

PreSchool@HealthyWeight: A preschool-based intervention for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers

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ABSTRACT BOOK

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PreSchool@HealthyWeight: A preschool-based intervention for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers

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Nutrition and physical activity research in preschoolers (Chair: Amy Yaroch), Club B, June 5, 2019,
12:05 PM - 1:30 PM

Early care and education (SIG)

Objective:

Preschools are identified as important environments for interventions to prevent overweight and obesity. Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers in preschools are potential key actors in promoting healthy eating and physical activity. The aim of this study was to gain insight in the effect of a preschool-based intervention for ECEC teachers on promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers.

Methods:

In a cluster randomized controlled trial, 37 preschools of child care organization Impuls in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, the Netherlands, were randomly allocated to an intervention or control group. In total, 115 female ECEC teachers (mean age $42 \pm \text{smn}$; 9 years) participated. The intervention for ECEC teachers consisted of modified versions of two existing Dutch programs: 'A Healthy Start' and 'PLAYgrounds'. In 'A Healthy Start', ECEC teachers learn to provide a healthy and active environment for toddlers. The 'PLAYgrounds' program, coaches ECEC teachers to stimulate physical activity in the playgrounds of preschools. The practices and knowledge of ECEC teachers concerning healthy eating and physical activity, and the level of confidence in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers were assessed at baseline and 9 months of follow-up. To examine the effect of the intervention linear mixed models were used.

Results:

Preliminary analyses of the practices indicated that Activity-related-Teaching/Autonomy-Support increased in the intervention group (mean difference: 0.181), but not in the control group (mean difference: -0.048; p-value group*time: 0.025). Food-related-Pressure-to-Eat decreased in the intervention group (mean difference: -0.580), but not in the control group (mean difference: -0.158; p-value group*time: 0.014). No effect of the intervention was found on knowledge (p-value group*time: 0.24) and the level of confidence (p-value group*time: 0.98) of ECEC teachers.

Conclusions:

The intervention seems to increase Activity-related-Teaching/Autonomy-Support and to decrease Food-related-Pressure-to-Eat. No effects were seen on knowledge and level of confidence of ECEC teachers in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers. The effect of the intervention on the bodycomposition of toddlers will be examined in further analyses.