



THE NATIONAL COLLABORATIVE ON CHILDHOOD OBESITY RESEARCH:

Making Progress Through Partnership



- The mission of the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) is to accelerate progress in reducing childhood obesity for all children, with attention to high-risk populations and communities.
- The Collaborative was designed to facilitate, coordinate, and expand the childhood obesity research and evaluation of the partners: CDC, NIH, RWJF, and USDA.

Why NCCOR collaboration works:

- Its structure enables agencies to rapidly streamline and disseminate research findings and identify initiatives that individual agencies can address.



Early wins: Early on, NCCOR worked to fill the gaps in measurement resources by creating the Measures Registry (a web-based portfolio of nearly 1400 studies and 100 discrete measures related to diet and physical activity) and the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems (access to more than 100 publicly available survey datasets relevant to childhood obesity research.) These tools were made possible by a combination of financial resources, intellectual capital, and management support from the four agencies and the Coordinating Center.



Current actions: This year, NCCOR began conducting a Measurement Workshop series to explore better measurement and measurement practices in childhood obesity research and evaluation. The three workshops brought together leaders from the field supported by a strategic alliance with The JPB Foundation. The second workshop also addressed issues of health disparities and social determinants of health.



Current actions: NCCOR has been able to develop and support new methodologies, such as with the RWJF-funded *Childhood Obesity Declines* project and the NIH funded *Childhood Obesity Evidence Base* project. The former tested an adapted version of the Systematic Screening Assessment method (SSA) and the latter is testing a new taxonomic meta-analytic method. This tool received more than 6,000 page views online in the first month alone after being launched.

- Synergistic efforts carry more weight address the needs of the research community.



Early wins: NCCOR sends out a monthly e-newsletter to more than 5,000 subscribers with information from across the four agencies on the latest funding opportunities, childhood obesity news, events, publications and tools.



Current actions: In September 2019, NCCOR launched four new Measures Registry Learning Modules, videos that assist researchers and practitioners with choosing the best measures across the four domains of: individual diet, food environment, individual physical activity and physical activity environment.

- Cross-collaboration broadens reach and relevance of each agency's childhood obesity activities.



Early wins: In 2012, due to a congressional mandate in the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, USDA's new emphasis on childhood obesity led to the NCCOR working group that created the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)-Ed Toolkit of Interventions which include evidence-based policy, system, and environmental strategies for obesity prevention. Four years later in 2016, the SNAP-Ed evaluation framework was also finalized with input from this workgroup and other SNAP-Ed regional leaders.



Current actions: Bring in non-traditional public health partners to our discussions. A recent example, the “Increasing Opportunities for Trail Use to Promote Physical Activity and Health Among Underserved Youth” project, brought in the Forest Service and the Department of Transportation. This project aims to identify what is known about the benefits of trail use, effective interventions or programs to promote trail use among underserved youth, and the facilitators and barriers related to trail use as a health-enhancing behavior among youth.



Current actions: In 2017, the Engaging Healthcare Providers workgroup created a web-based collaborative learning space for community-based healthy weight program practitioners and subject matter experts to inform the development of an evaluation framework for community-based healthy weight programs. NCCOR is developing the evaluation framework for release in early 2020, and plans to publish white papers and/or peer-reviewed manuscripts.

- **Facilitates “passing the baton” at the appropriate times, allowing more efficient and coordinated work.**



Early wins: In 2012, NCCOR established the Youth Energy Expenditure workgroup to develop energy expenditure values. Using intellectual capital across the organizations, the workgroup released the Youth Compendium of Physical Activities in 2017, which included a list of 196 common activities in which youth participate and the estimated energy cost associated with each activity.



Current actions: NCCOR worked to create Youth Compendium fact sheets for different audiences, such as for physical education and classroom teachers and public health practitioners. NCCOR is also currently working to translate the Compendium in Spanish; given

that many experts working in South America needed such translation to facilitate use of this resource internationally.

- **NCCOR creates and bolsters social capital -- a core base that enables members to leverage one another’s intellectual, managerial and financial capital.**



Early wins: USDA was not been able to provide current FPED nutrient estimates for NHANES dietary data in 2010 because of budget constraints. In 2011, USDA discussed this need within NCCOR. NCCOR member agencies rapidly provided financial capital (more than \$400,000) for the update of the 2007-2010 NHANES data. With this financial support, USDA released FPED updates in September 2013. The recognition of its importance to the field has enabled USDA to maintain its timely release of the FPED data. These data provide key information on usual dietary intake in the US relevant to the updates of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.



Early wins: In 2009, NCCOR members began discussions about the need for a funding mechanism to support the collection of time-sensitive data relevant to evaluation research on childhood obesity. Based on this discussion, NIH created an ongoing funding mechanism, “Time-Sensitive Obesity Policy and Program Evaluation,” to support the collection of baseline data. This mechanism has resulted in 21 grants from 2013-2019, most awarded in substantially less than the usual 9 months.



Current actions: NCCOR is creating a new guide for assessing childhood obesity after both CDC and NIH heard from their stakeholders of the need for such a tool. It will be released in early 2020.