

A young boy is the central focus, standing in a lush garden. He is shirtless, wearing blue shorts, and has his mouth wide open in a joyful shout. He is holding a large, empty metal bowl. In the background, there are green plants and a girl with a ponytail. The overall scene is bright and sunny.

# Childcare Program and Policy Opportunities for Healthy and Active Kids

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What is so special about the early  
years?

Everything!!!

What are some interesting obesity prevention programs targeting preschool children?

# Programs

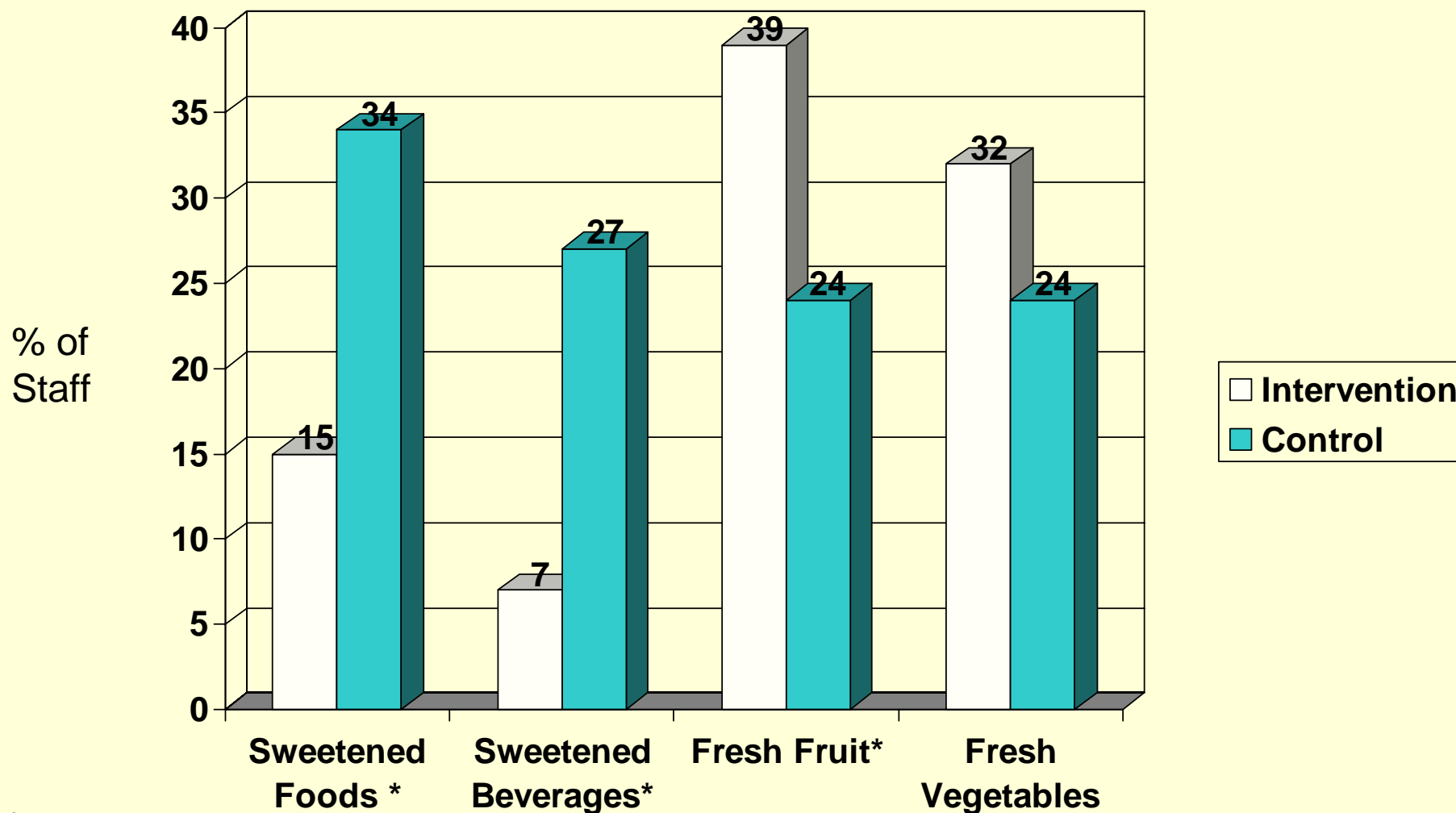
- While there are many interventions, not many published studies
- Many programs focused on curriculum and education, not on changing the environment
- We are learning from other arenas the importance of environmental change supported by education

# Guess the intervention...



# Children's Celebrations at Intervention Sites Included More Healthy Food & Beverage Choices

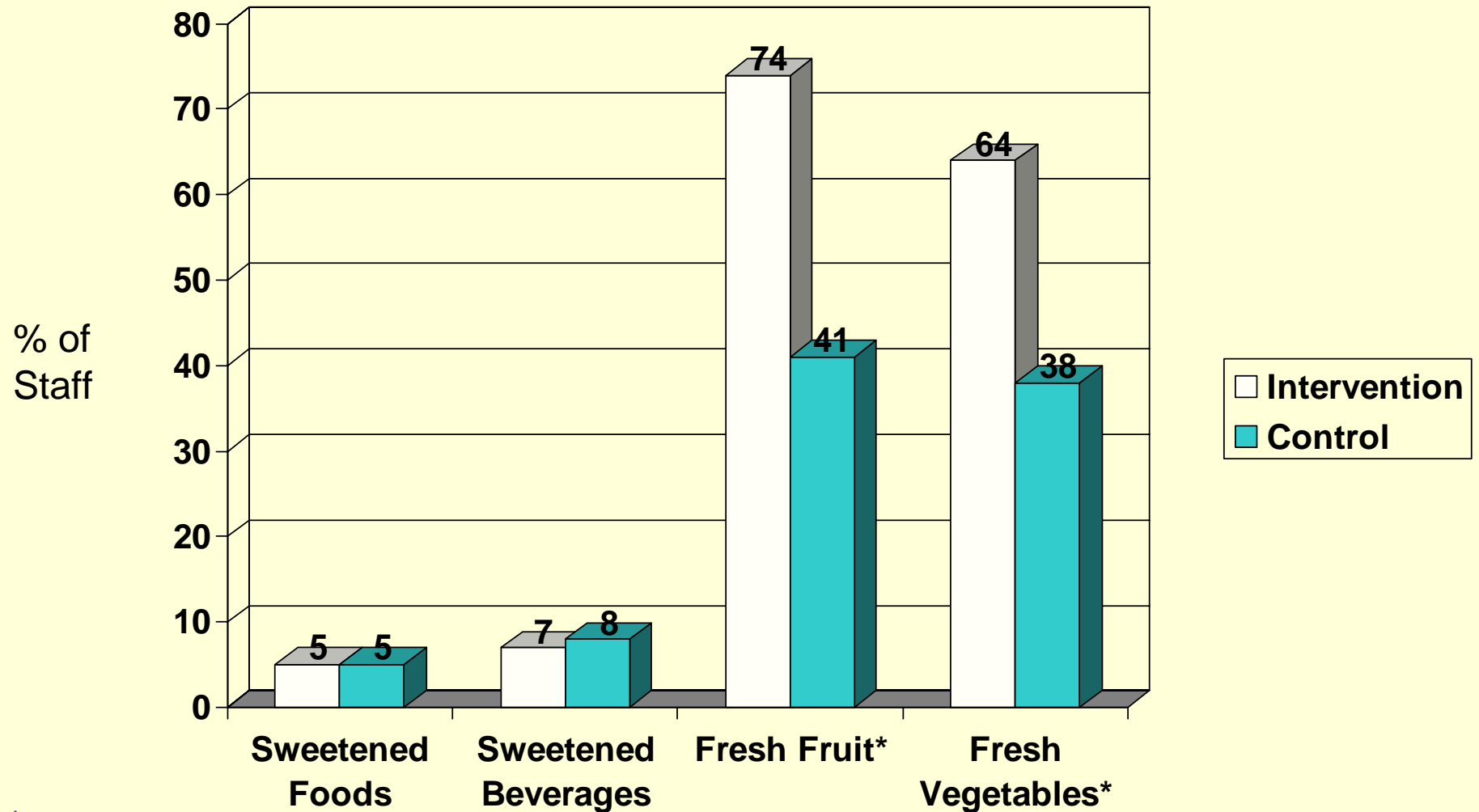
Percent of staff reporting "More often this year" for select foods and beverages served at children's celebrations



\*  $p < .05$

# Meals and Snacks at Intervention Sites Included More Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Percent of staff reporting “More often this year” for select foods and beverages served at meals and snacks

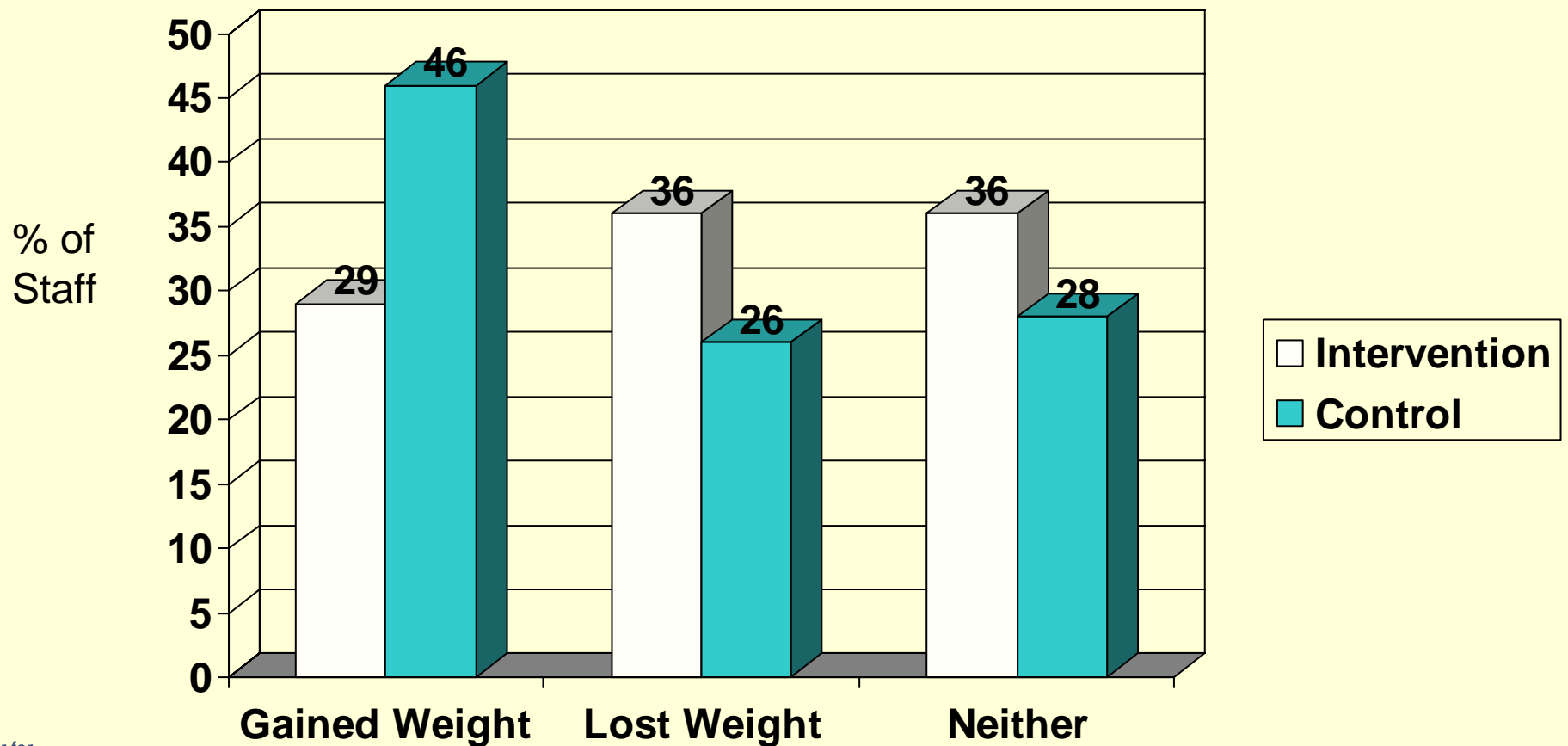


\*  $p < .05$

Providers reported small but significant improvements in their ease/comfort talking with parents about nutrition and physical activity



# Intervention Site Staff Reported Less Weight Gain Over the Intervention Period



Have you guessed it yet?

# A Childcare Staff Wellness Program!

# Who participated?

- Staff members at 13 childcare centers in Contra Costa County, California
- All centers were located in low-income neighborhoods
- Centers were operated by private entities and had at least 10 staff members

Characteristics	Total Sample [n=82]		Intervention [n=43]		Control [n=39]	
	%	(n)	%	(n)	%	(n)
<b>Female</b>	98	(80)	95	(41)	100	(39)
<b>Age, years</b>						
24 or younger	7	(6)	5	(2)	10	(4)
25-34	22	(18)	19	(8)	26	(10)
35-44	30	(25)	37	(16)	23	(9)
45-54	26	(21)	26	(11)	26	(10)
55-64	13	(11)	12	(5)	15	(6)
65+	1	(1)	2	(1)	0	(0)
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>						
Hispanic/Latino	13	(11)	16	(7)	10	(4)
Asian	20	(16)	26	(11)	13	(5)
Pacific Islander	4	(3)	5	(2)	3	(1)
White	49	(40)	44	(19)	54	(21)
African American/Black	17	(14)	5	(2)	31	(12)
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	(1)	2	(1)	0	(0)
Other	5	(4)	9	(4)	0	(0)

# Intervention Activities

## Personal Wellness



## Passport

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Wellness in the Workplace



## Walk Across California

Be more physically active every day!

## Log Book

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Why did we try a wellness intervention?

# What we had learned...

WIC educators who participated in wellness programs as part of Fit WIC improved their feelings of comfort in talking with parents about physical activity and made positive changes in how they talk with parents about weight

Crawford, Gosliner, et. al., 2004

# What we knew...

- 85% of dietetic professionals who exercised regularly rated exercise as a very important area of counseling compared to 48% who didn't exercise

*Martin et. al. J Am Diet Assoc 1987*

- Physicians who disclose personal health habits are better able to motivate patients to make lifestyle changes

Frank, E et.al. Arch Fam Med 2000

# What we learned from our intervention...

- A very modest, relatively simple intervention showed great promise
- Caregivers really appreciated the opportunity to participate
- Providers were very focused on *caregiving*, struggled to focus on themselves
- Providers preferred interventions ready to go for them to implement

# What we gather from our results...

Childcare providers responded very well to messages delivered to them about their own health, and seemed more motivated to apply health messages to the children in their care

# The Fit WIC Model

A major USDA initiative to determine how WIC could better respond to the obesity epidemic

# Fit WIC Outcomes

- ✓ Promising interventions and best practices shared throughout the nation
- ✓ New materials and approaches
- ✓ Organizational changes in WIC
- ✓ Results shared with Congress and other policy makers
- ✓ Major policy changes (i.e. seed planted for changes in WIC food package)

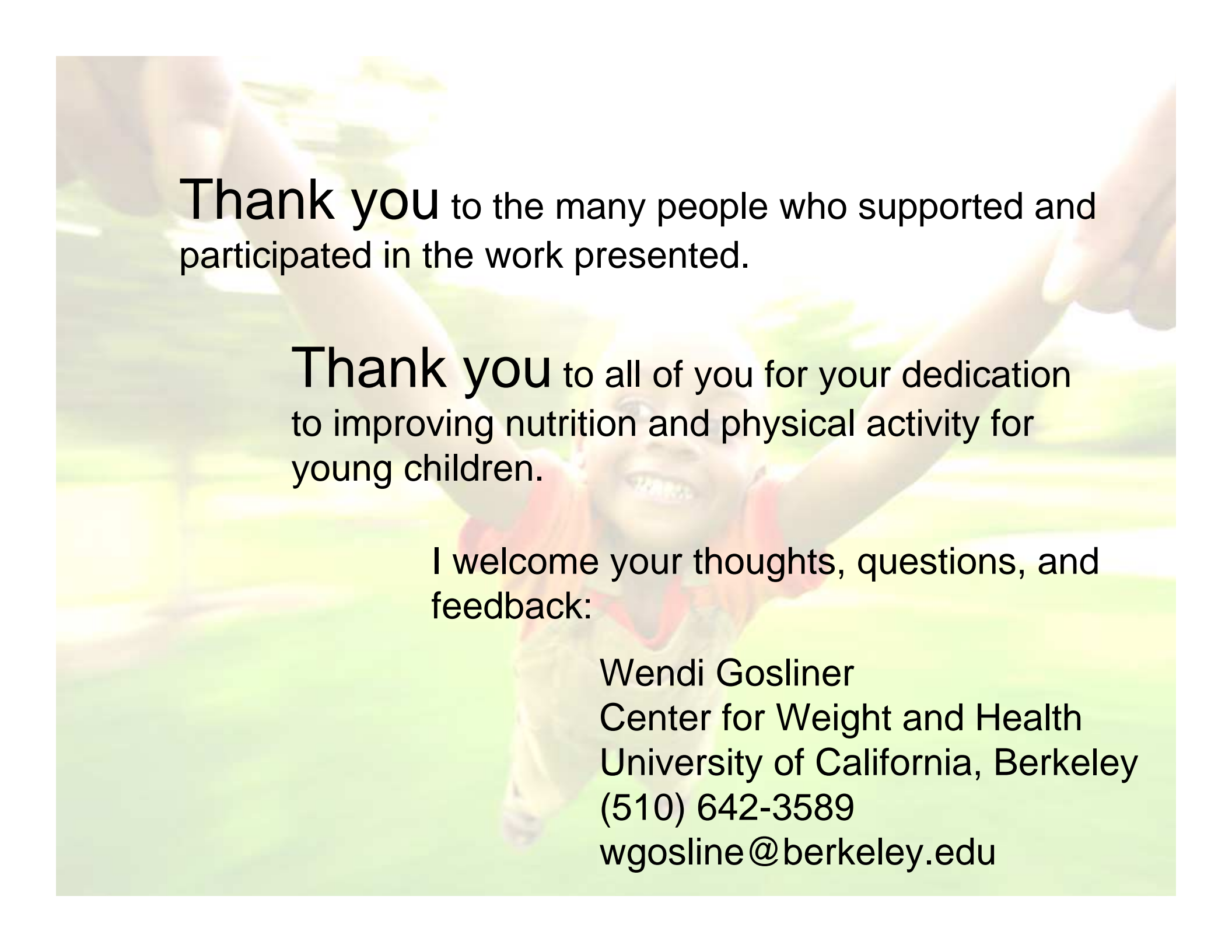
How can this Fit WIC model be applied to childcare?

If we know that nutrition and physical activity habits are established in early childhood, why isn't there more focus on the childcare environment?

What can be done to further the focus on children and families during these critical years?

# Suggested policy and environmental changes

- Increase perceived cultural value of care of young children
- Improve pay and benefits for early childhood educators
- Train early childhood educators in nutrition and physical activity
- Make participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program easier and more available; require meals and snacks served meet *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*
- Incorporate nutrition and physical activity education as critical elements of education, rather than as 'extras'
- Support staff members so that they are motivated to help children eat well and be physically active

A young child in a red shirt is being held up by two adults in a grassy field. The child is smiling and has their arms outstretched. The background is a bright, sunny outdoor setting with green grass and trees.

**Thank you** to the many people who supported and participated in the work presented.

**Thank you** to all of you for your dedication to improving nutrition and physical activity for young children.

I welcome your thoughts, questions, and feedback:

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