

Creating the Healthiest Generations of Children:

How Nemours Children's Health is Increasing Accessibility to Health Education

Adrienne Palmer, CLS and Erica Singleton, MPH, CHES

Community Health Education, Nemours Children's Health

Can you think of an opportunity your child has had to learn about stress management? The signs of an unhealthy relationship? How to communicate with others in a clear and healthy way? This is where health education comes in. Health education is defined as “learning experiences on health topics, to provide people with knowledge, skills, and tools to live healthier lives.”¹ These topics can range from mental and emotional health to food and nutrition; subjects that may not necessarily be covered at home or at school. Health educators have a unique opportunity to fill these gaps and increase health equity for everyone in our community.

Why Health Education is Important

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention notes the relationship between health education and adolescent behaviors:²

- Youth behaviors and experiences set the stage for adult health.
- Health behaviors and experiences related to early sexual initiation, violence, and substance use are consistently linked to poor grades and test scores and lower educational attainment.
- Providing health education as early as possible can help youth to develop positive well-being, academic success, and healthy outcomes into adulthood.

Health education also improves health literacy, which empowers people to make better-informed decisions regarding their health. Increased health literacy is positively associated with people seeking out preventative healthcare, decreased unnecessary emergency room visits, better management of chronic conditions, and improved quality of care and health outcomes.³

What Nemours Children's Health is Doing

Meeting our community members where they are is not just a phrase but a call to action. In 2023, Nemours Children's Hospital in Delaware established a Community Health Education (CHE) team, where our health educators work to break down accessibility barriers to health information by collaborating with community organizations all over the state to provide prevention education. As a children's healthcare system, our health educators build curricula that are not only age-appropriate, but also evidence-, research-, and medically-based. We then offer to bring these educational opportunities to children and their families throughout Delaware and the Delaware Valley via schools, community programs, and family organizations. This allows us to work toward our goal of improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities.

In addition, we partner with other departments within Nemours Children's Health such as our school-based health centers, community engagement, and dental outreach teams, to find additional ways we can enhance care outside of our walls. Our various program offerings are a vehicle for children to have access to health education where they live, study, and play. This is

essential because it provides early prevention and awareness, while also empowering children to think critically so they can make informed decisions about their own health. Our programs aim to increase health literacy and encourages children to become advocates for health in their families and peer groups.

Looking Forward

Nemours Children's is founded on several strategic pillars to guide the organization in achieving its aspirational vision of creating the healthiest generations of children. One of those pillars focuses on the equitable delivery of health in the community. The Community Health Education team is reinforcing that goal by meeting children and families where they are, providing essential health education services, and helping ensure that every child in Delaware has access to the tools and skills that will help them maintain healthy behaviors throughout their lives.

Ms. Palmer may be contacted at Adrienne.palmer@nemours.org.

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