

Mission:  
To protect, promote & improve the health  
of all people in Florida through integrated  
state, county & community efforts.



Rick Scott  
Governor

John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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## **THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PARTNERS WITH NEMOURS TO EXTEND CHILDCARE COLLABORATIVES**

**TALLAHASSEE**—During Every Kid Healthy Week, the Florida Department of Health is celebrating health and wellness achievements of schools and child care facilities statewide. Beginning last October, the department partnered with Nemours Children’s Health System on a particularly successful project, The Early Care and Education Learning Collaborative (ECELC) in the Big Bend. This collaborative effort promotes healthy weight interventions for early care education (ECE) programs in Madison, Taylor and Jefferson Counties.

“Many preschool children spend most of their days in early care settings,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “By focusing our efforts in early care, we can help our youngsters develop healthy habits that will last a lifetime.”

The ECELC in the Big Bend promotes healthy environments, policies and practices in ECE settings to promote healthiest weight for children. Because ECE programs are able to reach most preschool-aged children in Florida enabling centers to better address issues of children’s health is an effective way to make an impactful, lasting difference in their lives. This project, which is a partnership between Healthiest Weight Florida, the Bureau of Chronic Disease Prevention and Nemours has already made meaningful strides in the Big Bend.

At Kelly’s Kindergarten in Madison County, Director Dawn Phillips was inspired to reduce the amount of sugar sweetened beverages her students consumed after participating in an ECELC in the Big Bend area. Phillips helped the children at her center measure out the sugar equivalents of their normal lunch drinks. The children then took the sugar home to parents in plastic baggies. After what Phillips describes as, “a health and math lesson all rolled into one,” there was a notable difference in the types of beverages parents were sending with the children’s packed lunches.

With assistance from Nemours and the Florida Department of Health, ECE providers across the state are benefitting from learning collaboratives. After the success from the initial ECELC project, a new region in Florida will be selected to continue the project in 2015–2016. The focus will be on reaching rural areas that are particularly in need of assistance.

Learn more about Nemours National Early Care and Education Learning Collaborative Project at <https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/about-ecelc/>.

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Healthiest Weight Florida is a public-private collaboration bringing together state agencies, not-for-profit organizations, businesses and entire communities to help Florida's children and adults make consistent, informed choices about healthy eating and active living. To learn more about how to be active and make nutritious food choices, visit [www.healthiestweightflorida.com](http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com).

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. The department is recognizing 125 years of public health in Florida with educational opportunities and events. Please visit [www.flhealth125.gov](http://www.flhealth125.gov) for more information.

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