A FOCUS ON PREVENTION:
HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY FUTURES

To prevent overweight and obesity, efforts must focus on the environments where children live, learn and play. In 2009, Northeastern University, Boston Children’s Hospital, and the Boston Red Sox developed Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures (HKHF), a community-based initiative aimed at preventing childhood obesity. In an effort to create greater opportunities for wellness among Boston families disproportionately at risk of and burdened by chronic diseases including obesity, HKHF partners with Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD), Inc. Head Start and the Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) to provide programming, education and training in the Boston neighborhoods of Fenway, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain and Lower Roxbury.

HOW DOES IT WORK?
HKHF works with early child care providers, parents, and caregivers of young children to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity in child care settings, at home, and in the community. HKHF currently works with four Head Start programs and one City of Boston community center.

With Head Start, HKHF works in the following areas:

- Head Start goal setting & implementation
- Head Start staff training & professional development
- Wellness education for Head Start parents and caregivers

HKHF’s key messages focus on:

- Increasing fruit and vegetable consumption
- Reducing sugar sweetened beverage consumption
- Increasing physical activity
- Decreasing screen time

HKHF supports the whole family in their efforts to be healthier. In the community, HKHF provides access to free, family-based physical activity through the Saturday Open Gym program at BCYF’s Recreation Center at Madison Park.

Through participating in HKHF at home, parents and caregivers of young children have reported that the program encouraged them to reduce children’s consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods, limit portion sizes, talk about healthy foods with the family, and plan more physical activity for their children. In child care settings, Head Start staff reported increased awareness about promoting healthier eating habits in the classroom. In the community, HKHF’s Saturday Open Gym offers the only free, ongoing physical activity program in Boston for families with young children.
HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY FUTURES FACTS (2009-2012)

450
HKHF has reached over 450 Head Start staff and parents/caregivers of preschool children through training, education and capacity-building efforts.

300
More than 300 Head Start staff and parents/caregivers have participated in the Walk Challenge program over the last four years, walking over 48,000 miles.

120
In 2011 and 2012, 120 Head Start staff and parents/caregivers participated in an innovative pilot program called Farm to Family that brought subsidized shares of local produce to Head Start centers.

328
328 Boston families with young children have participated in Saturday Open Gym.

116
116 Northeastern University students have been recruited and trained to lead Saturday Open Gym.

3,000
Northeastern University students have contributed over 3,000 service-learning and volunteer hours through their participation in the Saturday Open Gym program.

HKHF GOALS
- To improve the capacity of early childcare providers to prevent childhood overweight and obesity among preschool children and their families.
- To increase opportunities for caregivers of young children to build skills that support informed and healthful food choices, increased physical activity, and reduced recreational screen time.
- To increase opportunities for young children to be physically active with their families in safe, accessible and age-appropriate settings.

HKHF APPROACH
Our individual health behaviors are shaped by our access to health-promoting environments. It is critical that healthy behaviors are promoted where we live, learn, work, and play. As children spend most of their time at home, in childcare, and in the community, promoting healthy eating and physical activity in these settings can have a significant impact on children’s health today and in the future.

FUTURE AHEAD
As one of the few initiatives designed specifically for families with young children, HKHF promotes healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood environments. Now entering its fourth year, HKHF will continue to support efforts to make child care, home and community environments healthier for young children. Continued efforts include Head Start staff professional development, caregiver wellness education and operation of the Saturday Open Gym program at BCYF’s Recreation Center at Madison Park in Roxbury.

For more information about Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures, contact: 617.373.7615 or visit www.neu.edu/healthykids