



HEALTHY LIFESTYLES WORK GROUP

Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria

The **HEALTHY LIFESTYLES WORK GROUP** is a community partnership of schools, city health and recreation agencies, nonprofits, businesses, policymakers and others who are committed to encouraging an active lifestyle and promoting healthy nutritional environments and behavior.

Our **VISION** is to engage the entire, diverse Alexandrian community in collaborative efforts to promote better health, including access to healthy foods and recreation for all.

GREAT NEWS! In February 2009, the Healthy Lifestyles Work Group received a two-year grant for \$40,000 from the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO) to support a coalition building and early childhood obesity prevention initiative. Alexandria was chosen by NACCHO as one of ten demonstration sites to address chronic disease risk factors of physical inactivity and poor nutrition at the policy, systems, and environmental change level to reduce the burden of chronic diseases such as arthritis, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer.



The Healthy Lifestyles Work Group's early childhood obesity prevention initiative is being done in collaboration with the Early Childhood Commission, the Arlington/Alexandria School Readiness Council, and other community organizations and businesses.

WHY ARE WE FOCUSING ON EARLY CHILDHOOD? In 2007, Inova Health System completed a comprehensive Healthy Weight Collaborative survey in Northern Virginia on obesity among parents and children, ages 2 – 18. According to survey findings:

- 26.4% or approximately 100,000 children in Northern Virginia are either overweight or obese.
- Among Alexandria children ages 2-5, 43.5% are overweight or obese. These numbers are significantly higher compared to other children in Alexandria (23.5% of children ages 6-10; 13.1% of children ages 11-14; 13.7% of children ages 15-18).
- In Arlington, the next highest jurisdiction, only 28.6% of children, ages 2-5, are overweight or obese.
- Alexandrian children who are Hispanic (32.9% overweight/obese) or with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level (29.9% overweight/obese) are particularly at risk.

COME JOIN US! We're just getting started on our early childhood obesity prevention initiative. If you're interested in promoting active living and healthy eating in Alexandria, we would love for you to join us.

WHEN DO WE MEET? Starting in May, we will be meeting every second Tuesday from 8:30 – 10 a.m. at the Lee Center on 1108 Jefferson Street, Alexandria, VA.

Get involved! If you're interested in joining one of these efforts, please contact Carrie Fesperman, Health Planner for the Partnership for a Healthier Alexandria, at Carrie.Fesperman@vdh.Virginia.gov or (703) 838-4400 x263.