

Making a Strategic Difference



MAKING A STRATEGIC DIFFERENCE

When NCCOR began 15 years ago, childhood obesity rates were escalating, and few resources existed to support prevention research. As a new public-private partnership, NCCOR sought to accelerate progress by increasing coordination among our four major 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).

Today, NCCOR is proud to reflect on a decade and a half of scientific achievements and the collaborations that made them possible. Our work transcends the boundaries of federal agencies, programs, and research disciplines to advance strategic priorities. The results are tangible. In the past 15 years, NCCOR has created seven free research tools, authored over 200 publications, hosted over 70 webinars and workshops, and presented or exhibited at over 40 scientific conferences.

NCCOR also connects the various social, ecological, and lifestyle factors that affect children's health. Research focused on diet and physical activity anchors our portfolio, but our scope has grown. NCCOR can now help researchers and practitioners describe the economic benefits of community improvements, create measures to assess social determinants of health, or explore the relationship between sleep and childhood obesity.

The theme of our 2023 Annual Report—Making a Strategic Difference—captures NCCOR's unique ability to foster collaboration, maximize resources, and spur innovation. As we reflect on our work in 2023, we celebrate the past year's accomplishments and the remarkable 15-year journey that has brought us to this point.



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New Research Frontiers

NCCOR Expands the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems with Sleep Variables

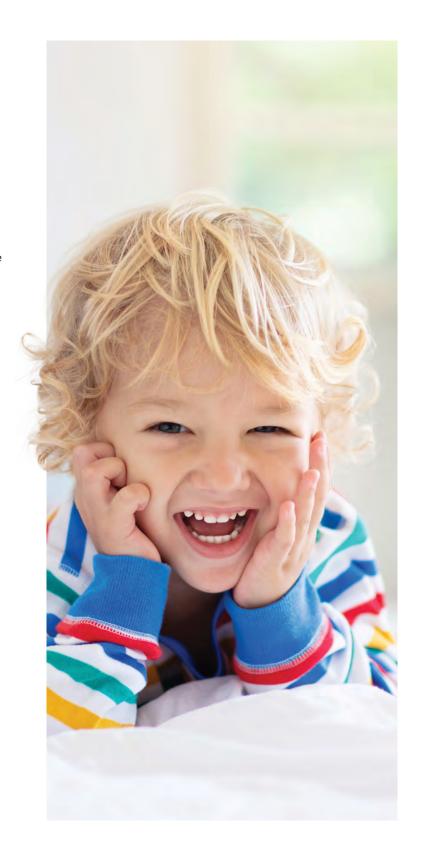
Every hour is important for fostering healthy childhood growth and development. How children eat, move, and sleep all influence their risk of developing obesity. Insufficient or poor-quality sleep can affect metabolic health and disrupt other positive behaviors. Yet, few research tools include behaviors across a 24-hour cycle, making it difficult to assess the collective impact of sleep, diet quality, and physical activity on obesity outcomes.

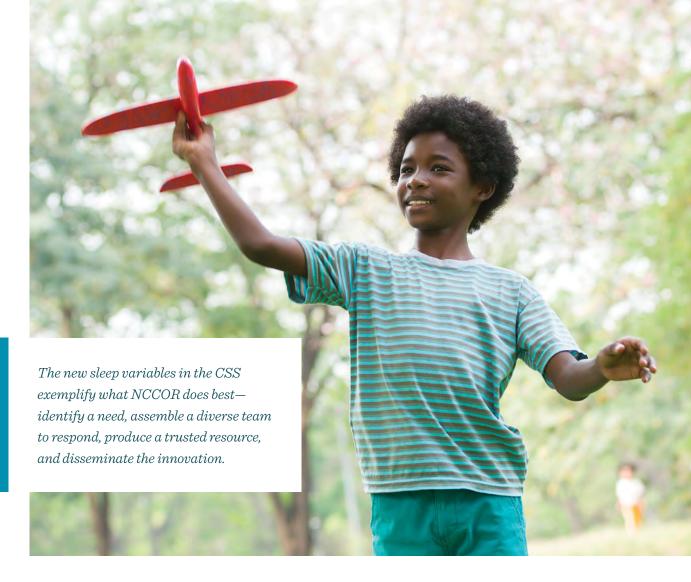
Recognizing the need for a comprehensive resource, NCCOR assembled an interdisciplinary and interagency team to identify high-quality publicly available data sources to advance sleep research. This work culminated in 2023 when NCCOR added sleep variables to the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems (CSS).

NCCOR launched the CSS in 2011 to streamline finding trusted variables about obesity-related behaviors, outcomes, determinants, policies, and environmental factors. Today, the CSS provides one-stop access to over 100 publicly available datasets. The new sleep variables expand research possibilities, enabling scientists to assess the interaction between different lifestyle factors. The sleep-related filter options include:

- Physical sleep environment
- · Social sleep environment
- · Sleep duration and quantity
- · Sleep disturbances and quality
- · Sleep timing and regularity

NCCOR also launched a communication campaign to promote the new sleep variables, including a fact sheet, social media messages, parter outreach, and a planned 2024 Connect & Explore webinar.





NCCOR Commentary Highlights the Evolution and Impact of Key Research Tools

The new sleep variables exemplify how NCCOR tools continue to evolve. A 2023 commentary in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* recounts the history of our signature tools, the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems (CSS) and the Measures Registry. The paper, "National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research Efforts to Advance Childhood Obesity Research: Progress and Next Steps," explains why these tools were groundbreaking when they were released and how they remain vital today.

NCCOR regularly updates our resources to address current research challenges. In addition to the new sleep variables, the CSS now includes more systems relevant to schools, communities, and racial and ethnic minorities. The Measures Registry contains more measures for rural environments, Spanish language speakers, and populations under two compared to when it first launched in 2011, and it has grown ever since. The 2023 commentary explores this history, concluding that the CSS and Measures Registry are tools worthy of celebration and continued investment.

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Over 900 people registered for NCCOR's September 2023 Connect & Explore

webinar, "Measuring Diet Quality Across the Lifespan: Introducing the New Healthy Eating Index-Toddlers-2020 and Healthy Eating Index-2020." This special event featured an expert panel of researchers from the National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, who developed the new HEI, highlighting the collective effort and interdisciplinary collaboration that underpin these advancements.

The introduction of the HEI-Toddlers-2020, alongside the updated HEI-2020, represents a significant leap forward in our ability to assess and improve diet quality across the lifespan. These tools fill a crucial gap in nutritional assessment



and offer new avenues for research and public health interventions to support healthy growth and development from an early age.

A recording of the HEI webinar can be viewed online at www.nccor.org/webinars.

From First Bites to Healthy **Lives: NCCOR Advances Dietary Assessment in Young Children**

From our first spoonful of mashed peas to toddlersized sandwiches (crusts optional), early dietary habits set the stage for a lifetime of healthy eating. Recognizing the importance of infant and toddler nutrition, the 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) now include dietary recommendations for children aged six to 24 months, emphasizing that "every bite counts."

Yet, how do you count those bites?

NCCOR's B-24 Diet Assessment workgroup devoted two years to addressing this question. Their response appeared in the September 2023 Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics focused on earlylife nutrition.

The NCCOR commentary reviews current dietary assessment methods for infants and toddlers and highlights the limitations of existing tools. Traditional methods often fall short of accurately capturing the multifaceted nature of dietary intake during these critical early years. The commentary details the workgroup's efforts to evaluate and identify these measurement gaps, underscoring the importance of developing innovative tools and methods to provide more reliable and nuanced data.

Additionally, the paper identifies opportunities for advancement. It proposes improving dietary assessment methods for estimating energy intakes and implementing surveillance systems to gather detailed information about the contextual aspects of food and beverage consumption. It also emphasizes the multidimensional and dynamic nature of dietary intake in infancy and toddlerhood, calling for tools to adapt to these complexities.

By pinpointing the limitations of current assessment tools and proposing pathways for future research, NCCOR is paving the way for more effective interventions and policies to support healthier dietary patterns from the beginning of life. This work contributes to the scientific community and promises to shape healthier futures for generations to come.





NCCOR Partners with the Healthy Eating Index to Promote Toddler Nutrition

For over a decade, NCCOR has assisted with the dissemination and outreach of the Healthy Eating Index (HEI). Created by the National Cancer Institute and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the HEI measures how closely foods adhere to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans' (DGA) recommendations. For the first time in its history, the most recent HEI includes two scoring systems: HEI-2020 for children and adults aged 2 years and older and HEI-Toddlers-2020 for children aged 12 to 23 months. The new versions address a need identified by the 2020 DGA Committee to have a scoring system for very young children. Until now, HEI-scoring was only possible for those aged 2 years and older.

NCCOR collaborated with the HEI's authors to develop a summary factsheet describing the latest changes and the need for a separate toddler version. Both systems address 13 measures of dietary quality, but young children have smaller calorie constraints appropriate for their age group. As a result, the 2020–2025 DGAs introduced a new USDA Dietary Pattern for toddlers aged 12 through 23 months, spurring the need for a new HEI system.

Other notable differences in the HEI-Toddlers-2020 include:

- A recommendation that children in this age group avoid all added sugars.
- No recommendation to limit saturated fats to less than 10% of energy intake.
- Recommendations for complementary foods and beverages for children who no longer receive human milk or infant formula. If toddlers are still receiving these foods, the HEI-Toddlers-2020 score should be calculated without energy or nutrient contributions from these foods.



Connect & Explore Webinars

Whether you're a researcher, practitioner, or student, NCCOR's Connect & Explore webinars offer a deep dive into key topics and emerging trends. In 2023, we explored a range of themes, from breastfeeding initiation to new measures of diet quality, each contributing to the broader discourse on childhood obesity and health equity. All NCCOR webinars are free, and the recordings are available on our website, www.nccor.org.

Breastfeeding Initiation Trends by WIC Participation and Race/Ethnicity Among Medicaid Births

January 11, 2023

Expert Panel: Marie Elizabeth Thoma, PhD, MHS, University of Maryland; Amanda Reat, PhD, RD, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Joanne Guthrie, PhD, MPH, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Leslie Hodges, PhD, MA, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Clinical Practice Guideline for the Evaluation and Treatment of Children and Adolescents with Obesity

March 28, 2023

Expert Panel: Sarah Hampl, MD, FAAP, University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Medicine; Sandra Hassink, MD, FAAP, American Academy of Pediatrics Institute for Healthy Childhood Weight; Cynthia Ogden, PhD, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being April 27, 2023

Expert Panel: Suzanne Stluka, PhD, RDN,
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA;
Sheila Fleischhacker, PhD, JD, RDN, National
Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA; Roger
Rennekamp, PhD, Association of Public and
Land-Grant Universities, Cooperative Extension;
Kerry Gabbert, MPH, West Virginia University/
Extension Foundation

Measuring Diet Quality Across the Lifespan: Introducing the New Healthy Eating Index-Toddlers 2020 and Health Eating Index-2020

September 7, 2023

Expert Panel: Jill Reedy, PhD, MPH, RD, National Institutes of Health; Marissa Shams-White, PhD, MSTOM, MS, MPH, National Institutes of Health; TusaRebecca Pannucci, PhD, MPH, RD, U.S. Department of Agriculture; Jennifer Lerman, MPH, RD, National Institutes of Health; Kirsten Herrick, PhD, MSc, National Institutes of Health



The Influence of Social Determinants of Health and Structural Racism on Childhood Obesity

In late 2023, NCCOR and the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition published an editorial in *Childhood Obesity* titled "The Influence of Social Determinants of Health and Structural Racism on Childhood Obesity." Researchers conducted a landscape analysis and expert interviews to identify gaps and opportunities for advancing measurement about this important issue.

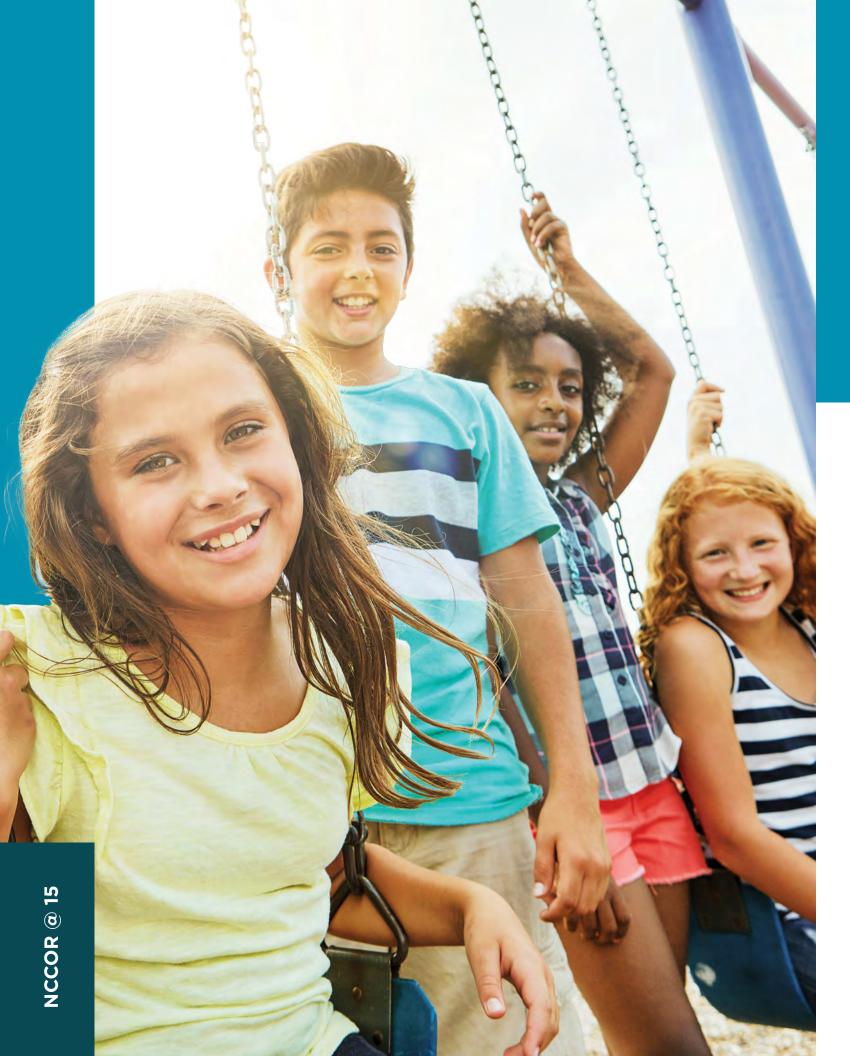
Measures for social determinants of health and structural racism exist in the literature, but their application to childhood obesity remains limited. The experts interviewed underscored the need for more comprehensive measures and frameworks to ensure these tools are properly used in a public health context. Their recommendations could also inform research efforts to understand the multilevel factors influencing childhood obesity.

This editorial stemmed from an earlier NCCOR report that identified measurement tools and resources to assess individual and environmental level influences on childhood obesity. Through these initiatives, NCCOR continues to make a strategic difference for all children.

NCCOR Webinar Spotlights USDA's New National Framework for Health Equity and Well-being

NCCOR highlighted equity in action during a 2023 Connect & Explore webinar with USDA that examined the Cooperative Extension's National Framework for Health Equity and Well-Being. This Framework addresses how health outcomes are influenced by contextual factors such as social determinants of health, policies, and practices. It also emphasizes USDA's commitment to addressing food and nutrition insecurity, aligning closely with the National Strategy goals of the White House Conference on Hunger, Nutrition, and Health.

The NCCOR webinar was part of USDA's efforts to accelerate the adoption of the new Framework. The session provided an overview of the Framework and discussed initial strategies for its implementation by academics, practitioners, and decision-makers. It also demonstrated how the Extension Foundation collaborated with other NCCOR members, particularly CDC and RWJF.



NCCOR AT 15

Impact & Innovations

Fifteen years ago, concern was mounting about escalating rates of childhood obesity, which had nearly tripled in just a few decades. Public health leaders urged action to address the growing challenge, but prevention research faced hurdles. Organizations had few opportunities to collaborate and share resources, and the scientific community lacked accessible data sets, validated measures, and a cohesive approach. Leading funders proposed a research collaborative to address these challenges. This new group would assemble multiagency and multi-disciplinary teams to advance strategic priorities that no single organization could accomplish alone.

Today, NCCOR continues to fulfill this promise. Our unique model has helped transform the childhood obesity field from a nascent research topic to a thriving area of scientific growth. We have created seven innovative research tools, published over 200 resources and scientific papers, and hosted over 70 webinars and workshops. More than products, NCCOR has created a research community. Our workgroups, journal publications, and conference presentations demonstrate the importance of cross-sector collaboration and position us to address future challenges and novel research needs going forward.

The following timeline presents only a sample of NCCOR's achievements during the past 15 years. Visit our website at www.nccor.org for a full list of projects and publications.



2009

 NIH, CDC, and RWJF formally launch NCCOR to accelerate progress in childhood obesity research.

15YEARS of NCCOR

2010

• USDA joins NCCOR as the fourth funding organization. Together, the four partners jointly commit more than \$40 million and considerable scientific expertise to NCCORsupported projects.



2011

- NCCOR releases its first tools, the Measures Registry and Catalogue of Surveillance Systems, creating standardized resources for the field.
- NCCOR's Envision Project launches, linking three data modeling networks—COMNet (Collaborative Obesity Modeling Network),
 CompMod (Comparative Modeling), and the Statistical Network—to forecast the impact of public health policies and interventions on childhood obesity through innovative modeling approaches.
- NCCOR receives the NIH's Director Award.
- NCCOR, the National Academy of Environmental Design, and the U.S. Green Building Council, focuses on linking environmental design, sustainability, and childhood obesity prevention.

2012

- The NCCOR Expert Scientific Panel (NESP) forms to advise on initiatives and serve as a valuable link between NCCOR and the extramural research community.
- NCCOR hosts the Envision Summit.

First tools released

Measures Registry
Catalogue of Surveillance Systems

2013

- USDA and NCCOR publish the first SNAP-Ed toolkit of evidence-based interventions in education; social marketing; and policy, systems, and environmental strategies.
- NCCOR premieres new print and video resources as part of a promotional campaign for the Healthy Eating Index.

2014

- NCCOR launches its Connect & Explore webinar series to engage, inform, and communicate with researchers and other external audiences.
- NCCOR convenes the Lessons Learned from Global Efforts forum to guide efforts to reduce childhood obesity prevalence in the United States and worldwide.

2015

 NCCOR forms the first strategic funding alliance with The JPB Foundation.

200+
resources & publications

2016

• NCCOR publishes the Measures Registry User Guides, the first of several enhancements that will become the Measures Registry Resource Suite.

2017

 The Youth Compendium of Physical Activities goes live after five years of dedicated work. The Compendium includes energy expenditure values for 196 common activities for youth, addressing a major barrier to studying physical activity among young people.

2018

- Childhood Obesity devotes a special issue to NCCOR's Childhood Obesity Declines project, which explored how four U.S. communities used policies and strategies to reduce obesity rates.
- The American Journal of Preventive Medicine publishes a special theme section about NCCOR ahead of its 10th anniversary, describing the formation of the collaborative, its accomplishments, and its potential.

2019

 NCCOR launches the Measures Registry Learning Modules through a partnership with The JPB Foundation.

50+
webinars
produced

2020

- Childhood Obesity publishes four papers highlighting findings from NCCOR's Childhood Obesity Evidence Base, which created a novel taxonomic method of data aggregation to identify successful obesity prevention strategies for young children.
- NCCOR releases several new tools and resources based on years of work, including A Guide to Methods for Assessing Childhood Obesity, a new tool on adapting measures for high-risk populations, and the Student Hub to support the next generation of researchers.

2021

NCCOR publishes A
 Toolkit for Evaluating
 Childhood Healthy
 Weight Programs to
 support researchers
 and practitioners in
 building capacity for
 research, evaluation, and
 surveillance.

2022

NCCOR reaches new audiences with the release of Create Thriving, Activity-Friendly Communities, a user-friendly resource suite to help local planners and neighborhood advocates create environments where all children can thrive.

2023

 NCCOR expands into a new research domain by adding sleep variables to the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems.



Amplifying Research, Creating Connections

NCCOR's free resources foster inclusivity and help drive innovation. Our comprehensive website and webinars connect the public with trusted voices and reliable research. Through these initiatives, NCCOR is helping to shape a more informed and equitable approach to addressing childhood obesity.



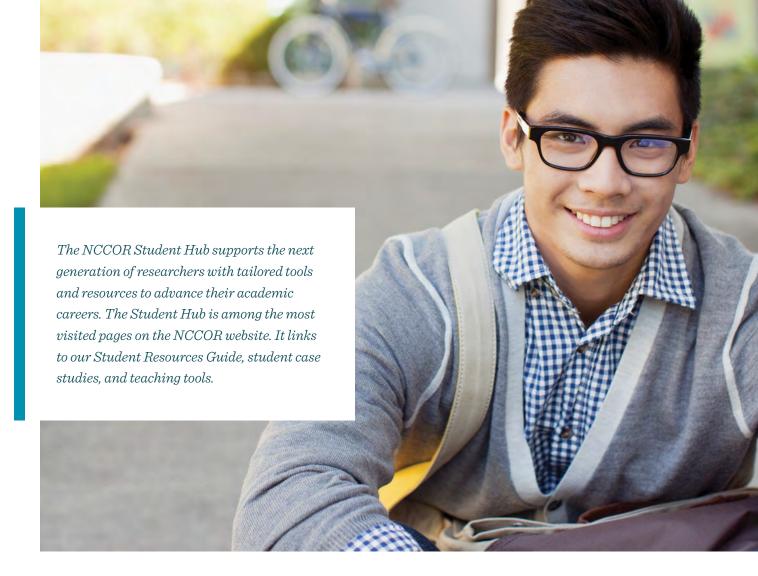
NCCOR Celebrates 15 Years with a New Website

NCCOR's website is an indispensable tool for connecting the field. With millions of page views, it provides a robust collection of research-based resources about childhood obesity from trusted experts. In 2023, we launched an ambitious website redesign to improve the user experience.

Our updated website features an enhanced Resource Library. This comprehensive repository contains over 200 journal articles and publications on childhood obesity. The new search and filter options make it easier for users to find everything NCCOR has produced on a particular topic, tool, or publication type, such as infographics, reports, factsheets, and Spanish language resources. Users can also filter by year, making navigating through 15 years' worth of NCCOR's impactful work simpler.

In addition to the Resource Library, users will find a news archive, a social media library with graphics that can be downloaded and shared, and over 50 webinars and workshops featuring leading experts. The site's project pages explore NCCOR's past and current initiatives, documenting our strategic efforts to address childhood obesity. Each project page links to supporting articles and publications, providing an in-depth view of our work.

The new NCCOR website reflects 15 years of dedicated work and paves the way for future efforts to address childhood obesity. Discover all it has to offer at www.nccor.org.



Supporting the Next Generation of Researchers

Bree Bode, an Evaluation Specialist at SNAP-Ed at the Michigan Fitness Foundation, is a public health professional dedicated to evidence-based approaches in nutrition and physical activity, focusing on research, evaluation, food justice, and the impact of policies on health outcomes.

Bree's journey with NCCOR began during her post-master tenure at a non-profit. NCCOR quickly became her "iron companion" in evaluation, offering a robust toolkit that enhanced her expertise in settings where evaluation resources were scarce. Through her PhD program and dissertation, Bree leaned on NCCOR's validated tools to ensure methodological rigor, particularly in crafting surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Bree continues to rely on NCCOR in her professional experiences, at the Michigan Fitness Foundation and as a volunteer. She credits NCCOR as a reliable resource to inform survey design when she is called into collaborative coalition projects. Her work primarily focuses on school-aged youth, nutrition, and physical activity questionnaires in urban settings, which emphasizes the versatility and relevance of NCCOR across diverse contexts. Bree also continues to elevate NCCOR resources by proactively disseminating materials such as the student newsletter, working to ensure that future researchers and practitioners have access to tools for unlocking success.

Connecting the Research Community

2023 PUBLICATIONS

National Collaborative on Childhood **Obesity Research Efforts to Advance** Childhood Obesity Research: Progress and Next Steps)

Sharfman A, Berrigan D, Galuska D, Kettel Khan L, Stowe E, Reedy J. National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research Efforts to Advance Childhood Obesity Research: Progress and Next Steps. Am J Prev Med. 2023. https://doi. org/10.1016/j.amepre.2023.02.017

Count Every Bite to Make "Every Bite Count": Measurement Gaps and Future **Directions for Assessing Diet from** Birth to 24

Zimmer M, Obbagy J, Scanlon KS, Gibbs K, Lerman JL, Hamner HC, Pannucci T, Sharfman A, Reedy J, Herrick KA., Count Every Bite to Make "Every Bite Count": Measurement Gaps and Future Directions for Assessing Diet from Birth to 24 Months, J Acad Nutr Diet. 2023. https://doi. org/10.1016/j.jand.2023.05.011

The Influence of Social Determinants of Health and Structural Racism on Childhood

Vest D, Anderson Steeves E, Berrigan D, Sharfman A, Nelson K, and Yaroch A. The Influence of Social Determinants of Health and Structural Racism on Childhood Obesity. Child Obes. 2023. https://doi. org/10.1089/chi.2023.0101

2023 CONFERENCES

Active Living Conference (ALC)

March 13–16, 2023 | Bethesda, MD

Workshop Session: Making the Economic Case for Activity-Friendly Places

Presenters: Van Do, MPH; Hatidza Zaganjor, MPH; Mark Fenton, MS; Cole Youngner, MPH; Angie Cradock, SD; Heather Devlin, MA NCCOR exhibit booth

Nutrition 2023

July 22-25, 2023 | Boston, MA

Poster: Count Every Bite to Make 'Every Bite Count': Measurement Gaps and Future Directions for Assessing Diet from Birth to 24 Months

Authors: Meghan Zimmer, MPH; Julie Obbagy, PhD, RD; Kelley S. Scanlon, PhD, RD; Kimberlea Gibbs, MPH, RD; Jennifer L. Lerman, MPH, RD; Heather C. Hamner, PhD, MS, MPH; TusaRebecca Pannucci, PhD, MPH, RD; Amanda Sharfman, MS, MPH; Jill Reedy, PhD, MPH, RD; Kirsten A. Herrick, PhD, MSc

International Conference on Diet and Activity Methods

June 26-29, 2023 | Limerick, Ireland

Poster: The National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) Catalogue of Surveillance Systems and Measures Registry: 10 Years of Progress and Looking Toward the Future

Authors: Marissa Shams-White, PhD, MSTOM, MS, MPH; David Berrigan, PhD, MS; Amanda Sharfman, MS, MPH; Laura Kettel Khan, PhD, MIM; Ellen Stowe, PhD, MPH; Stephanie George, PhD, MPH; Jill Reedy, PhD, MPH, RD

Poster: Finding Measurement Needs for Youth Active Travel to School in the United States

Authors: Stephanie George, PhD, MPH, MA; David Berrigan, PhD, MPH; Andrew Bremer, MD, PhD; Van Do, MPH

American Public Health Association (APHA)

November 12-15, 2023 | Atlanta, GA

NCCOR exhibit booth



- ▶ Adding a Sleep Variable to the Catalogue of Surveillance Systems
- ► Economic Impact of Built **Environment Improvements for** Physical Activity
- ▶ Identification and Categorization of Evidence Gaps in Physical Activity Research
- ▶ State of the Science on Measures of Individual Diet, Food Environment, Individual Physical Activity, and Physical Activity Environment
- ▶ Policy Lessons Learned for Healthy Childhood Growth
- ▶ Implementation Science
- ► Advancing Measurement of Dietary Assessment for Infants and Young Children
- ▶ 10th Anniversary Measures Registry & Catalogue of Surveillance Systems

NCCOR External Scientific Panel (NESP)

shape the trajectory of NCCOR's work, offering invaluable insights on specific projects and new initiatives.

- ▶ Shari Barkin, MD, MSHS, Virginia Commonwealth University
- ▶ **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, 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
- ▶ **Thomas N. Robinson**, MD, MPH, Stanford University School of Medicine
- ▶ **James F. Sallis**, PhD, *University of California, San* Diego (UCSD)
- ▶ Mary Story, PhD, RD, Duke University
- ▶ Elsie M. Taveras, MD, MPH, Harvard Medical School

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Cindy Davis, PhD John W. Finley, PhD, MEd Alanna J. Moshfegh, MS, RD Pamela R. Pehrsson, PhD Pamela E. Starke-Reed, PhD

Economic Research Service

Mark Denbaly, PhD Mariah Ehmke, PhD Joanne Guthrie, PhD, MPH Elina Page, PhD Saied Toossi, PhD Jay Variyam, PhD

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

J. Mark Carter, PhD
Carinthia Cherry, PhD
Deirdra N. Chester, PhD, RD
Helen Chipman, PhD, RD
Sheila Fleischhacker, PhD, JD, RDN
Lisa Jahns, PhD, RD
Pascale C. Jean, PhD, CHES, RD
Lydia Kaume, PhD, RDN
Mallory Koenings, PhD, RDN

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Suzanne Stluka, PhD, RDN

Amy McCune, PhD

Sara Bleich, PhD Kumar Chandran, MS, MPH Caree Cotwright, PhD

The Food and Drug Administration

Kellie Casavale, PhD, RD Robin A. McKinnon, PhD, MPA

FHI 360

Todd Phillips, MS, Director
Amanda Sharfman, MS, MPH, Deputy Director
Emily Callahan, MPH
Laverne Canady, MPA
Kirsten Deuman, MPH
Meher Din, MPH

Van Do, MPH Rachel Grimsland Dan Hatfield, PhD

Karen Hilyard, PhD Melissa Van Orman, MA Song Xiong, RD



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Looking ahead to 2024, NCCOR is set to launch new initiatives that will address emerging research topics and facilitate dialogue among practitioners in the field. These include:

- Hosting a conference series that will take a fresh look at population, policy, and community approaches to childhood obesity prevention—asking where we have been and where we still need to go to make progress for all children.
- Expanding Implementation Science offerings with a new resource for public health practitioners.
- Publishing new research on physical activity gaps and assessing the state of the science for individual physical activity measures.



2009-2023

NCCOR by the numbers

Since NCCOR began, we have:



Presented and exhibited at **44 conferences**



Authored **over 150 publications** accessible through the NCCOR website



Published 66 articles

in peer-reviewed journals



Created **7 major tools** to accelerate progress in childhood obesity research



Hosted

18 scientific workshops

on emerging research topics



Hosted **56 webinars** on the latest research and programs



Logged over **4 million page views** on the
NCCOR website



Attracted **over 4,100 fans and followers** on our social media channels



Produced

196 newsletters for over7,000 subscribers



Organized **over 40 workgroups** on a range of strategic priorities









