

## Leadership Competency 15: Staff Wellness

Note: hyperlinks are also available on the resources page at the end of this document.

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### Chapter Progress Key

- Not Started
- In Progress
- Completed

### What Is This Competency?

**Competency 15:** Promote staff wellness, including stress management, injury and illness prevention (e.g., staff immunizations), and healthy active living. *Select each number.*

1. Competency 15 focuses on the important role of leaders who manage health services in ensuring program-wide staff wellness.
2. Leaders support staff wellness through onsite health and safety promotion activities, policies, benefits, and environmental supports.
3. Leaders implement measures that prevent and manage [occupational hazards](#)
4. Leaders are responsible for creating an environment that enhances staff physical and mental health.
5. Leaders help staff access community health resources.

### Why is this competency important?

*Select each number.*

1. When leaders support and model healthy adult behaviors, they promote the health and wellness of children, families, and staff.

2. When leaders establish and maintain effective staff wellness programs, they reduce the likelihood of caregivers experiencing injuries, stress or depression, unhealthy weight, and infectious diseases.
3. Staff wellness programs can improve staff job satisfaction and retention. Lower staff turnover rates provide more opportunities for children to have consistent relationships with adult caregivers.
4. Staff who have techniques and resources to manage their stress are better able to offer praise, nurturance, and the structure that young children need.

## Prevent Illness

Leaders collaborate with the Health Services Advisory Committee, management team, Policy Council, and governing body to establish illness prevention policies and procedures. *Select each item to learn more.*

- [Pre-employment health exams](#) assess staff well-being and reduce the chance of spreading infectious diseases to other staff, children, and families.
- Periodic re-examinations assess staff for newly acquired infectious diseases and support ongoing wellness.
- [Immunizations](#) protect staff from infectious disease. The [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) recommendations](#), which include an annual flu vaccine, are the best way to keep staff and children healthy.
- [Staff exclusion](#) criteria determines when staff can return to work after an illness for their own protection and the well-being of others.

## Prevent Illness

Leaders train, implement, and enforce illness prevention practices. *Select each image to learn more.*

- [Proper and consistent handwashing](#) is best facilitated when staff have easy access to all the appropriate handwashing equipment and supplies.
- Programs promote healthy [indoor air quality](#) by providing as much fresh outdoor air as possible and keeping the indoor environment free from air fresheners, other fragrances, and cleaning products containing harmful chemicals.
- [Standard precautions](#) protect staff from exposure to body fluids.
- Programs establish policies to protect pregnant staff and those of child-bearing age and inform them about how to reduce [exposure to infections](#) for healthier pregnancies.

## Prevent Illness: Try Your Hand

Select the correct answer. (Correct answer is preceded by an asterisk\*)

1. Staff should wash their hands after \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. dressing a child
  - b. combing a child's hair
  - c. **\*wiping a child's nose**
    - i. Feedback: Frequent and proper hand washing decreases the likelihood of respiratory infections.
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ protects staff from the flu.
  - a. Dressing warmly
  - b. Taking vitamins
  - c. **\*Annual flu vaccine**
    - i. Feedback: Everyone 6 months and older should receive a yearly flu vaccine.
  
3. Staff with strep throat should not return to work \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. until their sore throat is gone
  - b. until they have a note from a doctor
  - c. **\*for 24 hours after they start antibiotics and their fever ends**
    - i. Feedback: Untreated people release bacteria into the air when they cough or sneeze. Like many infections, strep throat spreads through close contact.
  
4. All pregnant staff members in regular contact with children should \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. **\*discuss possible occupational hazards with their health care provider**
  - b. avoid finger painting
  - c. avoid physical activity
    - i. Feedback: Exposure to certain infections can affect the outcome of a pregnancy.

## Promote a Healthy Workplace

Leaders collaborate with the Health Services Advisory Committee, management team, Policy Council, and governing body to create opportunities for staff to be more physically active, make better food choices, and work in a healthy and safe environment. Offer staff opportunities to improve or maintain their health and safety practices. *Select each image to learn more.*

### Offer time to exercise and options to eat well

- Include healthy food choices for snacks in staff lounges and vending machines
- Promote [physical activity](#) for staff.

- Implement curricula such as [I Am Moving, I Am Learning](#) to make moderate-to-vigorous physical activity part of every work day

**Provide furniture and equipment to [reduce the risk of back injuries](#) for adults, including accommodations for staff who are pregnant**

- Train staff on how to safely lift children and heavy objects
- Encourage use of suitable equipment, such as steps to a changing table, to reduce the necessity of lifting children able to assist themselves

**Promote smoking reduction measures**

- Share resources that help people [quit smoking](#)
- Develop policies to reduce second- and third-hand smoke exposure, such as a smoke-free campus

## Promote Stress Management

Leaders collaborate with the Health Services Advisory Committee, management team, Policy Council, and governing body to implement a comprehensive program for mindfulness practices and other stress management strategies. *Select each star for staff mental health and wellness tips.*

- **Tip 1:** Schedule regular opportunities for staff to learn about mental health, stress reduction strategies, and wellness
- **Tip 2:** Develop strategies to recognize staff contributions to the workplace and ensure staff feel valued
- **Tip 3:** Develop a procedure that allows staff who are stressed to take a short break
- **Tip 4:** Ensure access to a [mental health consultant](#) as part of a program-wide culture that promotes overall well-being and health
- **Tip 5:** Maintain a list of community resources to help staff address concerns related to health, mental health, financial stability, food security, housing, substance misuse, and domestic violence
- **Tip 6:** Develop strategies to help staff feel comfortable discussing concerns
- **Tip 7:** Provide a break room where staff can relax

## Summary

*Select the buttons to review the main concepts related to staff wellness.*

**Prevent illness:** Establish illness prevention policies and procedures.

**Promote a healthy workplace:** Create opportunities for staff to be more physically active,

make better food choices, and work in a healthy and safe environment.

**Promote stress management:** Implement a comprehensive program for mindfulness practices and other stress management strategies.

**If you have 10 minutes, review:**

Caring for Our Children Standards related to [staff health](#).

**If you have 30 minutes, review:**

[Taking Care of Ourselves: Stress and Relaxation](#) resources from the Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation and decide which to share.

**If you have 1 hour, explore:**

CDC's [Workplace Health Promotion](#) website. Use the [Worksite Health ScoreCard](#) to assess your current staff wellness activities and discover new ideas.

## Connecting with Others

- If you have more questions, contact the National Center on Early Childhood Health and Wellness (NCECHW) at [health@ecetta.info](mailto:health@ecetta.info) or (toll-free) 1-888-227-5125.
- Join [MyPeers](#): a collaborative platform for the early care and education community
- Subscribe to the American Academy of Pediatrics' [Early Childhood listserv](#)

**Congratulations! You have reached the end of this module.**

## Resources throughout the module:

[Major Occupational Health Hazards](#)

[1.7.0.1: Pre-Employment and Ongoing Adult Health Appraisals, Including Immunization](#)

[7.2.0.3: Immunization of Caregivers/Teachers](#)

[Recommended Adult Immunization Schedule for ages 19 years or older, United States, 2019](#)

[3.6.1.2: Staff Exclusion for Illness](#)

[3.2.2.2: Handwashing Procedure](#)

[5.2.1.1: Ensuring Access to Fresh Air Indoors](#)

[3.2.3.4: Prevention of Exposure to Blood and Body Fluids](#)

[Reproductive Health and the Workplace](#)

[Worksite Physical Activity](#)

[I am Moving, I am Learning](#)

[5.3.1.7: Facility Arrangements to Minimize Back Injuries](#)

[How to Quit Smoking](#)

[The Mental Health Consultation Tool](#)

- If you have 10 minutes, review: *Caring for Our Children Standards* related to [Staff Health](#)
- If you have 30 minutes, review: Resources from Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation on [Taking Care of Ourselves: Stress and Relaxation](#)
- If you have 1 hour, explore: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [Workplace Health Promotion](#) website and use the [Worksite Health ScoreCard](#)
- For ongoing conversation and resources related to Staff Wellness, join the [Staff Wellness Community](#) on MyPeers. If you are not a member, join [MyPeers](#).

## Additional Resources

[Action for Happiness Monthly Action Calendars](#)

[Child Care Staff Health Assessment](#)

[Essential Elements of Effective Workplace Programs and Policies for Improving Worker Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Healthy Workplaces: A WHO Global Model for Action](#)

[Indoor Air Quality \(English and Spanish\)](#)

[Lifting and Bending the Right Way](#)

[Mindfulness: A Resilience Practice \(Video\)](#)

[The Physical and Mental Health of Head Start Staff: The Pennsylvania Head Start Staff Wellness Survey, 2012](#)

[Prevent Seasonal Flu](#)

[Promoting Organizational and Staff Wellness \(Video\)](#)

[Standard and Universal Precautions in the Child Care Setting \(English and Spanish\)](#)

[Workplace Wellness](#)