

**CT Children's Mental Health Task Force
Nutrition Sub-Committee
Recommendations to the Task Force for discussion
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Quick Fixes:

- Reimburse complete vitamins w minerals for Medicaid patients
- Reimburse **DHA supplementation** for pregnant and non-breast-fed babies (Docosahexaenoic acid, is a type of fat abundant in the gray matter of the brain and in membranes of the photoreceptors of the eyes. Best source: mom's breast milk.). Also **choline** needs to be supplemented as most pregnant and breastfeeding moms are deficient and there is not adequate in most formulas (helps brain cells of fetus to develop properly; also functions like folic acid on neural tube development).
- Consider formula support for low income *working* families who do not qualify for WIC, or who are over WIC age and cannot afford Gastro-tube feeds.
- Continue to support breastfeeding as the perfect choice for newborn to year 1.
- Encourage schools provide PA before, during, and after school. Fill in mandated "gaps" as research continues to show connections to PA and lower rates of depression, better weight management, etc.
- Reimburse RD nutrition counseling under Medicaid funding. It's minimal and needs improvement. RDs are the food and nutrition experts, trained multiple years in the food and body sciences, and in behavior change theories.

Long Term:

- Address poverty in children. It's complicated. Paying families adequate wages with social programs built around education (budgeting, food resource management, health and wellness, prevention medicine) then we could perhaps decrease supplemental programs.
- Address food insecurity. Schools now engaging more and more in breakfast, lunch and suppers! Food insecurity is worse on the weekends, school holidays and summer. The first step is to utilize USDA monies allocated esp. for summer. CT towns leave money on the table in DC by not offering food in summer, and also by not engaging in the school breakfast program offered by the USDA.

-Address environment ie fund multiple community gardens (Knox Foundation model). Hartford has a partnership with the Mayor Segarra.

-Support pregnant and new moms. Perhaps a “pre” WIC nutrition assessment as soon as prenatal care starts. Brain cells are formed very early on in gestation, and many moms probably do not get on WIC prior to 2-3 months.