributed by the county's licensing department. Additionally, the county's Parent Aware Coach distributed the survey to in-home providers and daycare centers in their system. In total, 87 out of the county's 446 in-home providers and daycare centers took the survey, yielding a 20% response rate.



Current Practices

The charts below show that Washington County child care providers already have many practices in place to promote healthy behaviors in children. For example, all or nearly all child care providers offer children:

- drinking water whenever they want it (100%),
- fruits at least twice daily (98%), and
- at least 90 minutes of active playtime each day (94%).

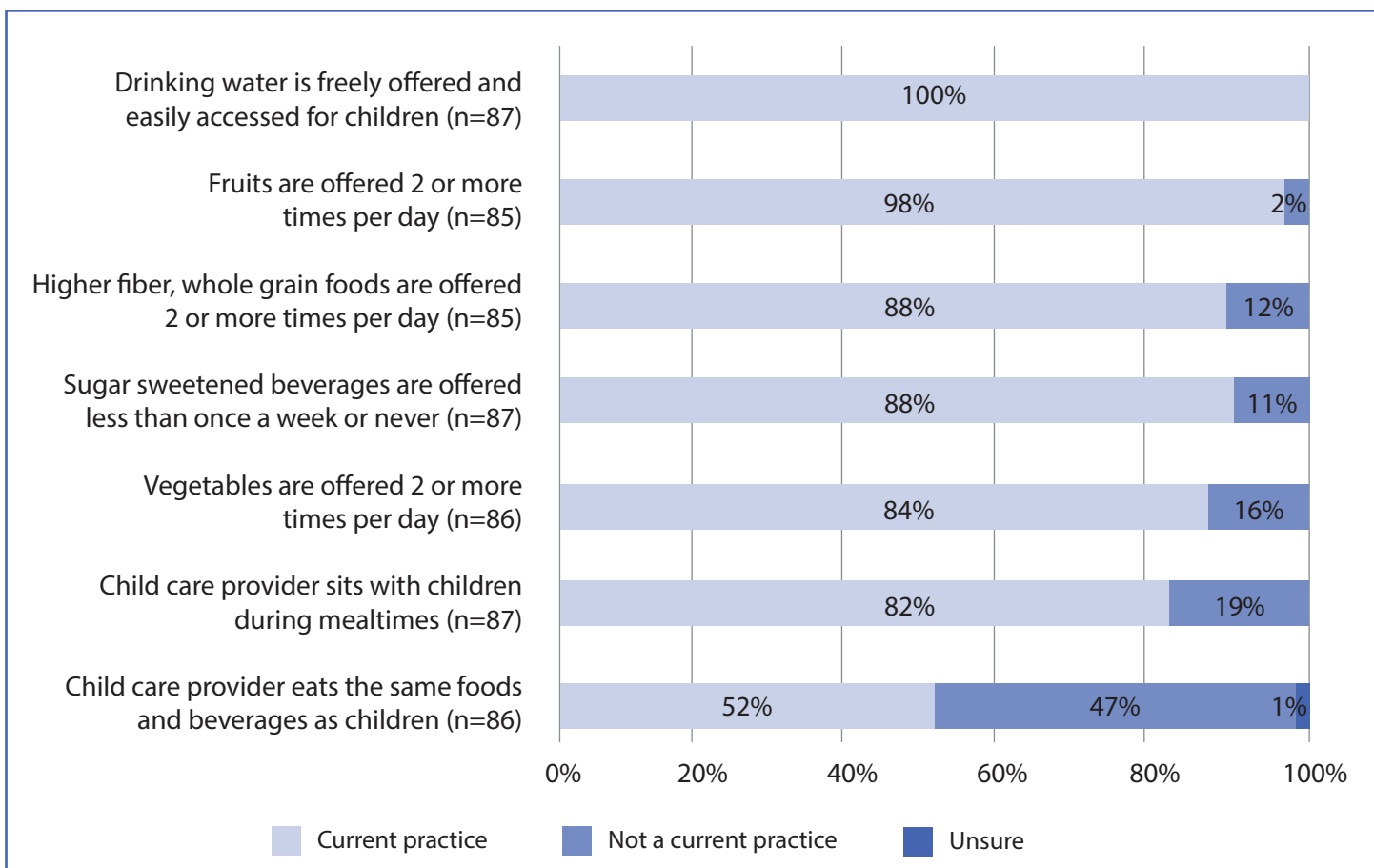
Eating the same food and beverages as children was the least common practice, with about half of providers participating (52%).

When asked about ways they help children choose healthy behaviors, providers were more likely to share strategies for promoting healthy eating than physical activity. Several providers mentioned involving children in growing and preparing food to pique their interest in eating fresh vegetables and fruits. Others spoke of providing taste testing of healthy foods. Of providers who spoke about physical activity, yoga was the most popular physical activity mentioned. Additionally, several providers spoke of reinforcing good hygiene habits to help kids choose healthy behaviors.

Child Care Provider Current Nutrition Practices

The majority of providers report implementing seven nutrition-related best practices from the survey. The least common practice reported by providers was eating the same foods and beverages as children.

Similar proportions of in-home providers and daycare centers reported implementing nutrition-related best practices with the exception of offering sugar sweetened beverages and eating the same foods as children, where more daycare centers report implementing those practices.



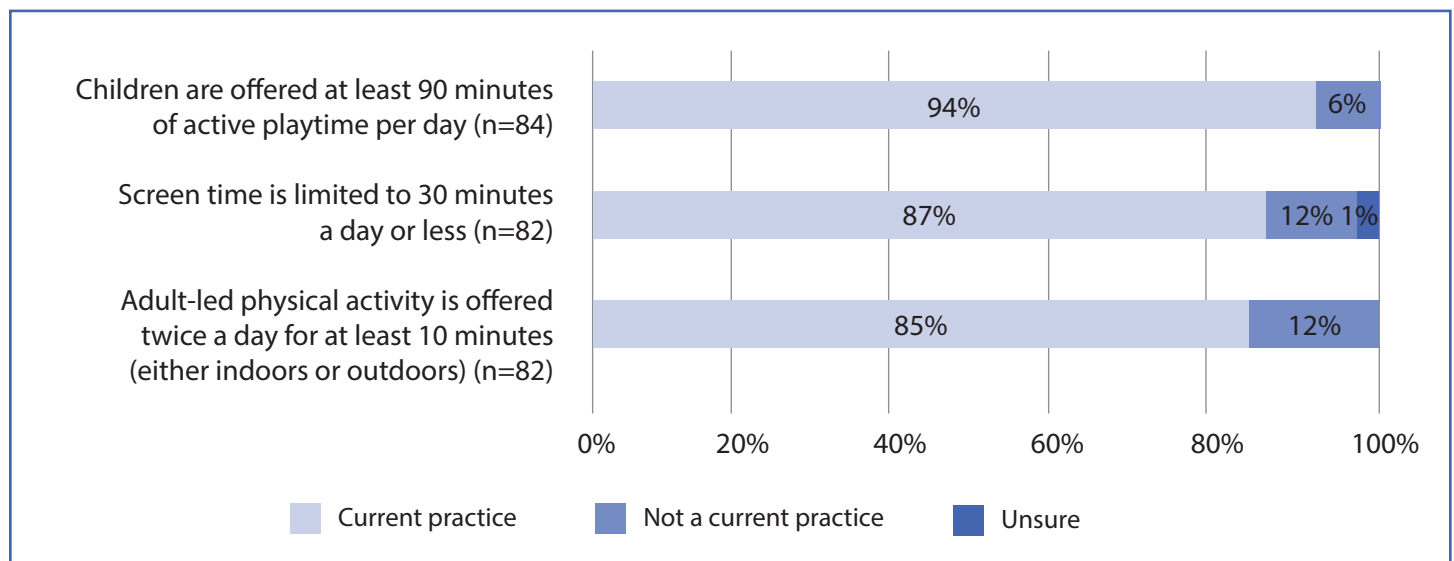
Differences by provider type

- All in-home providers and daycare centers freely offer water to children.
- All in-home providers (100%) and most daycare centers (91%) offer fruit twice or more daily.
- About the same amount of in-home providers (90%) and daycare centers (91%) offer whole grain, high fiber foods at least twice daily.
- All daycare centers (100%) and 86% of in-home providers offer sugar sweetened beverages less than once a week.
- About the same amount of in-home providers (83%) and daycare centers (82%) offer vegetables at least twice daily.
- All daycare centers (100%) and 81% of in-home providers sit with children as they eat.
- More daycare centers (63%) than in-home providers (53%) eat the same foods and beverages as children.

Child Care Provider Current Physical Activity Practices

The majority of providers report implementing physical activity best practices with fewer providers implementing screen time limitations and adult-led physical activity.

Fewer in-home providers report implementing screen time limits and fewer centers report providing 90 minutes of active playtime per day. Similar proportions of in-home and center providers report implementing adult-led physical activity.



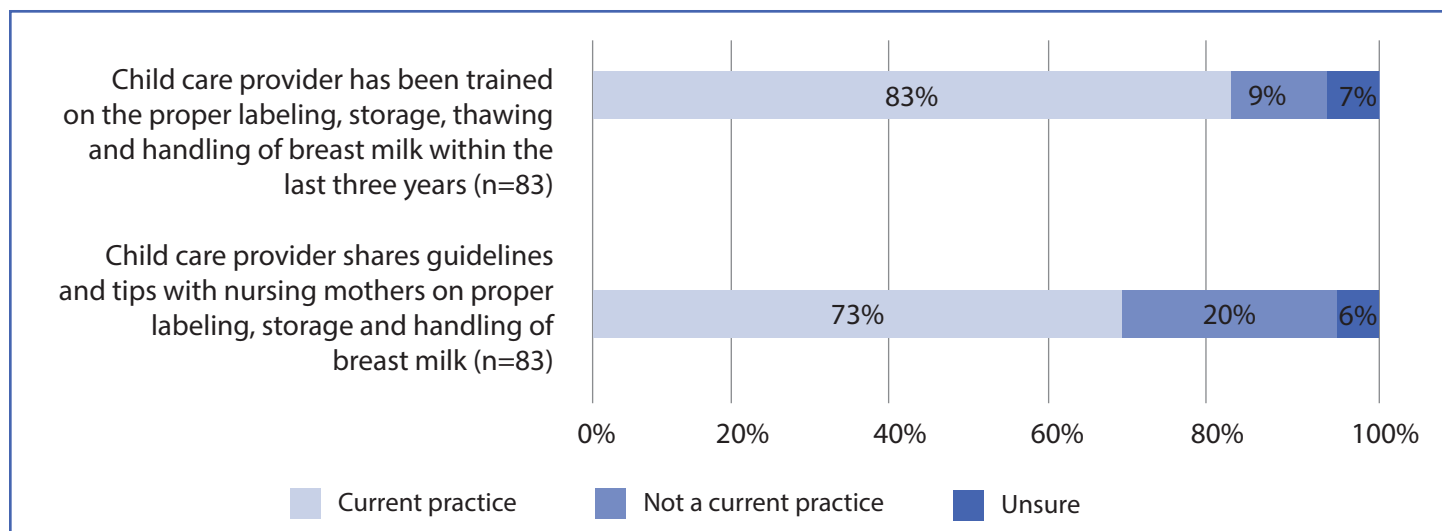
Differences by provider type

- All daycare centers surveyed (100%) and 84% of in-home providers limit screen time to 30 minutes a day or less.
- More in-home providers (95%) than centers (83%) offer children at least 90 minutes of active playtime per day.
- Adult-led physical activity is offered at similar rates for in-home providers (86%) and daycare centers (83%).

Child Care Provider Current Breastfeeding Support Practices

The majority of providers report receiving training on the proper handling of breastmilk within the last three years and report sharing guidelines and tips on these topics with nursing mothers.

More center providers report receiving training on the handling of breastmilk and sharing information about those topics with nursing mothers.



Differences by provider type

- All daycare centers (100%) and 80% of in-home providers have been trained on the proper labeling, storage, thawing and handling of breast milk within the last three years.
- More daycare centers (84%) than in-home providers (70%) share guidelines and tips with nursing mothers on proper labeling, storage and handling of breast milk.

Intentions for the future

When sharing current health practices in their child care, some providers indicated that they would like to expand on an existing practice or adopt an entirely new practice. The lists below show the top practices that providers would like to change. Increasing adult-led physical activity and offering more vegetables were common goals across both in-home providers and daycare centers.

Top practices in-home child care providers would like to expand or adopt

- 1 Child care provider sits with children during mealtimes
- 2 Child care provider eats the same foods and beverages as children
- 3 Adult-led physical activity is offered twice a day for at least 10 minutes (either indoors or outdoors)
- 4 Vegetables are offered 2 or more times per day

Top practices daycare centers would like to expand or adopt

- 1 Adult-led physical activity is offered twice a day for at least 10 minutes (either indoors or outdoors)
- 2 Vegetables are offered 2 or more times per day
- 3 Child care provider shares guidelines and tips with nursing mothers on proper labeling, storage and handling of breast milk
- 4 Children are offered at least 90 minutes of active playtime per day

Interest in technical assistance and support

One third of providers (33%) expressed an interest in receiving technical assistance and support from Living Healthy in Washington County (LHWC) to further promote health in the child care setting. Another 44% of providers shared they would like LHWC to follow up with more information about the supports available.

Daycare providers that were interested in receiving technical assistance and support from LHWC were asked which topics were most appealing. As shown in Table 1, all daycare centers and most in-home providers surveyed expressed interest in receiving support to offer new physical activity opportunities. All daycare centers also expressed interest in increasing the minutes children spend in physical activity. Providers were able to suggest additional ideas for technical assistance and support and several suggested grants for outdoor play equipment.

Another popular area for technical assistance and support is developing materials for parents and caregivers to promote healthy behaviors in the child care. Most frequently, providers currently communicate with parents about health promotion efforts in their child care through informal conversations with parents at pick-up and drop-off or through email and notes home. Some providers share articles or handouts with parents through a newsletter or a hard copy sent home with the child. Two providers mentioned sharing health promotion efforts with parents through Facebook.

Table 1: Preferred topics for technical assistance and support

	In-home providers (n=20)	Daycare centers (n=7)	Total¹ (n=28)
Offering new physical activity opportunities	85%	100%	86%
Developing materials for parent and caregivers on how to promote healthy behaviors in the child care	60%	57%	61%
Increasing the minutes spent in physical activity	45%	100%	57%
Promoting healthy food choices	45%	71%	54%
Supporting breastfeeding infants and mothers	20%	29%	21%
Reducing screen time	5%	0%	4%
Other	20%	0%	14%

¹Total includes in-home providers, daycare centers, and one provider that is unknown whether they are a center or an in-home provider.

Table 2 shows that most daycare centers prefer in-person trainings. However, 40% of in-home providers were unsure of their preferred type of training, 25% prefer in-person trainings and 25% prefer one-on-one on-site trainings.

Table 2: Trainings preferred by child care providers

	In-home providers (n=20)	Daycare centers (n=7)	Total (n=28)¹
In-person trainings	25%	71%	34%
One-on-one trainings at child care site	25%	14%	22%
One-on-one trainings over the phone	10%	0%	9%
Unsure	40%	14%	34%

¹Total includes in-home providers, daycare centers, and one provider that is unknown whether they are a center or an in-home provider.

As shown in Table 3, both in-home providers and daycare centers prefer trainings held on early evenings on weekdays.

Table 3: Preferred timing of training by child care providers

	In-home providers (n=19)	Daycare centers (n=7)	Total (n=27)¹
Weekday mornings	11%	14%	12%
Weekday afternoons	11%	0%	9%
Weekday early evenings	32%	57%	33%
Saturday mornings	21%	14%	18%
Saturday afternoons	5%	0%	6%
Unsure	21%	14%	21%

¹Total includes in-home providers, daycare centers, and one provider that is unknown whether they are a center or an in-home provider.

Interest in public recognition Fourteen percent of providers were interested in receiving public recognition through LHWC for their health promotion efforts, and half of providers (49%) were interested in receiving more information about recognitions programs.

APPENDIX: DATA TABLES

Table A1: All Child Care Providers Survey Responses: Current Practices and Future Intentions

	I currently do this.	I currently do this but would like to expand my efforts in the future.	I currently do not do this, but want to do this in the future.	I do not do this and have no plans to do this in the future.	Don't know
Fruits are offered 2 or more times per day (n=85)	94%	4%	2%	0%	0%
Vegetables are offered 2 or more times per day (n=86)	71%	13%	8%	8%	0%
High fiber, whole grain foods are offered 2 or more times per day (n=85)	79%	9%	7%	5%	0%
Drinking water is freely offered and easily accessed for children (n=87)	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Sugar sweetened beverages are offered less than once a week or never (n=87)	87%	1%	0%	11%	0%
Child care provider sits with children during mealtimes (n=87)	62%	20%	5%	14%	0%
Child care provider eats the same foods and beverages as children (n=86)	38%	14%	6%	41%	1%
Child care provider has been trained on the proper labeling, storage, thawing and handling of breast milk within the last three years (n=83)	78%	5%	1%	8%	7%
Child care provider shares guidelines and tips with nursing mothers on proper labeling, storage and handling of breast milk (n=83)	65%	8%	6%	14%	6%
Children are offered at least 90 minutes of active playtime per day (n=84)	86%	8%	6%	0%	0%
Adult-led physical activity is offered twice a day for at least 10 minutes (either indoors or outdoors) (n=83)	71%	14%	12%	2%	0%
Screen time is limited to 30 minutes a day or less (n=82)	76%	11%	2%	10%	1%

Table A2: In-home Provider Survey Responses: Current Practices and Future Intentions

	I currently do this.	I currently do this but would like to expand my efforts in the future.	I currently do not do this, but want to do this in the future.	I do not do this and have no plans to do this in the future.	Don't know
Fruits are offered 2 or more times per day (n=66)	98%	2%	0%	0%	0%
Vegetables are offered 2 or more times per day (n=67)	73%	10%	7%	9%	0%
High fiber, whole grain foods are offered 2 or more times per day (n=66)	82%	8%	5%	6%	0%
Drinking water is freely offered and easily accessed for children (n=67)	93%	7%	0%	0%	0%
Sugar sweetened beverages are offered less than once a week or never (n=67)	85%	1%	0%	13%	0%
Child care provider sits with children during mealtimes (n=67)	63%	18%	6%	13%	0%
Child care provider eats the same foods and beverages as children (n=67)	40%	13%	3%	42%	1%
Child care provider has been trained on the proper labeling, storage, thawing and handling of breast milk within the last three years (n=65)	75%	5%	2%	9%	9%
Child care provider shares guidelines and tips with nursing mothers on proper labeling, storage and handling of breast milk (n=65)	62%	8%	8%	15%	8%
Children are offered at least 90 minutes of active playtime per day (n=65)	89%	6%	5%	0%	0%
Adult-led physical activity is offered twice a day for at least 10 minutes (either indoors or outdoors) (n=65)	71%	15%	11%	3%	0%
Screen time is limited to 30 minutes a day or less (n=65)	72%	12%	3%	11%	2%

Table A3: Daycare Center Survey Responses: Current Practices and Future Intentions

	I currently do this.	I currently do this but would like to expand my efforts in the future.	I currently do not do this, but want to do this in the future.	I do not do this and have no plans to do this in the future.	Don't know
Fruits are offered 2 or more times per day (n=11)	82%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Vegetables are offered 2 or more times per day (n=11)	55%	27%	18%	0%	0%
High fiber, whole grain foods are offered 2 or more times per day (n=11)	82%	9%	9%	0%	0%
Drinking water is freely offered and easily accessed for children (n=12)	92%	8%	0%	0%	0%
Sugar sweetened beverages are offered less than once a week or never (n=12)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Child care provider sits with children during mealtimes (n=12)	83%	17%	0%	0%	0%
Child care provider eats the same foods and beverages as children (n=11)	36%	27%	18%	18%	0%
Child care provider has been trained on the proper labeling, storage, thawing and handling of breast milk within the last three years (n=11)	91%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Child care provider shares guidelines and tips with nursing mothers on proper labeling, storage and handling of breast milk (n=11)	73%	18%	0%	9%	0%
Children are offered at least 90 minutes of active playtime per day (n=12)	75%	8%	17%	0%	0%
Adult-led physical activity is offered twice a day for at least 10 minutes (either indoors or outdoors) (n=12)	75%	8%	17%	0%	0%
Screen time is limited to 30 minutes a day or less (n=11)	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Table A4: Survey responses by city in Washington County

City	Responses
Afton	1
Cottage Grove	26
Forest Lake	1
Hugo	4
Lake Elmo	5
Mahtomedi	3
Oakdale	11
Saint Paul Park	2
Scandia	1
Stillwater	8
Woodbury	24
Washington County, unspecified	1