



Education Policy

- More years of high-quality education are linked to better life-long health and healthier lifestyles, which can lower state health care costs.
- Schools can lay the foundations for a healthy life.
- Health is critical for learning and success.

Resources and policy tools that address education and health	What state agencies can address education and health
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early child development strategic plans • Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) State Plans • Expanded health and behavioral health services provided by schools. Telehealth and Telemental Health • State support for school-based health centers • Medicaid payment for school-based services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State superintendent • Medicaid and education liaison • Homeless education liaison • Public health’s healthy schools programs

State Policy Options

Universal pre-kindergarten. States can improve the health and education outcomes of their population with an [early child development strategic plan](#) or an [Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) State Plan](#).

School-based health centers. States can bring [health centers into schools](#) to meet children where they are and care for their physical and mental health. [Medicaid](#) covers health and related services provided in schools for Medicaid-enrolled children.

School-based programs to improve nutrition and increase physical activity. Kids cannot learn or play when they are hungry. State breakfast and lunch programs, and requirements for physical education, recess, and before or after school programming have an impact on health and learning.

This document is part of NASHP’s [Upstream Health Priorities for New Governors Toolkit](#). Explore the entire toolkit [here](https://nashp.org/toolkit-upstream-health-priorities-for-new-governors/).

Evidence and Resources for State Leaders

Policy	Resource	Notes
Early childhood education and universal pre-kindergarten	CityHealth rates cities on their high-quality, universal pre-kindergarten policies.	Evidence suggests that early childhood education has far-reaching impacts on high school graduation rates, improved cognitive development, and better lifetime health
	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Health Impact in 5 Years Interventions (HI-5), “Childhood development is an important determinant of health over a person’s lifetime.”	Delaware is looking to the future of their population and workforce with an early child development strategic plan.
School Nutrition Programs	School Nutrition Programs help combat barriers to learning, like hunger and stress related to food insecurity.	Food and Nutrition Service provides information on child nutrition programs, like the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.
	National Governor’s Association (NGA), “Reducing Childhood Hunger: Toolkit for Governors and First Spouses”	This resource emphasizes the role that school nutrition programs can play in planning to reduce childhood hunger
School-Based Violence Prevention	CDC’s HI-5 “Universal school-based violence prevention can be supported at the state level and implemented by school districts for all students”	Oregon enacted a law requiring school districts to incorporate bullying prevention into existing student training programs.
School Environmental Health	The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) provides resources on maintaining, renovating, and improving quality of school buildings.	“Studies show that health, attendance, and academic performance in schools increases with improved maintenance of school facilities.”
Other Education Resources	National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP), “State Strategies to Address Mental Health and Education Inequities.”	This resource provides state examples of strategies to address inequity in the classroom, which can lead to health disparities.