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Media Contact: Amy McCauley, Community Outreach Manager, (828) 695-5818, amccauley@catawbacountync.gov

THIRTY-SIX CHILDCARE CENTERS ACHIEVE 'HEALTHY' STATUS

HICKORY, NC – Catawba County Public Health's Early Childhood Support Team recognized 36 local childcare centers for achieving Healthy Childcare Center status through the Healthy Childcare Center Recognition Program.

Along with 28 childcare centers receiving repeat Healthy Childcare Center designation this year, 8 centers have newly been named awardees: Newton-Conover City Schools Preschool at Thornton, Conover School, St. Stephen's Lutheran Preschool, Hickory High School CDC, Head Start Catawba County, Quality Care CDC Hickory, Quality Care Child Learning Center Claremont, Little Stars CDC Startown.

The full list of this year's Healthy Childcare Centers follows:

- A New Beginning Children's Learning Center
Abernethy's Child Development Center
Bethlehem United Methodist Child Development Center
Chesterbrook Academy
Christ Church Child Development Center
Community Ridge
Conover School
Eastern Sky CDC
Footsteps
Head Start Catawba County
Hickory Foundation YMCA Child Development Center
Hickory High School CDC
Hickory Montessori School
Kids in Motion
LeGrande Learning Center
Little Stars CDC Startown
Love-N-Care CDC
Little Stars CDC
Maiden Rosenwald Preschool Academy
Miss Millies
Montessori at Sandy Ford
Nanny's Learning Center
Newton-Conover City Schools Preschool at Thornton
Quality Care CDC Hickory
Quality Care Child Learning Center Claremont
Rainbow Child Care Center (Conover)
Rainbow Child Care Center (Fairgrove)
St. Stephen's Lutheran Preschool
Sherrills Ford Learning Academy
Sweetwater Preschool
Tender Care CDC
The Pa Paw Patch
The Sandbox
Tyndall Center for Early Childhood
Woodlawn Child Development Center
Word of Life Academy

The Healthy Childcare Center Recognition Program focuses on preventing childhood obesity and chronic disease by promoting healthy policies and environments in centers serving young children. The initiative encourages childcare centers to meet the following eight criteria:

- 1. Childcare center directors and staff (including cooks) are committed to the health and well-being of the childcare center population, act as positive role models, meet monthly, and communicate regularly with parents
2. Offer fresh fruit and/or vegetables at least 3 times per week at lunch and/or snack

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3. Offer water daily
4. 100% childcare center classrooms comply with and exceed the minimum state standards for structured physical activity
5. Have in place a childcare center policy for healthy fundraisers and enforce this policy
6. Have in place a policy for decreased screen time and enforce this policy
7. Have in place a childcare center policy for healthy snacks for parties (birthday, holiday, etc.) and enforce this policy
8. Have in place a tobacco free childcare center policy and enforce this policy

All participating centers meeting the criteria on an annual basis are designated as Healthy Childcare Centers. In addition to previous designees, several new childcare centers are invited to participate each year.

“The Healthy Childcare Recognition program encourages childcare centers to formalize basic health promotion practices in order to create a sustainable healthy environment for young children,” said Tonya Moss, RN, Early Childhood Support Team, Catawba County Public Health. “We are pleased to see so many of our local childcare centers embracing this program as a fundamental part of their operating model.”

Catawba County Public Health’s Early Childhood Support Team is a Smart Start funded project through the Catawba County Partnership for Children. Located off Fairgrove Church Road behind Catawba Valley Medical Center in Hickory, N.C., Catawba County Public Health provides health and education services to eligible men, women, and children in the community. For more information, please call (828) 695-5800 or visit [www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth](http://www.catawbacountync.gov/phealth).

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