



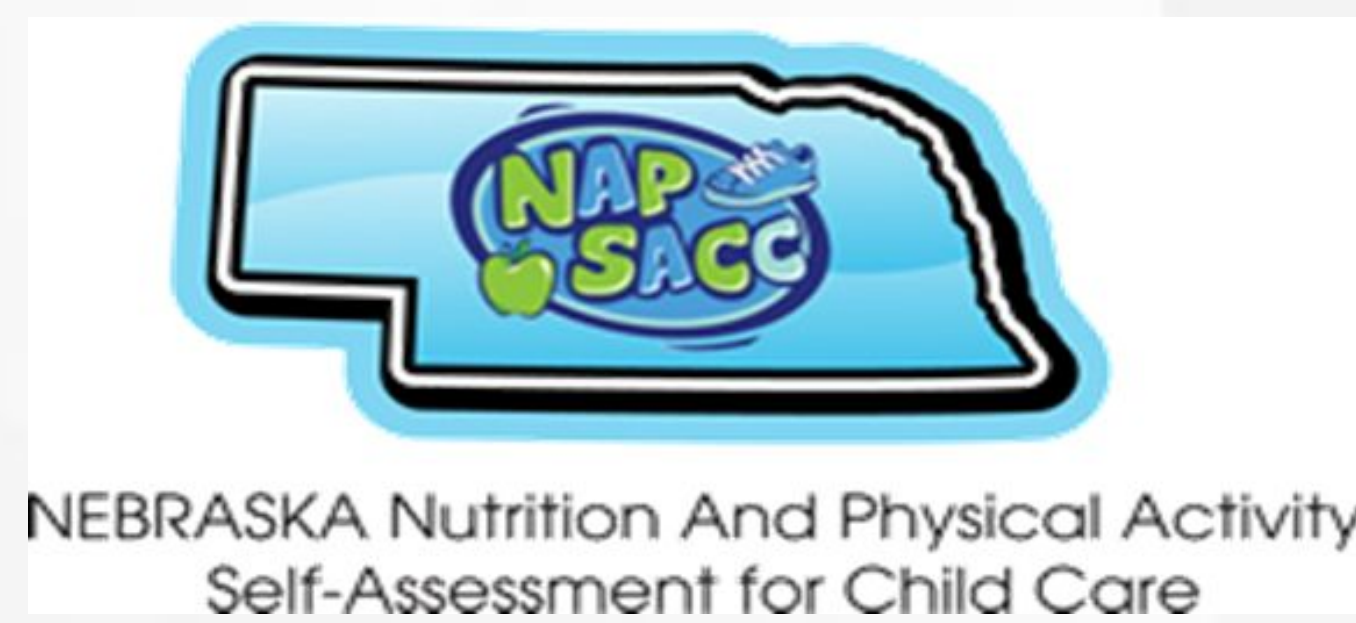
# Nebraska transitioned an in-person early childhood PSE approach, called Go NAP SACC, to be delivered virtually.

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## BACKGROUND

Go NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care) is an evidence-based program for improving the health of young children through better nutrition and physical activity in early care and education programs. Young children in early care and education programs spend nine or more hours per day in a child care setting, which means that child care providers play a critical role in shaping the nutrition and physical activity practices of young children.

**Go NAP SACC is a trusted process that helps child care centers and homes go the extra mile to support children's healthy eating and physical activity.**

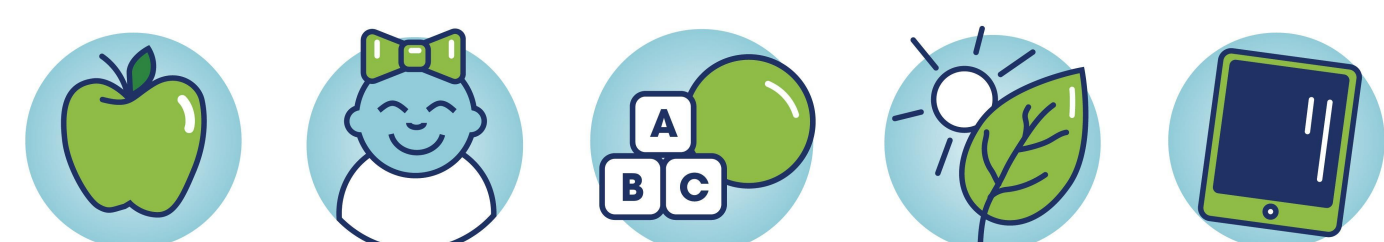


The Nebraska (NE) Extension Go NAP SACC team consists of 24 Go NAP SACC trainers, 11 of which are funded by SNAP-Ed. SNAP-Ed funded Go NAP SACC trainers work exclusively with child care providers that serve SNAP-eligible families.

When COVID-19 forced NE Extension to cancel all in-person classes, the Go NAP SACC team had to evaluate future trainings. Child care providers were among the frontline workers experiencing high levels of stress as they tried to remain open and, most importantly, keep the children they care for healthy. Over the first few of months of the pandemic, many child care facilities were closed or had decreased enrollment. Providers expressed interest in using that time as a chance to participate in professional development. Further into the pandemic, sites generally remained open while following directed health measures.

## PURPOSE

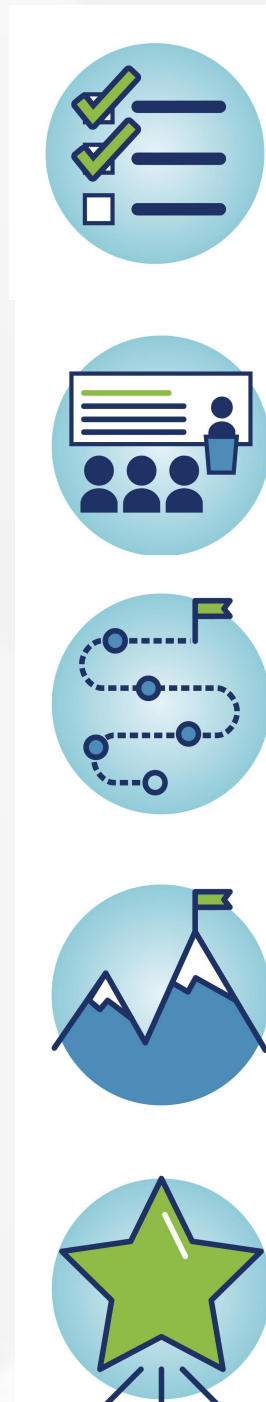
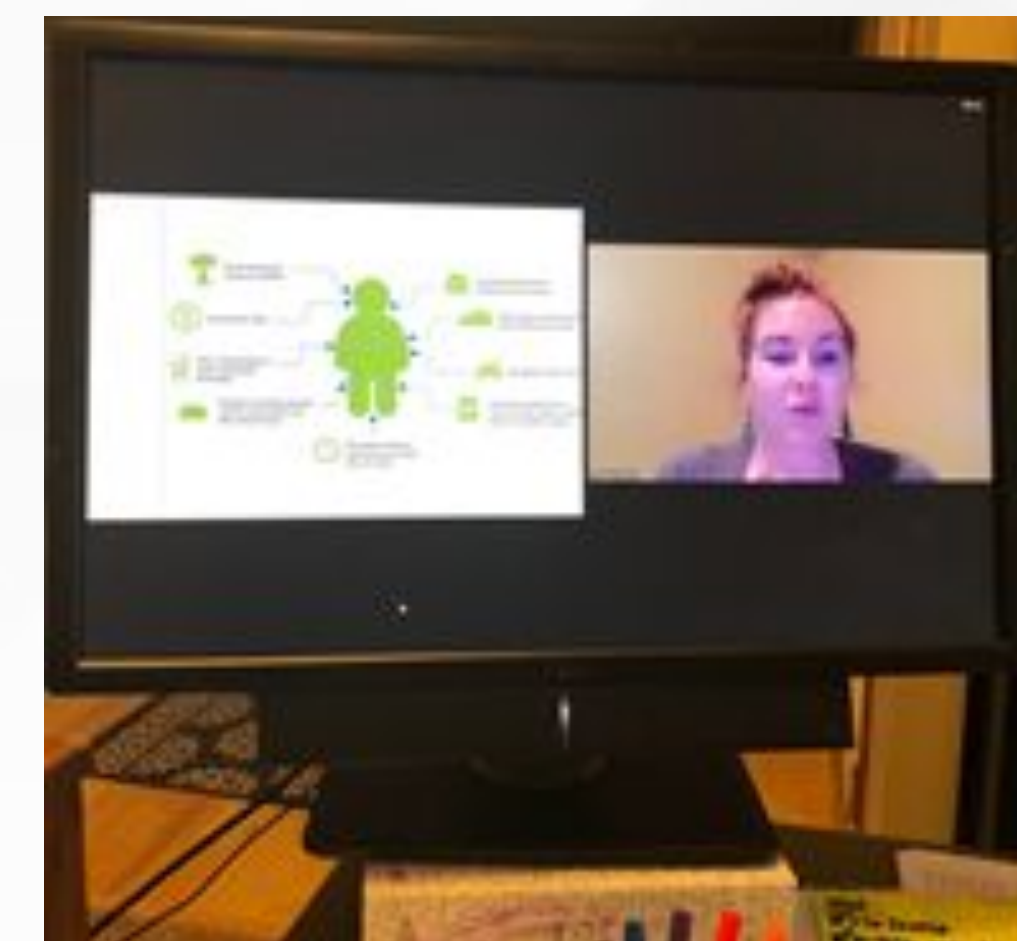
1. To improve the implementation of nutrition, physical activity, and infant feeding best practices of early care and education (ECE) environments.
2. To meet the training and technical assistance needs of ECE professionals, during a pandemic, while using engaging virtual strategies that meet the needs of adult learners.



## METHODS

**Needs Assessment:** A needs assessment was conducted to gauge the interest of child care providers participation in Go NAP SACC workshops during the pandemic. (n=15).

- Virtual vs. In-Person Workshops:
  - 85% preferred replacing in-person training with virtual training.
  - 15% preferred to wait until health concerns lessened to attend an in-person training.
- Technology:
  - 93% stated they had equipment available to attend and participate in video conference-based training.
  - 7% did not have equipment available.
- Format of virtual workshops:
  - 43% preferred 3, 2-hour trainings
  - 43% preferred 2, 3-hour trainings
  - 7% preferred 6, 1-hour trainings
  - 7% preferred 1, 6-hour training



**Process required to transition from in-person workshops to virtual workshops:**

- Build-in engaging teaching strategies that work well in virtual spaces, like breakout rooms, polls, interactive activities.
- Adapt the presentation materials and activities to accommodate virtual delivery. Hard-copy materials were mailed to providers ahead of time, and all handouts were also shared digitally.
- The Go NAP SACC team participated in professional development opportunities and practice sessions to improve technical skills related to zoom, to ensure smooth delivery of a quality program.
- To ensure equity to all interested participants, the registration questions gauged the providers' level of comfort with technology. To ensure technology was not a barrier to full participation, technology practice sessions were offered in advance to any providers that expressed interest.
- Between each virtual Go NAP SACC training, an iterative process was used to edit the workshop protocols and make improvements for the next workshop series.

## RESULTS

Three virtual Go NAP SACC training workshops (3, 2-hour trainings) were offered during the pandemic in April, July and September. Overall, 110 child care providers attended virtual Go NAP SACC workshops from 11 childcare family homes and 31 child care centers.

In addition to the traditional pre- and post-self-assessment that each child care facility completes during the Go NAP SACC process, a digital workshop evaluation was collected.

- 70% of participants strongly agreed that the content in the workshop effectively addressed the workshop objectives, 30% agreed.
- 67% of participants strongly agreed that the training they received will be useful in their work environment, 33% agreed.

**Things we noticed:**

- Cost effective
- Some providers love the option of virtual trainings and others still prefer in-person.
- The virtual format reduces the burden on the provider, which makes delivering the program over time more manageable – which is more conducive to knowledge retention.
- Virtual format made access easier to involve child care staff and teachers.

**Pros:**

- A large number of providers joined the training, due to convenience of it being offered virtually.
- The trainings were made available statewide, increasing access to training to rural providers.
- Resources were leveraged from across the state. Training was offered by a multidisciplinary team from the pool of trainers and the technical assistance was assigned locally.
- Co-teaching with colleagues allowed instructors to learn from each other and receive feedback on delivery methods.

**Cons:**

- Planning process needs to be started well in advance.
- Delivery plan needs to be structured and organized to ensure virtual delivery is well received by attendees.
- The burden on the SNAP-Ed instructor may be higher for a virtual delivery especially in the beginning.
- As the Zoom platform made updates, it required the training team to adapt and continue to learn new features with each training.

## CONCLUSIONS

**Transitioning the Go NAP SACC training to a virtual platform was found to be feasible for SNAP-Ed educators.**

Based on surveys from the audience of interest, the virtual training was desired and found to be an engaging strategy to share the physical activity and nutrition best practices with early care providers.

**Key Considerations:**

- Does the audience desire online training?
- What technology platform is accessible? High speed internet availability?
- Is there time, resources and expertise to master technology for high quality delivery?
- For child care licensing, are steps needed to ensure training is allowable in a virtual format?
- What steps can be taken to ensure access to training is equitable?
- How will success of delivery method be evaluated and adjusted over time?

While early care and education providers continue their essential role amid this pandemic, it is possible to continue PSE efforts to support the development of healthy habits early in life.

Based on the success of this transition to a virtual training, the Nebraska Go NAP SACC team has decided to continue to offer a virtual option quarterly in 2021.

*"I loved the zoom training. I felt so comfortable in my own space. I know participation was way different than in class."*

*"Even though it had to be virtual, it was still interactive with the breakout rooms."*

*"It was great. I appreciate it being offered during closure, it was actually easy for me to attend."*



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