

**Learning Care Group Announces Alignment with *Let’s Move!* Child Care**

February 27, 2014

**Background**

Since launching in 2011, nearly 12,000 child care providers have committed to providing healthy environments and instilling healthy habits among our nation’s preschoolers that will last a lifetime. Through *Let’s Move!* Child Care, providers are increasing physical activity, limiting screen time, serving healthier food and beverages, and supporting breastfeeding mothers. More than 1 million children are being reached by early childhood education networks that have committed to *Let’s Move!* Child Care.

Child care providers across the country have been working diligently to ensure that their centers are healthy environments for the children they serve. Supporting those efforts, the CDC released a report last year which found that childhood obesity rates declined among low-income preschoolers in eighteen states and one territory. In an additional twenty states, rates stayed the same. For the first time in decades, there are positive signs that the childhood obesity epidemic may be decreasing.

**What is being announced today?**

Mrs. Obama will visit La Petite Academy in Bowie, Maryland to highlight the commitment Learning Care Group has made to align with the best practices of *Let’s Move!* Child Care. Learning Care Group, the second-largest for-profit child care provider in the country, provides early education and care services to children between the ages of six weeks and 13 years under five brands: Childtime, Tutor Time, The Children’s Courtyard, Montessori Unlimited, and La Petite Academy. Learning Care Group operates more than 900 schools and has the capacity to serve 100,000 children. Today, Learning Care Group is announcing that it will commit to the Partnership for a Healthier America to implement policies and procedures that reflect the best practices of *Let’s Move!* Child Care. Specifically, Learning Care Group will adopt the following guidelines:

1. Physical Activity: Provide at least 1 hour of physical activity throughout the day, including outside play when possible.
2. Screen Time:
	1. Eliminate screen time for children under two years.
	2. For children ages two and older, limit screen time to no more than one hour per day.
	3. Work with parents and caregivers to ensure children have no more than 1 hour of quality screen time per day.
3. Food:
	1. Serve ½ cup fruits and/or vegetables at every meal and snack.
	2. Eat meals family-style when possible.
	3. Do not serve fried food.
4. Beverages:
	1. For children over two years of age, serve unflavored low-fat (1%) or non-fat milk.
	2. For children over two years of age, serve no more than one 4 ounce serving of 100% juice per day and/or low sodium vegetable juice.
	3. Provide access to free, potable water during meals and throughout the day.
5. Infant feeding:  For mothers who want to continue breastfeeding, allow for the provision of mother’s milk for their children, and accommodate mothers who wish to breastfeed during the day.
6. Parent Engagement: Engage parents and caregivers using informational material and/or activities focused on healthy eating and physical activity a minimum of 3 times per year.

**Why is this important?**

* We know that helping kids develop healthy habits in their earliest years is critical to their future health.
* A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine pointed to the importance of addressing overweight and obesity in the pre-school years. The study showed overweight children entering kindergarten are four to five times at risk to be obese in the eighth grade as their healthy weight classmates.
* Efforts to make child care centers healthier environments may be working: A report released earlier this week in the Journal of the American Medical Association found that the prevalence of obesity among preschool children ages 2 to 5 dropped from 12.% in 2009-2010 to 8.4% in 2011-2012.
* Many young children spend the majority of their time in child care and it is critical that the child care environment be a place that supports our kids’ health.
* These efforts help ensure that the hard work parents are doing at home to keep their kids healthy will be reinforced when they are in child care.