

The National Kidney Foundation (NKFM) is a long-time provider of Go NAPSACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care). Go NAPSACC is a direct education and policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) change intervention designed to enhance nutrition and physical activity practices in early care and education (ECE) settings.

In 2020, the NKFM connected with the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC), a Southwest Detroit-based organization dedicated to providing quality, innovative, and culturally appropriate services. Early on, the NKFM promoted ways to live healthier lives within the DHDC community through the Cooking Matters at the Store program. In April 2023, the NKFM expanded its services, offering Go NAPSACC to DHDC's informal ECE providers. NKFM staff guided DHDC early care providers through the five Go NAPSACC steps, including goal setting, action planning, and material implementation.

ECE centers that have implemented the program have been found to be more likely to make significant changes in nutrition and physical activity practices than centers that did not participate in the program. PSE work is a multiyear investment, and with the support of SNAP-Ed funding, NKFM has increased the capacity for DHDC early care providers to build healthy eating and physical activity habits in children.

While the NKFM was excited to engage with DHDC's childcare community, they also understood the importance of ensuring a culture of inclusion, connectedness, and culturally appropriate programming. To build trust and integrity with the providers and the DHDC community, NKFM contracted with a Spanish-speaking program coordinator, Andrea. Having someone who can engage in personalized conversations and build intentional, trusting relationships was important to both NKFM and DHDC.

Andrea was trained in delivering Go NAPSACC, and together with NKFM's Go NAPSACC Project Manager they compiled culturally relevant program materials. In May 2023, Andrea presented the program to 10 of DHDC's early care providers, and five of those providers eagerly expressed interest. Andrea provided personalized assistance to each provider in the self-assessment process to find areas for improvement. Then, each provider utilized Go NAPSACC's action planning tool to help set goals and track progress and success. Each provider set at least two goals, including:

Oral health education

Reducing and/or limiting the amount of sweet and salty snacks provided to children

Reducing and/or limiting the amount of high fat meats provided to children

Building a garden

Offer a variety of different fruits and/or vegetables to grow in the garden

Offering at least 90 minutes of indoor and outdoor physical activity every day

Providers interacting with infants to help build motor skills during tummy time

Through partner engagement, approved materials, training modules, in-person networking, and custom technical assistance, all five sites are confidently and successfully making progress toward their goals. Provider ML, for example, set goals related to gardening. NKFM connected them to Keep Growing Detroit, a local agency committed to promoting food sovereignty in the City of Detroit. Keep Growing Detroit waived the registration fee for ML to join their Garden Resource Program (GRP). GRP supports urban gardening in the city by providing high-quality resources, including seeds, gardening assistance, and networking opportunities with other local gardeners and farmers. This fall, ML started a container garden and will be able to grow and offer produce to their children and their families.

The investment in Go NAPSACC has set the foundation for long-term, sustainable policies, systems, and environmental change that support lifelong health and well-being. More importantly, NKFM's dedication to honoring commitments, providing high-quality, culturally inclusive programming, and building trusting relationships has allowed the DHDC providers to begin building a generation of young, healthy minds.

The NKFM will continue to work with DHDC and their early care providers, as funding allows, to further support the structures where the community lives, works, play, and eats.

"The evolution of our partnership with DHDC has been pivotal for NKFM and our SNAP-Ed work. Over a two-to-three-year period, we nurtured our relationship with DHDC. We took the time to listen, pivot, and show them that we're in this to build a better, healthier childcare community. Our funders allowing us to bring in Andrea was the bridge to building this partnership, and while there is still work to do, we've made great progress.

We're excited for this next funding year. Together with DHDC, we will create a DHDC provider learning cohort. Andrea and I will be able to meet in person, regularly with the providers to assist and celebrate in their PSE successes." – Mary Neumaier, Program Specialist, NKFM