

FIT TOGETHER!

**Northwest CT Healthy Eating &
Active Living Initiative**

Annual Report 2014-2015

What is Fit Together?



Northwest CT Healthy Eating
& Active Living Initiative

Formed in 2010, Fit Together is a collaboration of community organizations and individuals who want to create a healthier community where the healthy choice is the easy choice.

Initial funding was provided by Charlotte Hungerford Hospital and Sam's Club Foundation through the YMCA of the USA.

Using the Pioneering Healthy Communities model, Fit Together surveyed the community to assess the extent that policies, systems and environment support healthy living in the places where people live, work, learn and play. The organization's collaborative goal is to make Policy, Systems and Environmental changes that will affect the communities access to healthy resources.



MISSION STATEMENT:

To build the healthiest kids, families, and communities through sustainable strategies that foster healthy eating and active living.

OUR DREAM:

To make Torrington and Winsted the healthiest communities in Connecticut. Our future is held by our children, and our challenge is to give them the best chance to live long, healthy and productive lives.

Partners



Charlotte
Hungerford
Hospital



Winchester
**Cradle2
Career**
Advocates for Children, Youth and Families



**Work here.
Live here.
Give here.**



24 Agencies in Northwest Connecticut

Steering Committee Members

Carla Angevine, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Greg Brisco, Northwest CT YMCA
Bill Burgess, Partners for Sustainable Healthy Communities, NW CT
Elinor Carbone, Mayor, City of Torrington
Jay Cohen, Winsted YMCA
Michael Curi, Pediatrician
Cheryl Kloczko, Superintendent, Torrington Public Schools
Donna Labbe, Torrington Early Childhood Collaborative
Rista Malanca, City of Torrington
Brian Mattiello, Charlotte Hungerford Hospital
Leslie Polito, Torrington Area Health District
JoAnn Ryan, Chamber of Commerce
Kristin Stoeke, Cradle to Career, Winsted

Fit Together Northwest Connecticut
c/o Northwest Connecticut YMCA
259 Prospect St.
Torrington, CT. 06790
www.FitTogetherNWCT.org

Accomplishments

Torrington Public Schools

- **The School Wellness Policy** directs the district's policies on healthy environments, physical activity, recess, vending machines, birthday celebrations and food it serves for lunch. Following a Fit Together led assessment of the school environment to promote healthy living, Fit Together worked with the Torrington Public Schools administrators and its Wellness Committee for over a year to develop a comprehensive Wellness Policy that was adopted by the Board of Education.
- **Adoption of Healthy Food Certification (HFC)** for the first time in six years by the Torrington Public Schools, means that schools must certify annually to the CT State Dept. of Education that they will follow the CT Nutritional Standards for all foods sold to students separately from reimbursable school meals. Certification allows the district to receive a higher reimbursement for students receiving free and reduced lunches. Program priorities and activity plans shall acknowledge the strong link between academic performance and a healthy school environment, including healthy eating, school based physical activity and health education.
- **Rod Dixon's KiDSMARATHON[®]** is an 8-10 week running program that enables kids to complete a full marathon by running incremental distances each week. Through the project, elementary students develop life-long fitness skills, positive nutritional habits, social-emotional learning, a feeling of accomplishment and a self-confidence for themselves. TPS implemented this program during its school day.
- **Edible School Gardens** were created in three elementary schools led by Garden Coordinators. These projects created active learning for students by being responsible for growing fresh vegetables and incorporating them into their diets.

Winchester Public Schools

• School Wellness Policy

Following a Fit Together led assessment of the school environment to promote healthy living, the Winchester Board of Education adopted a newly revised Wellness Policy.

City of Torrington

- **Right to Farm Ordinance** was passed to promote and advance the City's policy to conserve and protect agricultural land, to encourage resident agricultural operations and the sale of local farm products and reduce the loss of local agriculture resources by limiting the circumstances under which any such operation may be considered a nuisance.

- **Complete Streets Resolution** enabled the streets of the City of Torrington to provide safe, convenient and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling and public transportation and to encourage increased use of these modes of transportation. This will enable convenient travel as a part of daily activities, improve public welfare by addressing a wide array of health & environmental problems and meet the needs of all users of the streets, including children, older adults & people with disabilities.

Community Assessments

- **Community Healthy Living Index** Fit Together volunteers completed assessments of two communities, two senior centers, seven businesses, four schools and five childcare centers in Torrington and Winsted. The information helped these organizations utilize a set of tools to assess the extent that policies, systems and environment support healthy living in the places where people live, work, learn and play. The CHLI tool helped towns and organizations discover strengths, identify needs and plan for action to build a healthier community.

Each business, childcare center and school district made immediate changes to policies and environments including organizing employee wellness committees. Both Torrington and Winchester Public Schools identified the single most important item having the largest impact in improving child health was the district's Wellness Policy.

- **Litchfield County Health Needs Assessment** A 100 page county-wide, town by town assessment report was researched and developed with funding from Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, the United Way of Northwest CT, Fit Together and Torrington Area Health District.

Community Planning

Torrington Development Corporation adopted a resolution to support healthy eating and physical activity in the city's Master Development Plan

The NW CT Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) included a priority strategy aligned with the Fit Together Mission; to support healthy eating and active living.

Let's Go! 5-2-1-0

5 Priority Strategies

1 Provide healthy choices for snacks and celebrations; limit unhealthy choices.

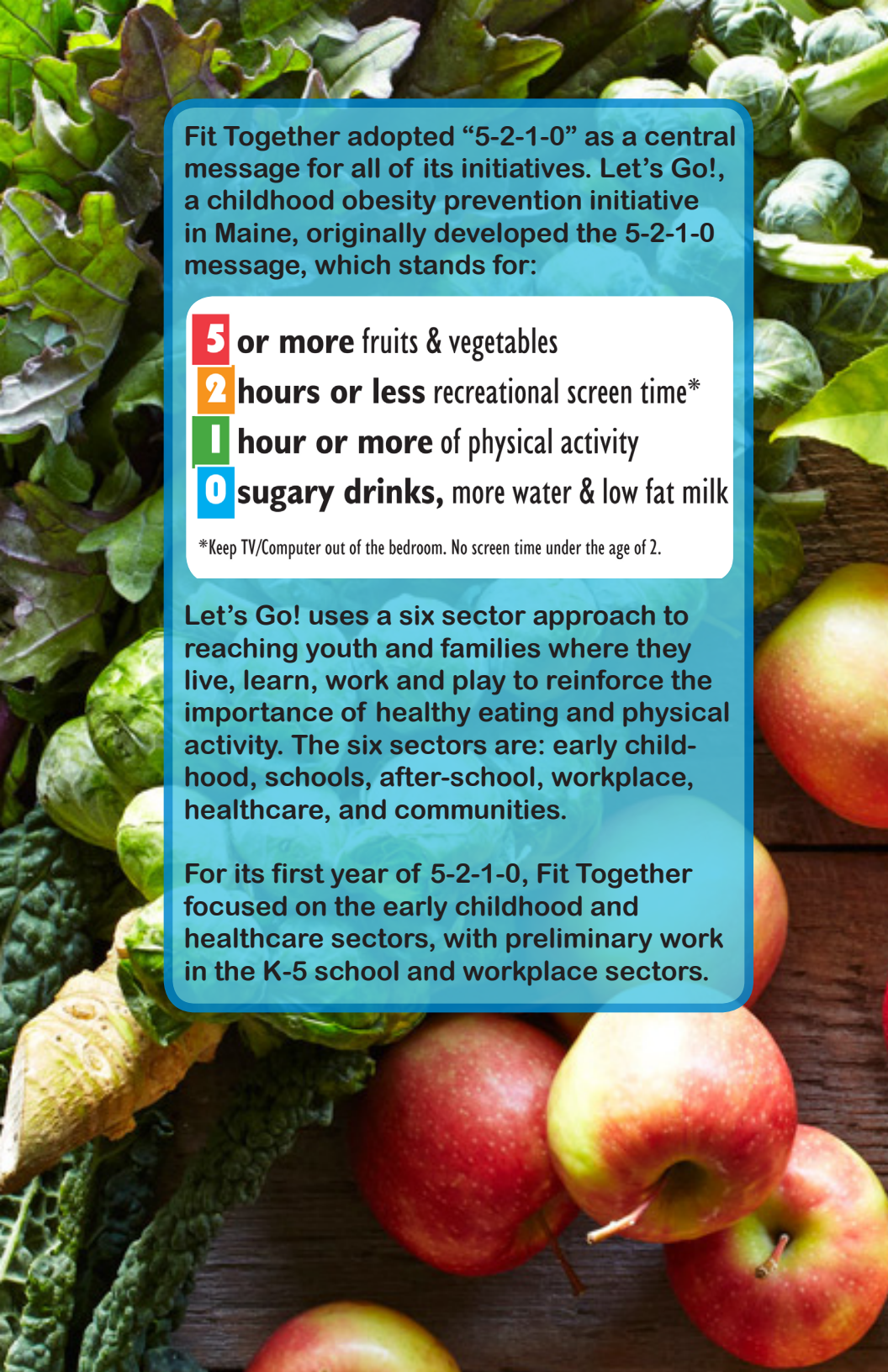
2 Provide water and low fat milk; limit or eliminate sugary beverages.

3 Provide non-food rewards.

4 Provide opportunities for children to get physical activity every day.

5 Limit recreational screen time.





Fit Together adopted “5-2-1-0” as a central message for all of its initiatives. Let’s Go!, a childhood obesity prevention initiative in Maine, originally developed the 5-2-1-0 message, which stands for:

- 5** or more fruits & vegetables
- 2** hours or less recreational screen time*
- 1** hour or more of physical activity
- 0** sugary drinks, more water & low fat milk

*Keep TV/Computer out of the bedroom. No screen time under the age of 2.

Let’s Go! uses a six sector approach to reaching youth and families where they live, learn, work and play to reinforce the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. The six sectors are: early childhood, schools, after-school, workplace, healthcare, and communities.

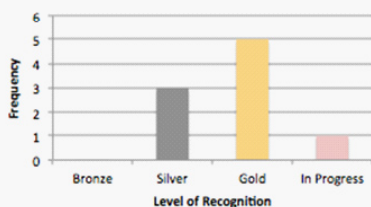
For its first year of 5-2-1-0, Fit Together focused on the early childhood and healthcare sectors, with preliminary work in the K-5 school and workplace sectors.

5-2-1-0

Child Care

In the first year, 9 childcare centers & preschools in Torrington & Winsted implemented 5-2-1-0 strategies in their classrooms.

5-2-1-0 Childcare Center Levels in Northwest CT

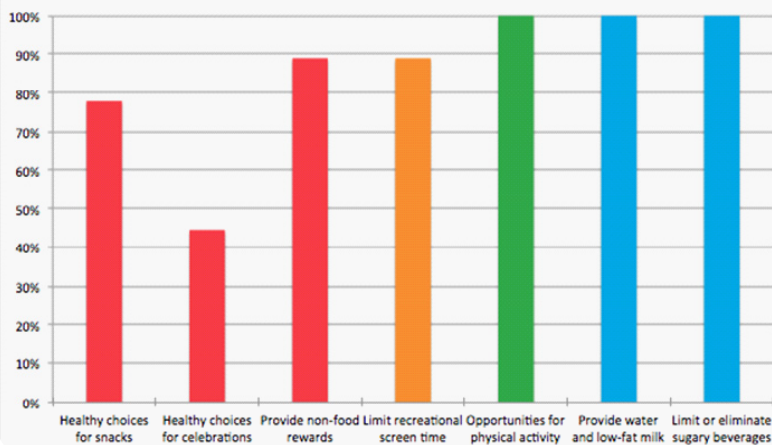


Childcare Centers were rated on the number of 5-2-1-0 strategies they implemented.

- 5 Gold
- 3 Silver
- 1 In Progress



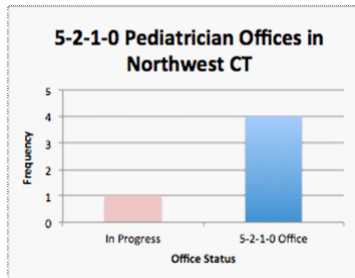
5210 Strategies Implemented By Childcare Centers



5-2-1-0

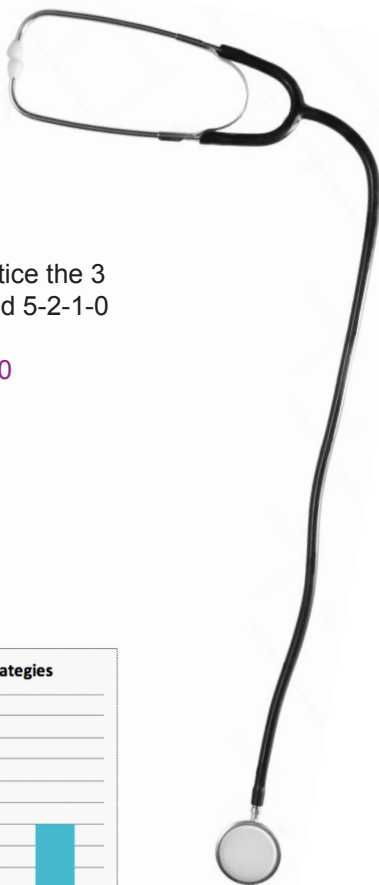
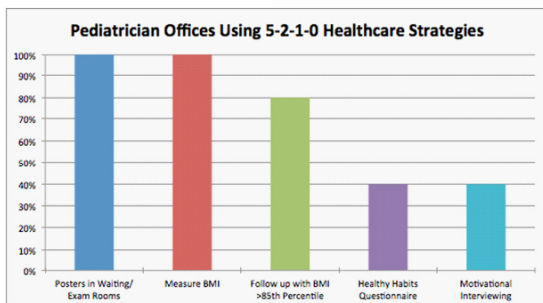
Pediatricians

In the first year, 8 pediatricians (5 of-
fices) implemented 5-2-1-0 strategies
in their offices. Participating pediatri-
cian offices were located in Torrington,
Winsted and Litchfield.



Pediatrician offices that put into practice the 3
Healthy Core Components were rated 5-2-1-0
offices.

1. Connect patients & 5-2-1-0 efforts
2. Accurately weigh & measure patients
3. Have conversations around healthy eating & active living



Mini Grants

• School Gardens

A \$1,500 contribution was given to each Torrington Elementary school- East, Forbes and Southwest- from Charlotte Hungerford Hospital, Fit Together and Partners for Sustainable Healthy Communities. This allows students to participate in all aspects of growing, harvesting and preparing nutritious seasonal produce.

1. East School



Bill Burgess (LHFS), Susan Fergusson (East) and Leslie Polito (Fit Together)



2. Forbes School



Bill Burgess (LHFS), Joanne Creedon (Forbes) and Leslie Polito (Fit Together)

3. Southwest School





• Lap Tracker System

Fit Together donated funds to help activate a positive physical activity model in the Torrington Public Schools. The Lap Tracker System is an ed-tech innovation for active school recess & physical education. Students get their own ID card which tracks progress towards goals that students set for themselves. The system is accessible to all students in the East, Southwest, Torrington and Vogel-Wetmore schools. This system helped kids prepare for the **KiDSMARATHON** event in June.

Fit Together awarded \$3,111 to the Torrington Public Schools for the purchase and licensing of the Lap Trackers.

Events

SNAP Education (SNAP-Ed) Event:

Half Your Plate: Fruits and Vegetables

June 4, 2015

In partnership with the SNAP-Ed team, Fit Together NWCT hosted a workshop on how to increase the amount and variety of vegetable consumption.

KiDSMARATHON Final Mile

June 13, 2015

Over 300 students from 14 local elementary schools completed the final mile of the KiDSMARATHON program. Fit Together NWCT hosted a booth to promote healthy eating and active living.



5-2-1-0 Healthy Celebration Workshop

October 27, 2015

Fit Together NWCT held a healthy celebration workshop and certificate ceremony to celebrate the progress of the childcare centers that participated in the 5-2-1-0 initiative.

Workplace Wellness

Workplace Wellness Toolkits

One of Fit Together's newest projects is a Workplace Toolkit for Employee Wellness. The Toolkit was developed to encourage employers to consider the various ways that they can promote staff wellness and to offer information and examples to assist employers in creating wellness programs.

This Toolkit provides employers with a concrete manual of options to help increase staff wellness and reduce health care costs. These costs have risen dramatically over the years: obesity and related chronic diseases alone cost employers up to \$93 billion per year in health insurance claims. Wellness programs can provide an effective means to reducing these costs and they also reduce sick days and disability days for people with diabetes and obesity.

Though the Toolkit has a target audience of employers from larger organizations and businesses, it can be adapted to suit the needs of smaller workplaces as well. Employers from all sized workplaces can make simple changes to promote healthier work environments, such as posting health information in break and lunch rooms or planning a nutrition education class for employees.

