



NCCOR ANNUAL REPORT 2022

# Connecting Research to Communities









Nearly halfway into its second decade, the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) continues to accelerate efforts to address the epidemic of childhood obesity in the United States. NCCOR facilitates scientific collaboration among four leading funders—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

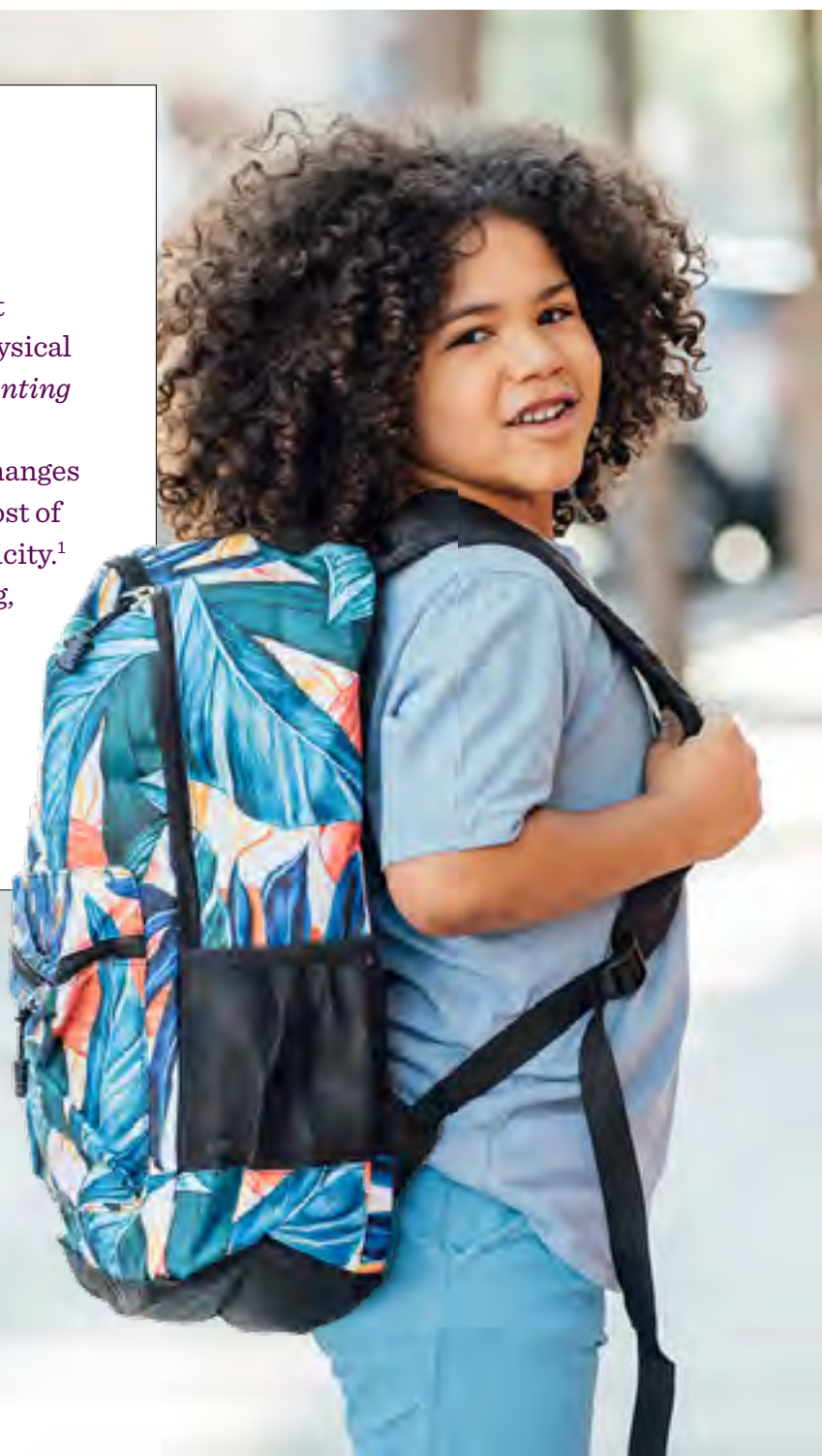
Though NCCOR's work begins with the collaborative, its impact is broad. The 2022 Annual Report highlights NCCOR's unique role in building a community among federal agencies, practitioners, students, and scientists working in children's health. In addition, NCCOR continues to reach new audiences. With the launch of user-friendly tools, NCCOR seeks to connect research to communities and empower those working to create healthy environments for all children.



# Empowering Communities with Evidence-Based Resources

In 2022 NCCOR developed a suite of tools and resources that help local leaders create environments where all children can thrive. These new resources can help communities meet the demand for inclusive spaces that promote physical activity. According to a survey published in *Preventing Chronic Disease*, more than half of respondents supported activity-friendly community design changes even if the changes increased the community's cost of living. This support did not differ by race or ethnicity.<sup>1</sup> NCCOR's new suite of resources, Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities, can help local planners and advocates harness this enthusiasm to develop equitable initiatives that allow all residents to thrive.

1 Dsouza N, Serrano N, Watson KB, McMahon J, Devlin HM, Lemon SC, et al. Exploring Residents' Perceptions of Neighborhood Development and Revitalization for Active Living Opportunities. *Prev Chronic Dis* 2022;19:220033. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5888/pcd19.220033>





## Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities: Making the Case for Investments in Activity-Friendly Communities

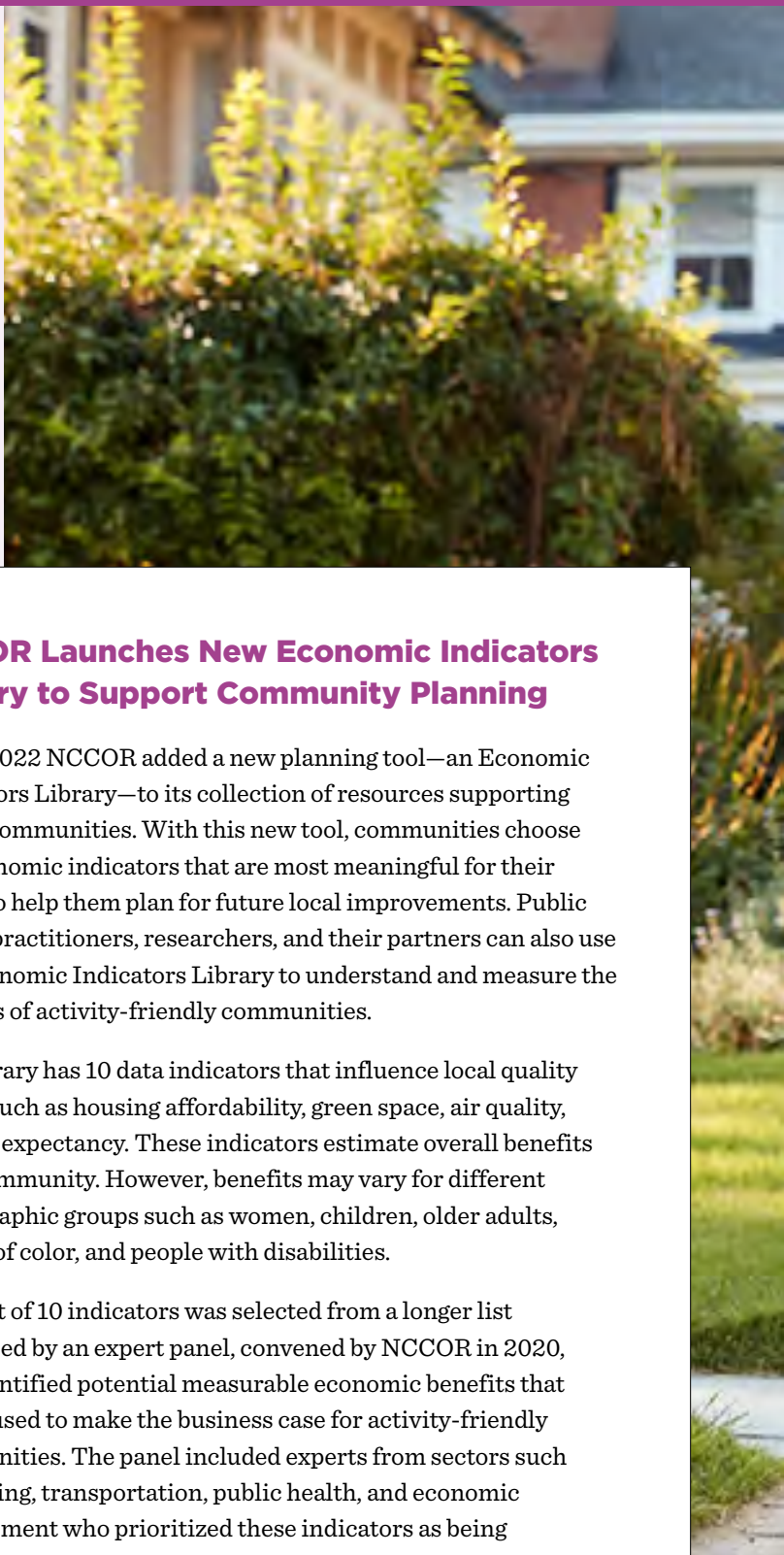
Activity-friendly communities have benefits for health and can also improve safety, social connectedness, air quality, and local economies.<sup>2</sup> NCCOR launched a new community-focused tool to help public health practitioners, decision makers, and community members make the business case for investment in built environment approaches that promote physical activity. The tool, **Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities: Making the Case for Investments in Activity-Friendly Communities**, builds on NCCOR's years of physical activity research.

The tool's suite of resources and research emphasize the economic benefits of promoting physical activity and are designed to facilitate conversations with local leaders. Materials include:

- ▶ **Tips for talking about the economic benefits of activity-friendly communities:** Offers talking points and questions to help start a conversation about activity-friendly communities.
- ▶ **Making the Business Case for Activity-Friendly Places fact sheet:** This ready-made factsheet offers an overview of the popular approaches and the measurable benefits of activity-friendly places. It makes for a helpful handout at community meetings and to share with community leaders.
- ▶ **Presentation:** This customizable PowerPoint presentation allows users to choose what benefits to emphasize based on their community's needs.
- ▶ **Recent research articles and other resources:** Includes articles published by NCCOR on the benefits of improving the built environment, as well as resources and tools from other organizations.



<sup>2</sup> Reference: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities. Washington, DC: U.S. Dept of Health and Human Services, Office of the Surgeon General; 2015



## NCCOR Launches New Economic Indicators Library to Support Community Planning

In fall 2022 NCCOR added a new planning tool—an Economic Indicators Library—to its collection of resources supporting active communities. With this new tool, communities choose the economic indicators that are most meaningful for their needs to help them plan for future local improvements. Public health practitioners, researchers, and their partners can also use the Economic Indicators Library to understand and measure the benefits of activity-friendly communities.

The library has 10 data indicators that influence local quality of life, such as housing affordability, green space, air quality, and life expectancy. These indicators estimate overall benefits for a community. However, benefits may vary for different demographic groups such as women, children, older adults, people of color, and people with disabilities.

This list of 10 indicators was selected from a longer list developed by an expert panel, convened by NCCOR in 2020, that identified potential measurable economic benefits that can be used to make the business case for activity-friendly communities. The panel included experts from sectors such as housing, transportation, public health, and economic development who prioritized these indicators as being high quality, highly feasible, and having high influence on decision making.

For a complete list of the 73 indicators identified during the expert panel, see [Priorities and Indicators for Economic Evaluation of Built Environment Interventions to Promote Physical Activity](#), published in the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health* in 2021.

### WALKING THE WALK

NCCOR took to the streets—literally!—to demonstrate how communities can better promote active transportation. Nationally recognized physical activity expert Mark Fenton led a walk through Boston’s Seaport District for attendees of the American Public Health Association’s annual meeting, which was held in Boston in November 2022. During the walk, he highlighted features of the built environment that either promote or discourage active transportation.





### REACHING NEW AUDIENCES

NCCOR's most recent tools that seek to make research translation practical and meaningful for communities were among the most popular resources on the NCCOR website in 2022. Our user-friendly guide, *A Toolkit for Evaluating Childhood Healthy Weight Programs*, had **199,482** page views, and our newest resource, *Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities*, had **165,319** page views.



# Charting a Path Forward

NCCOR continues to address the pandemic's impact on children's nutrition and physical activity.



## The Impact of COVID-19 on Early Childhood Care Centers

NCCOR's research collaboration with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition (GSCN) sought to identify how the pandemic affected early child education centers and how to address those challenges going forward, with a focus on practical strategies for improving nutrition and opportunities for physical activity.

A June 2022 article published in *Frontiers in Public Health* presents findings from NCCOR's prior two years of work with GSCN, namely, findings from 17 key informant interviews. The article also describes interviewees' recommendations, which were focused on addressing social determinants of health (including food insecurity among both staff and children in early childhood settings) and improving infrastructure for nutrition and physical activity. Continued programmatic and public health recovery efforts aimed at mitigating the negative impacts of COVID-19 are critical to fostering health and wellbeing in child care settings.



## The White House Shines a Spotlight on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health

The first White House Conference to illuminate hunger, nutrition, and health in more than 50 years was held in September 2022, catalyzing a new wave of energy as it convened a diverse group of experts, policy makers, community leaders, and individuals with lived experiences to discuss the country's intersecting challenges of food insecurity and diet-related diseases. In conjunction with the conference, the White House released a National Strategy on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health. This bold strategy seeks to advance the goals of ending hunger and increasing healthy eating and physical activity by 2030 so fewer Americans experience diet-related diseases. It also seeks to reduce health-related disparities in the United States.

The National Strategy outlines a range of ambitious and achievable actions the federal government will take to fundamentally shift the country's food, nutrition, and health policies to achieve the 2030 goals. These actions are organized into five pillars: improving food access and affordability; integrating nutrition and health; empowering all consumers to make and have access to healthy choices, supporting physical activity for all; and enhancing nutrition and food security research. Examples of actions in the National Strategy with relevance for children include advancing a pathway to free healthy school meals for all, expanding summer electronic benefits transfer (EBT) to more children, supporting physical activity for children in and out of school, bolstering training of the health care workforce on pediatric obesity prevention, and expanding access to the evidence-based Family Healthy Weight Programs through at least three new funding opportunities.

Importantly, the National Strategy emphasizes that the federal government cannot make these transformative changes alone—accelerating this work will require actions by state, Tribal, local, and territory governments; academia; civil society; philanthropy; the private sector; and other partners. As such, the Strategy recommends steps that other sectors can pursue to help reach the 2030 goals.



# Making Research Accessible for All

NCCOR offers a diverse range of free resources and learning opportunities for researchers, practitioners, and students.

## 2022 Connect & Explore Webinars

NCCOR's webinars attract an international audience and connect attendees with leaders in childhood obesity research. This year's webinars

- 1 highlighted a new research paradigm regarding the cultural context of childhood obesity,
- 2 spotlighted the importance of recess in children's development, with a focus on practical policy solutions, and
- 3 offered guidance on how to use NCCOR's resources to achieve program goals.

Connect & Explore webinars are always free and made available on NCCOR's website for later viewing. Nearly 1,300 people registered for NCCOR's online learning events in 2022, and all recordings are available online.

## NCCOR Annual Showcase: New Projects, Tools, and Resources

February 7

Experts: Stephanie George, PhD, MPH, MA; Hatidza Zaganjor, MPH; David Berrigan, PhD, MPH; Brook Belay, MD, MPH

## Reframing Childhood Obesity: Cultural Insights on Nutrition, Weight, and Food Systems

September 7

Experts: Karabi Acharya, ScD, MHS; Jamie Bussel, MPH; Ted Fischer, PhD; Tatiana Paz Lemus, PhD

## Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities

November 17

Experts: Hatidza Zaganjor, MPH; Cole Youngner, MPH; Mark Fenton, MS

## Optimizing Recess for Healthy Child Development

December 6

Experts: William Massey, PhD; Kimberly Clevenger, PhD, MPH





## SHARING RESEARCH AND RESOURCES

The monthly NCCOR e-newsletter spotlights major developments in childhood obesity research. It keeps our audience up to date on NCCOR's work and helps connect them with the work of other organizations by highlighting new journal articles, events, and funding opportunities.

## The NCCOR Student Hub Supports the Next Generation of Leaders

NCCOR's Student Hub offers user-friendly resources to help students who are new to childhood obesity research learn how NCCOR can help them achieve academic and career goals. Geared toward graduate students in public health, nutrition, and kinesiology, the Hub features a Student Resources Guide that provides case studies, step-by-step guidance on how to use NCCOR's tools, and information about additional training materials. It also offers assistance for designing a research project by helping students select the most appropriate measures and datasets and pointing them toward tools that can help conduct systematic reviews and meta-analyses, develop childhood obesity interventions, analyze secondary data sets, and more.

The Student Hub was the second-most visited page on the NCCOR website in 2022, with 378,357 page views. The program also publishes an e-newsletter each semester with up-to-date research geared towards a student audience.

**STUDENT HUB**  
**PAGE VIEWS**  
**378,357**

## REMOVING BARRIERS TO ACCESSING RESEARCH

All NCCOR-supported research is published under open access licenses, eliminating access barriers to users without individual or institutional subscriptions to databases or journals. This list of published research is also consolidated in our website's research library, to which three new peer-reviewed articles were added in 2022.



# Advancing Interdisciplinary Research

NCCOR continues to maintain its commitment to facilitating collaboration among the research community.

Two of the research papers that NCCOR published in 2022 aimed to advance novel ideas for interdisciplinary collaboration between researchers in health promotion, public safety, transportation, and community design.

## **Systematic Review on Quantifying Pedestrian Injury When Evaluating Changes to the Built Environment**

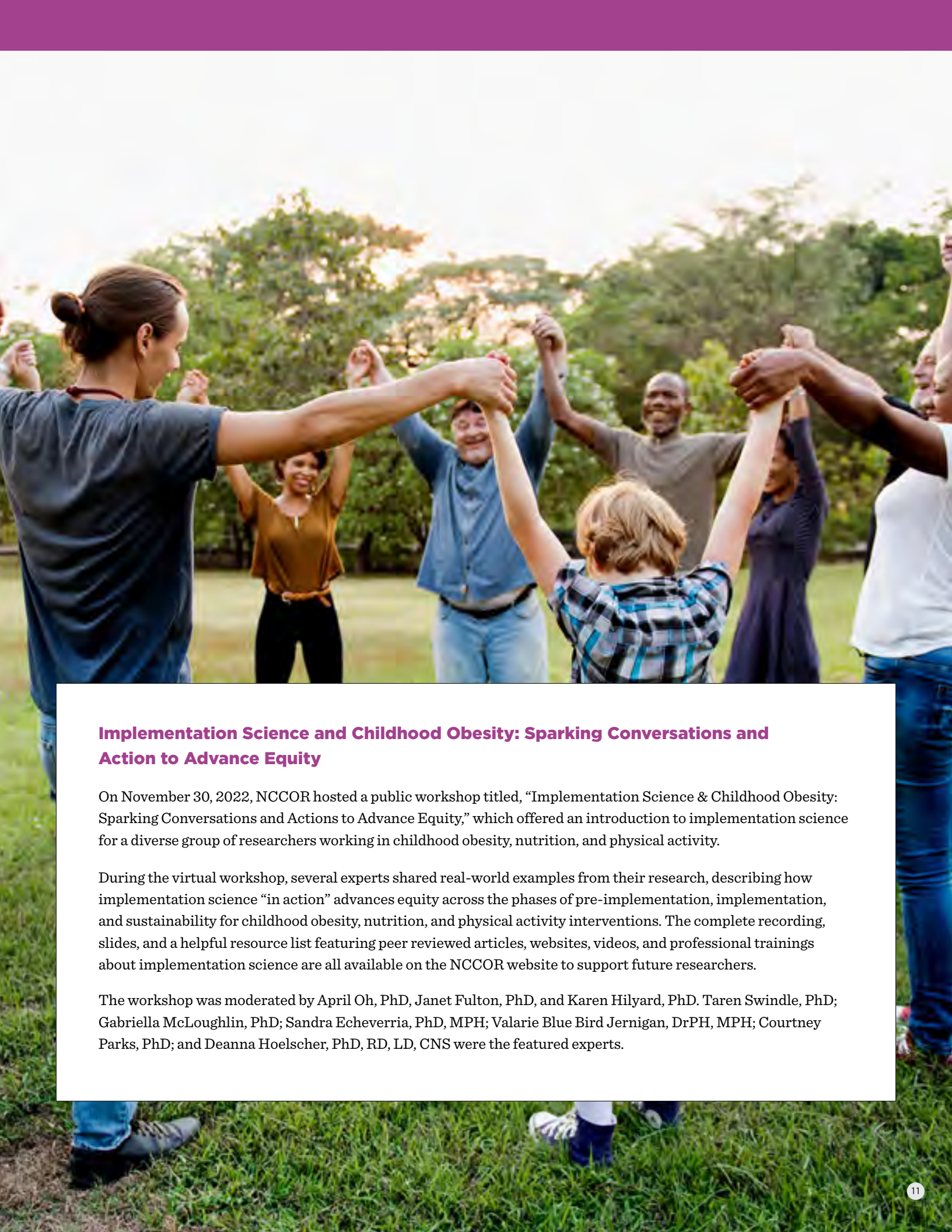
Published in *Preventive Medicine Reports* (April 2022), this manuscript sought to answer the question of whether interventions that promote more walkable communities have the added benefit of improving safety. Researchers from NCCOR's Additional Benefits of Walkability workgroup found that few studies have quantified pedestrian injury relative to interventions in the built environment that foster walkable communities. The manuscript concludes with recommendations for quantifying injury prevention and clarifying the safety benefits of walkable communities and urges greater collaboration between physical activity and injury prevention professionals.

## **Improving Active Travel to School and Its Surveillance: An Overlooked Opportunity in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention**

A commentary in *Translational Behavioral Medicine* (July 2022) synthesizes findings from a 2020 NCCOR workshop on active travel to school (ATS) surveillance, metric prioritization activities, and post-workshop conversation and consultation. It offers insights to strengthen surveillance and data collection of ATS behaviors as well as ATS environmental, policy, and program supports. The commentary is the third NCCOR publication that advances research on the topic of ATS, a promising approach to help increase the currently low (~25 percent) prevalence of U.S. youth who self-report meeting the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommendation for daily physical activity.







## **Implementation Science and Childhood Obesity: Sparking Conversations and Action to Advance Equity**

On November 30, 2022, NCCOR hosted a public workshop titled, “Implementation Science & Childhood Obesity: Sparking Conversations and Actions to Advance Equity,” which offered an introduction to implementation science for a diverse group of researchers working in childhood obesity, nutrition, and physical activity.

During the virtual workshop, several experts shared real-world examples from their research, describing how implementation science “in action” advances equity across the phases of pre-implementation, implementation, and sustainability for childhood obesity, nutrition, and physical activity interventions. The complete recording, slides, and a helpful resource list featuring peer reviewed articles, websites, videos, and professional trainings about implementation science are all available on the NCCOR website to support future researchers.

The workshop was moderated by April Oh, PhD, Janet Fulton, PhD, and Karen Hilyard, PhD. Taren Swindle, PhD; Gabriella McLoughlin, PhD; Sandra Echeverria, PhD, MPH; Valarie Blue Bird Jernigan, DrPH, MPH; Courtney Parks, PhD; and Deanna Hoelscher, PhD, RD, LD, CNS were the featured experts.

# Connecting the Research Community

## 2022 Conferences

### International Society of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity (ISBNPA)

May 18–21 | Phoenix, AZ

The mission of ISBNPA is to stimulate, promote, and advocate for innovative research and policy in the area of behavioral nutrition and physical activity toward the betterment of human health worldwide.

Presentation: Key Informant Interviews to Inform Nutrition and Physical Activity Recovery Efforts in Child Care Settings amid the COVID-19 Pandemic in the United States

Author: Allison Magness Nitto, PhD, in collaboration with the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition

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### American College of Sports Medicine

May 31–June 4 | San Diego, CA

This comprehensive sports medicine and exercise science conference includes programming that covers the science, practice, public health, and policy aspects of sports medicine, exercise science, and physical activity.

Poster: Evaluation of Practice-Based Programs to Increase Use of Trails Among Youth from Under-Resourced Communities

Authors: David Brown, MPH; David Berrigan, PhD, MPH; Van Do, MPH; Michael Hill, MLA; and Julian Reed EdD, MPH, MS

### American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)

October 7–11 | Anaheim, CA

The AAP's national conference and exhibition aims to keep pediatricians up to date with the most current best practices in pediatrics.

Poster: A Toolkit for Evaluating Childhood Healthy Weight Programs

Authors: Sarah Armstrong, MD; Ihouma Eneli, MD, MS; Brook Belay, MD, MPH; Van Do, MPH

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### SHIFT Summit

October 17–20 | Fort Collins, CO

The SHIFT Summit is a national gathering of land managers, researchers, funders, educators, retailers, and conservationists, along with outdoor recreation, health, military, and nature therapy professionals, who share experiences, evidence, and ideas for better linking of both humans and nature.

Poster: Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities: Tools to Make the Case for Investments in Activity-Friendly Communities

Authors: Hatidza Zaganjor, MPH; Van Do, MPH

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### American Public Health Association

November 6–9 | Boston, MA

This annual conference is the largest in the field of public health, bringing together more than 13,000 public health practitioners.

Presentation: How-to Resources to Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities: Making the Case for Improving the Built Environment

Authors: Angie Cradock, ScD, MPE; Van Do, MPH





## NCCOR Workgroups Promote Research Collaboration

The collaborative workgroup model is the heart of NCCOR's approach to provide a structure for members to collaborate on both emerging and established issues of shared interest. Workgroups help researchers share resources, provide productive feedback, and spur innovation. Some workgroups continue for extended periods and encompass multiple projects; others focus on one project and disband when the work is complete. The following workgroups and projects were active during 2022:

- ▶ 10<sup>TH</sup> Anniversary – Measures Registry & Catalogue of Surveillance Systems
- ▶ Adding a Sleep Variable to the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems
- ▶ Additional Benefits of Walkability
- ▶ Advancing Measurement of Dietary Assessment for Infants and Young Children
- ▶ Childhood Obesity & COVID-19
- ▶ Economic Impact of Built Environment Improvements for Physical Activity
- ▶ Engaging Health Care Providers and Systems
- ▶ Increasing Opportunities for Trail Use to Promote Physical Activity and Health Among Underserved Youth
- ▶ Implementation Science
- ▶ Youth Active Travel to School Surveillance Initiative

## NCCOR External Scientific Panel (NESP)

The NCCOR External Scientific Panel (NESP) advises NCCOR on its future direction and provides guidance on specific projects and emerging work. NESP members represent a diverse range of expertise in academia and medicine and are valued liaisons between NCCOR and external scientific communities, informing the Collaborative on new science and connections to outside research, practice, and policy.

### 2022 NESP Membership

- ▶ **Shari Barkin**, MD, MSHS, *Vanderbilt University Medical Center*
- ▶ **Ross C. Brownson**, PhD, *Washington University in St. Louis*
- ▶ **John Cawley**, PhD, *Cornell University*
- ▶ **Terry Huang**, PhD, MPH, MBA, *City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate School of Public Health and Health Policy*
- ▶ **Shiriki Kumanyika**, PhD, MPH, *Dornsife School of Public Health, Drexel University*
- ▶ **Lisa M. Powell**, PhD, *University of Illinois at Chicago School of Public Health*
- ▶ **Amelie G. Ramirez**, DrPH, *The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio*
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- ▶ **James F. Sallis**, PhD, *University of California, San Diego (UCSD)*
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# Coming Up in 2023

NCCOR will celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2023. In addition to reflecting on the history of its signature tools, the Measures Registry and the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems, NCCOR is planning the following activities for 2023:

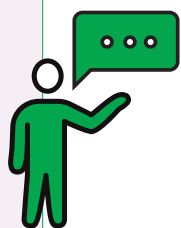
- ▶ Launch a major expansion of the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems with the introduction of “sleep” as a new key search term and variable. This effort is the product of an NCCOR workgroup that was formed to address the gap in access to datasets that include sleep-related variables that could assist researchers in identifying quality sleep measures for surveillance and epidemiological research. This initiative is an example of how NCCOR continues to evolve its tools in response to emerging research and community needs.
- ▶ Continue to participate in follow-on initiatives to the September 2022 White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.
- ▶ Highlight research gaps to advance new measurement tools, methods, and data for dietary assessment among children from birth to 24 months of age.





# 2022 NCCOR BY THE NUMBERS

## CONFERENCES



5

Conferences

3

Presentations

2

Posters

2

Exhibits

## E-NEWSLETTERS



Monthly E-newsletter

6,264

subscribers

Student E-newsletter

755

subscribers

## WEBSITE

1.9 MILLION

Total page views in 2022

nccor.org



Most visited pages include:

Measure Registry  
Resource Suite

392,828

Page views

Student Hub

378,357

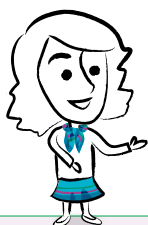
Page views

Create Thriving,  
Activity-Friendly  
Communities

199,482

Page views

## ONLINE LEARNING



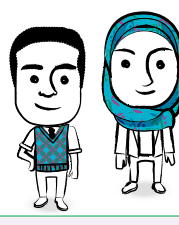
4

Connect & Explore  
webinars



1

Virtual  
workshop



1,300

Registered attendees