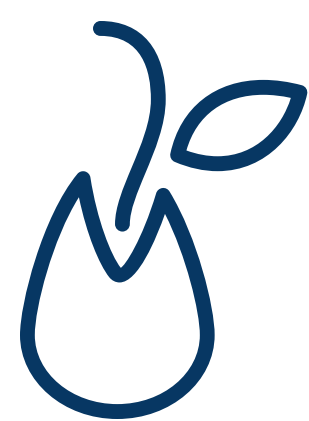


# Health promotion in early childhood education settings: A rapid evidence review



Development during early childhood lays the foundation for health, education, social, employment & economic outcomes throughout the life course.

Many New Zealand children spend time in early childhood education settings, making them an ideal location for health promotion; particularly as settings-based approaches to health promotion are more effective in terms of addressing health inequities.

Reviews of health promotion interventions in early childhood education (ECE) settings suggest some small-to-modest improvements in health-related behaviours and outcomes among children.



Sun safety policies, education (for staff & children) & environmental changes (such as shade provision) in ECE settings can increase the use of sunscreen, hats & shade.



Structured activity sessions & guidelines in ECE settings can increase the intensity and duration of children's physical activity.



Social & emotional education programmes can improve social & emotional skills, learning engagement, social behaviour & decrease conduct problems.



Nutrition policies in ECE settings can improve staff's food-related practices, support breastfeeding, increase children's intake of fruit, vegetables & water, decrease children's intake of foods high in salt/fat/sugar.



Little evidence was available on oral health promotion in ECE settings. However, tooth brushing and water promotion interventions in other settings are promising.



Promoting hand washing & hand sanitiser use after toileting & before handling food can decrease the number of gastrointestinal & respiratory illness episodes.

There are several common characteristics among the most effective interventions. They:

Modify the environment to enable healthy choices

Produce written policies & guidelines

Integrate health-related activities into the curriculum

Provide education opportunities to ECE setting staff

Ensure ECE setting staff role model healthy behaviours

Participate in structured external health promotion programmes

Use multicomponent interventions

Engage, involve, educate & empower parents