



Empower



The Arizona Department of Health Services is happy to announce a new opportunity for child care providers beginning in January 2010. Providers who choose to participate will receive a designation of “Empower Centers” by the department which parents will recognize as a center that promotes a healthy environment for their child. Empower Centers will incorporate **10 Ways To Empower Children To Live Healthy Lives**, a list of standards that addresses everything from providing healthy food and exercise, to limiting “screen” time.

Empower Centers will receive a reduction in their licensing fees and their center will receive an Empower Pack, which includes curriculum and activities that can easily be incorporated into the everyday routine of child care to support good nutrition, physical activity and tobacco prevention. This pilot builds on the department’s successful Champions for Change campaign, which provides common nutrition messages to participants of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program). This statewide campaign includes materials distribution, information, TV ads, an interactive Web site, parent education materials, and recipes. It will be complemented by the EMPOWER PACK program which is being developed for school age children. This curriculum empowers children to make good choices about nutrition, physical activity and tobacco, using age appropriate vehicles including costumed characters and a coloring book. Additionally, child care centers will display posters and disseminate materials about the state’s smoking cessation services to all parents. The launch of this three year pilot program will provide relief to child care providers facing increased licensing fees at the same time that it addresses the alarming rise in childhood obesity and the harmful effects of tobacco.

The Empower Pack Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Tobacco Prevention for Children

Childhood obesity is on the rise and presents an alarming threat to the health of Arizona’s children. The average age of initiation of tobacco use in Arizona is just 12.7-years-old. Child care centers and schools are often a hub of activity for families and offer an access point for critical public health prevention messages. The Empower Movement combines the messages of eating healthy foods, promoting physical activity, preventing tobacco use initiation and reducing children’s exposure to second-hand smoke.

The program for 8-to 12-year-olds includes:

- **Traveling Live Theater:** The EMPOWER PACK is a trio of super singer, and dancer, heroes (really every day kids whose healthy choices give them their “super powers”) dedicated to the principle of wiping out the desire, and therefore the need, to smoke. Their principle enemy is ADDICTOR. He is very evil and cannot be seen, but his power is tremendously strong. Only THE EMPOWER PACK can possibly help. The trio is comprised of three kids who can create huge gusts of wind and are physically fit. They have only one weakness, one Achilles Heel and that is the consumption of non-nutritious food. This production is a musical about the heroes’ struggles against ADDICTOR. The main message is everyone has the power to control the choices we make. The goal is

to tie the marketing of this campaign in with our “Champions for Change” campaign which features real mothers who have made healthy changes to the foods their families eat including buying low fat milk and eating more fruits and vegetables.

- **An EMPOWER PACK Web site:** Here kids can “finish the story” where the live performance script ends, learn more about the heroes’ super powers and participate in additional engagement activities.
- **A Printed Piece/Comic Book:** This “leave behind” gives kids the opportunity to “finish the story” where the live performance script ends.
- **A Study Guide:** This will be provided as a resource to teachers in classrooms.
- **Stories about the EMPOWER PACK:** These will appear in Bear Essential News for Kids (a statewide publication distributed through schools directly to the target audience).
- **A Statewide Arts Contest:** This will offer kids a chance to exercise their creativity.

The EMPOWER PACK show script will be written to include several of the ADE State Education Theater Standards and will be vetted through ADE and approved by ADHS and USDA. Initial funding will allow for the development and implementation of the live show traveling to 20 Title I schools in the school year ending in 2010 and an additional 20 Title I schools in the first half of the school year ending in 2011.

The program for 2- to 5-year-olds in Child Care Centers includes:

- A printed piece/comic book which features the EMPOWER PACK trio for each child in the center.
- Materials to distribute to parents regarding the dangers of second-hand smoke and the number for the state-wide quit line.
- An EMPOWER PACK which includes curriculum and activities that can easily be incorporated into the everyday routine of child care to support good nutrition, physical activity and tobacco prevention.
- Visits from THE EMPOWER PACK characters to reinforce physical activity, nutrition and anti-tobacco messages
- Access to a cadre of professional consultants to assist with the incorporation of these messages into the curriculum.
- **10 Ways to Empower Children to Live Healthy Lives**
 - This is a list of 10 things that child care centers must do to become an official ADHS Empower Center. It includes incorporating physical activity, nutrition and anti-tobacco education into the everyday activities of the Center.
 - Endorsement by the Arizona Department of Health Services as an official “Empower Center.” This includes an “Empower Center” sticker that can be placed on the window and allows the center to advertise using this endorsement.

Empower Center Standards
10 Ways to Empower Children to Live Healthy Lives

1. Facilities should encourage physical activities as part of their curriculum by scheduling at least 60 minutes of structured activity (which can be broken up in shorter time periods) per day. Encourage “sun safe” physical activities.
2. Limit kids’ screen time* to under one hour a day.
3. Avoid more than 60 minutes of sedentary activity at a time, except while the child is sleeping.
4. Offer water at least 4 times during the day.
5. Serve 1% low fat or fat free milk for all children over two years of age.
6. Serve only 100% percent fruit juice (with no added sugars), and limit kids to (4 ounces) per day.
7. Serve meals family style** and let the child decide how much to eat. Avoid rewarding good behavior or a clean plate with foods of any kind.
8. If eligible, participate in the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program.
9. Facilities and homes should be totally (24-hour) smoke-free campuses.
10. All families should receive education and referrals regarding tobacco prevention cessation and second hand smoke at least 4 times per year.

*Screen time includes: TV/DVD, Computer, and Video Games.

**Family-style meal service means serving foods in bowls or dishes on the table. Children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. Caregivers eat the same food, promote healthy eating habits, and create a positive meal-time environment. Enough food must be placed on the table to provide the full required portion size for all the children at the table.

Note: Programs operating 6 hours or less would alter the activity schedule, screen time, and the number of times water is offered by ½.

All of these recommendations can be adapted to meet the needs of children of all ages.

For Information on Applying for the Program, please contact:

Call Child Care Licensing at (602) 364-2539
8 a.m. to 5 p.m., leave message if after hours

For Information on the Empower Care Standards or Packet, please contact:

Wayne Tormala, Chief
Arizona Department of Health Services
Bureau of Tobacco and Chronic Disease
150 North 18th Avenue, Suite 310
Phoenix, AZ 85007
(602) 364-0834
wayne.tormala@azdhs.gov
www.tobaccofreearizona.com

Karen Sell, R.D., Chief
Arizona Department of Health Services
Bureau of Nutrition and Physical Activity
150 North 18th Avenue, Suite 310
Phoenix, AZ 85007
602 542-2826
sellk@azdhs.gov
<http://www.azdhs.gov/phs/bnp/index.htm>
www.eatwellbewell.org