

# WIC NEWS

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children

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September 2022

## September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month

Childhood Obesity: The Pandemic of Tomorrow and Today

Dr. Gregory Weiss

Obesity rates continue to rise across the globe and, although adult obesity gets a lot of press due to the pressing nature of the comorbid diseases that go along with it, the rates of childhood obesity are on the rise as well.

In fact, Solveig Cunningham, PhD, and colleagues at Emory University have found that the incidence of childhood obesity is higher, is occurring at younger ages and is more severe than 12 years ago.

This trend is deeply concerning as such severe and early onset obesity may be associated with significant health consequences as children grow. The scope of the obesity problem in the United States is daunting. Further, the prevalence of childhood obesity in the U.S. is among the highest in the world.

The authors of this study hoped to better define the problem by investigating temporal changes in childhood obesity rates as well as severity in comparison to historic data. They feel that, with a clear perspective on the magnitude of the problem, an assessment can be made about how well prevention efforts have worked and areas where they can be improved upon.

Cunningham and colleagues obtained data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) including ages and body mass index (BMI) information. Using this data, children were separated into age cohorts and obesity prevalence as the percentage of children with obesity at a given point in time was determined.

The authors found that children born in the first decade of this century had a higher chance of being obese and were obese at a younger age than children born in the late 1980s and 1990s. This was despite aggressive public health campaigns aimed at preventing obesity. They also found that as many as 40 percent of current high school—students could be categorized as overweight before leaving primary school. As with many other health problems, childhood obesity affects minority and low socioeconomic populations disproportionately. In this study non-Black Hispanic kindergartners were 29 percent more likely to be obese by the fifth grade compared to the same children 12 years earlier. Children in economically disadvantaged groups saw a 15 percent increase in obesity in primary school.

## **Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, Continued**

"These worrying data indicate that the childhood obesity epidemic in the United States continues to grow and get more serious," said Venkat Narayan, MD, coauthor of the study. "We urgently need an aggressive national strategy for interdisciplinary research and public health to stem the tide of childhood obesity and its consequences in the U.S. and worldwide."

A single overriding message is born from these data, efforts at combating childhood obesity have fallen short or failed outright. While high profile initiatives like the Let's Move! Campaign and the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act have tried to make a difference since 2010, they have had no impact whatsoever on population-level obesity. The authors call for public health policies that address the heterogeneity of the incidence of obesity in schools. For instance, while the highest and lowest socioeconomic households were the most likely to have obese children, boys were more likely than girls in primary school to develop obesity. A one size fits all plan will not work.



"For decades, we have seen the number of children with obesity increasing, in spite of extensive efforts from many parents and policymakers to improve children's nutrition, physical activity and living environments," Cunningham noted. "Have these efforts worked? Is obesity finally receding? Our findings indicate that no, obesity must continue to be a public health priority."

This is not solely about negative outcomes down the road. Obese children are at higher risk for diabetes, depression, anxiety, and a host of social disadvantages when compared to normal weight children. The authors suggest the development of programs and policies aimed at a younger audience even preschool children. Clearly, we are not reaching children early enough to make a difference. Recognizing disparities in access to clinical care and advice as well as the availability of healthy food should be areas of focus while surveillance continues in an effort to measure our successes and failures. Finally, we must learn from the initiatives that have failed. Clever slogans and media campaigns cannot take the place of sound guidance and the provision of choices for every child in every neighborhood.

Source: https://www.endocrinologynetwork.com/view/childhood-obesity-the-pandemic-of-tomorrow-and-today

## **An Update from Our Safe Sleep Partners**

Secondhand and Thirdhand Smoke

Several types of tobacco products produce a smoke or aerosol that is harmful to both the user (firsthand smoke) and other people nearby who are not using these products (secondhand and thirdhand smoke).

Secondhand smoke is in the air around smokers. There is no "risk-free" or "safe" level of secondhand smoke exposure; even brief exposure to secondhand smoke can be harmful to health. Being around secondhand smoke can increase baby's risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) and sleep-related infant death.

#### Chemicals in Thirdhand Smoke Can: Reduce Ability Increase Risk of Damage DNA Lower Ability to Damage Cells to Heal Injuries **Fight Infection** Cancer Cause Headaches Cause Earaches Increase Risk Attacks Respiratory Illness of Disease HIRDHAND thirdhandsmoke.org

**Thirdhand smoke** is what sticks on surfaces, such as walls, ceilings, furniture, car seats, clothing, dust, and even hair, long after someone has smoked in the area.

Learn more about <u>secondhand and thirdhand smoke</u>, how they affect you and what you can do to protect your health and the health of others. Learn more about <u>Smoking & Safe Sleep</u> and visit the <u>Michigan Tobacco Quitline</u> or call 1-800-784-8669 for resources and support to quit smoking.

## **Breastfeeding Update**

#### **AAP Updates Breastfeeding Recommendations**

Kristina Doyle, RD, IBCLC

Since 2012, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has recommended exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months after birth with continued breastfeeding for up to one year or longer. On July 27, 2022, the AAP issued a <u>policy statement</u> updating their recommended duration of breastfeeding for two years or beyond, as mutually desired by parent and child.

Research continues to inspire policy changes like this as we discover how important breast milk is to children. Even into the second year of life, breast milk is a great source of protein, fat, carbohydrates and immunity for growing toddlers. Parents also continue to benefit from decreased risk of medical illnesses like type 2 diabetes, breast cancer, ovarian cancer and more.

The AAP has also recognized that meeting these guidelines may not be easy for families, as there are many barriers in our society to prolonged breastfeeding. The AAP suggests some key suggestions for health care providers, hospitals and other maternal child programs:

- Birth centers and hospitals should implement maternity care practices that promote breastfeeding initiation, duration and exclusivity.
- Pediatricians need to take the initiative to learn about the basics of breastfeeding and its health benefits.
   Also, offer breastfeeding support within their office or refer to local support programs.
- Health care providers should learn about or have access to resources on medication and vaccination safety.
- Pediatricians can promote socially and culturally sensitive policies that address inequities in the delivery of care in the office, hospital and community to eliminate disparities in breastfeeding.
- Pediatricians can be proactive in advocating for policies that protect breastfeeding, such as universal paid maternity leave and insurance coverage for lactation support and breast pumps.

Many parents across the country have voiced their reactions to the AAP update. While there is appreciation for recommending change in the health care system, many parents have expressed their frustration saying breastfeeding for two or more years is unrealistic.

The barriers to breastfeeding are very real. Many parents lack the connections to breastfeeding support, postpartum emotional support, paid parental leave, supportive work environment in which to pump and so much more. These are barriers that WIC agencies and their <u>peer support</u> staff can help parents tackle head on. Consider educating parents on the updated AAP recommendations, allow them to voice their concerns, explore any potential barriers, and work with breastfeeding families to find solutions to achieving their breastfeeding goals.



TOGETHER, SAVING LIVES

Did you know that the MDHHS Maternal Child Health Epidemiology Section posts statewide and prosperity region-specific health outcome data annually? The most recent data was posted in July 2022 and includes statistics through 2020. The data reports include information on infant and maternal mortality rates, low birthweight and preterm birth rates, breastfeeding initiation and duration rates, and more. This data is examined to identify targeted quality improvement projects in each region as a deliverable of the Mother Infant Health & Equity Improvement Plan.

Click here to visit the Maternal Child Health Epidemiology Section website.

## **Nutrition 101**

#### **Digestive Health: Learning from New Research**

Elizabeth Carlson, B.S., GVSU Dietetics Intern

In recent years, "gut health" has been a buzz word in the wellness sector. While research on digestive health has rapidly evolved since the mid-19th century, recent research milestones have pushed the idea of "gut health" to the headlines. With an impressive amount of information floating around on this topic, this article will aim to digest (no pun intended) the most important aspects of gut health to keep you informed and aware of the facts.



#### **Development of the Gut Microbiome**

As babies, we all start out with a relatively sterile gut environment (or microbiome). The introduction of bacteria begins almost immediately, as the infant's microbiome rapidly develops during breast or formula feeding. Around age three, the microbiome becomes more stable as variation in diet decreases. Alterations on type and amount of gut bacteria will transform throughout life based on diet, age, and external influences such as antibiotic use and other medications. A diverse gut is a healthy gut, and we should focus on developing this with age. A varied diet with inclusion of several sources of fiber, fermented products and polyphenols (nuts, seeds, berries) will help to increase gut diversity.

#### **Purpose of Gut Bacteria**

The bacteria in your microbiome serve many purposes. Nutrient and drug metabolism, protection against harmful gut bacteria and regulation of the immune system are all examples. In terms of nutrition, the bacteria in your gut work to ferment undigested carbohydrates (fiber) and then convert them to short chain fatty acids (SCFA). These SCFAs benefit your body in many ways, including protecting against diarrhea, inflammatory bowel disease, colon cancer, obesity, heart disease and diabetes. Bottom line: eat your fiber!

#### **Probiotics vs. Prebiotics**

Probiotics and prebiotics are two sources of bacteria supplementation used to maintain or increase beneficial strains of bacteria in the gastrointestinal system. Probiotics contain live strains of bacteria which directly add to the bacteria population already in your gut, while prebiotics are specialized plant fibers which act as a fertilizer to advantageous gut bacteria strains. Strong sources of probiotics in WIC foods include non- or low fat Activia yogurt, traditional buttermilk, and mozzarella and cottage cheese. WIC food sources of prebiotics include ones that have a high concentration of fiber or resistant starch, such as bananas, apples, whole grain pasta, oatmeal or bread.

#### **Take Away**

Knowledge about the gut microbiome continues to increase as research efforts progress. Although it is easy to get lost in all the information, here are a few key points to remember:

- Bacteria is introduced to the microbiome when we are babies and grows more diverse as we eat different foods.
- A diverse gut is a healthy gut, and supplements like probiotics and prebiotics can help!
- With a large enough supply of healthy bacteria living in the microbiome, risk of developing chronic diseases is reduced.
- Overall, you will benefit most from increasing your intake and variety of fiber-rich foods, polyphenols, probiotics and prebiotics. These items are found in many WIC foods, such as vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds and fruits.

Stay healthy and remember that bacteria can help!

#### References:

Nature: https://www.nature.com/immersive/d42859-019-00041-z/index.html

Tanaka M, Nakayama J. Development of the gut microbiota in infancy and its impact on health in later life. *Allergol Int*. 2017;66(4):515-522. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.alit.2017.07.010

Jandhyala SM, Talukdar R, Subramanyam C, Vuyyuru H, Sasikala M, Nageshwar Reddy D. Role of the normal gut microbiota. *World J Gastroenterol*. 2015;21(29):8787-8803. doi: 10.3748/wjg.v21.i29.8787

## **Innovative Outreach**

# Arizona WIC Agency Creates Text Campaign to Shorten Delay in WIC Enrollment of Mothers and Newborns for Optimal Breastfeeding Support

Melissa Fedt, BS, RD, IBCLC, Devina Wadhera, PhD, and Anne Whitmire, MPA IBCLC RLC

One of the many barriers to breastfeeding initiation and exclusivity include lack of lactation support soon after delivery. The Arizona WIC Breastfeeding Team identified a delay among pregnant participants in enrolling themselves and their newborn infants in the WIC program, thereby hindering optimal breastfeeding support and care. To bridge this gap, the team developed a Pregnancy Text Campaign that involved sending a text message before the Estimated Due Date (EDD), to ensure that pregnant women and their newborn infants were enrolled in WIC soon after delivery. It is the hope that this campaign will provide crucial breastfeeding support and improve re-enrollment rates of mothers and their newborn infants.

The logistics of this text campaign includes sending a text message to a pregnant WIC participant one week before her Estimated Due Date (EDD). Each local agency is provided a monthly data sheet with the client's ID, clinic, phone number, language, EDD, and last Breastfeeding Peer Counselor (BFPC) contact for each participant who will receive the text during the month. The text message sent out reads, "Being a new parent can be hard, WIC is here for you. Call to make an appointment for you and your baby after delivery." From here, each local agency has the option to either contact the participant further or wait for the participant to contact their clinic.

Shortly after the first groups of texts were sent, the Arizona WIC Program decided to evaluate the effectiveness of the text campaign. Two local agencies (each averaging 3,400-3,500 participants) were assigned to either an intervention or control group. The control local agency does not follow up after receiving the text message while the treatment group calls each participant within one week of receiving the text message. The purpose of this study is to determine if sending a text message accompanied with a phone call follow-up, would increase re-enrollment rates of the mothers and newborn infants to a greater extent than those not receiving a follow-up. Data collection for this study concluded in May 2022. Preliminary anecdotal evidence from frontline staff show some positive effects of the campaign. Here are some quotes from frontline staff regarding their experiences with the text campaign:

- "I feel like we are more effective in getting our women who were pregnant and their babies enrolled more efficiently now that we have tools in place to contact them."
- "This is an interesting project. A lot of the new mothers are very kind and easy to talk to! I also enjoy telling them congratulations on becoming a mom, so, thank you for entrusting a project like this to me!"
- "I feel that this project has been mostly successful. There have been multiple occasions where I've spoken
  with a new mother and they've been thankful that I've contacted them since they've felt overwhelmed and
  would forget to call us. Participants that are also close to their due dates have been appreciative of me
  reaching out and scheduling follow-up calls to see if their baby has been born or if there have been updates
  on the new expected due date."

The Arizona WIC Breastfeeding Team, along with the Evaluation Team, will continue to monitor the efficacy of the text messaging campaign on re-enrollment rates, breastfeeding, and delay in certification rates. The Arizona WIC Program is eagerly awaiting these results and is excited about its success.

Source: National WIC Association Research to Practice Newsletter, July 8, 2022.

## **Highlight on Client Centered Services**

Monica Smith, MA, LPC, RD

I would like to share some communication wisdom that a client gave me. She created a way to quickly establish rapport with a stranger. She calls her technique "5 Minute Friend." Whenever she meets someone new she approaches them as if her purpose and theirs is to create a connection – or friendship of some sort. She begins the encounter with a compliment (commonly known in the CCS world as an affirmation). Right away the encounter is focused on something that is working. It might look like this: "Hi, it's good to meet you. I can tell you've been working with your child on using her inside voice. Do you have any secrets or tips I could share with other moms?" In this example, her effort has been affirmed in a complimentary way and she has been offered respect. She and her child were seen. Less than a 5-minute investment as you walk from the waiting area to the room. Now your appointment with her is likely going to start and finish on a positive note. This same technique is possible with phone interactions. "You sound tired, but you still found time for your appointment. I love working with such dedicated moms!" Though not an official CCS skill, noticing and giving voice to what is working is a powerful tool for opening the door to change.

I wish you all the best and hold you in the highest esteem.

## **Local Agency Highlights**

#### **Washtenaw County Health Department**

Coordinator Gayathri Akella shares that Project FRESH is off to a great start in Washtenaw County WIC! Washtenaw WIC is partnering with Michigan State University Extension for in-person coupon issuance and group education at the farmers markets. This on-site model allows for clients to shop right away for their fresh locally grown produce.



Gayathri would also like to thank all of their student volunteers and dietetic interns for making this possible.

A happy client shares, "Thank you for making our farmers market experience an enjoyable one!"



#### **Detroit Health Department**

Cidni Howard, of the Detroit Health Department WIC program, shares that they have partnered with the City of Detroit Storytelling Team to produce five "WIC Proud" videos to help change the stigma around participating in the WIC program. These short but impactful videos highlight how past WIC clients have used WIC as a stepping stone to reach their career goals, overcome life's obstacles, meet their nutritional needs, and reduce stress by having one less thing to worry about. All five videos will be spotlighted in the DHD "WIC CAN" social media marketing campaign.

## **WIC Staff Celebrations**

#### **Health Dept of Northwest Michigan**

Congratulations to Ashley Colborn on the birth of Eliza Marie, born June 20, 2022! Ashley works as a tech in the Gaylord WIC clinic.



#### **InterCare Community Health Network**

Congratulations to Kali Jones on the birth of Claire Alexandra, born May 26, 2022! Kali serves as the InterCare WIC Coordinator.



#### **Urban League of Detroit**

Congratulations to Krista Zenk on the birth of Opal, born June 24, 2022! Krista shares that both she and Opal are doing well and that they are all enjoying being a new family of four. Krista serves as WIC Assistant Director for Urban League.





#### **Kent County Health Department**

Jennifer Gudith is celebrating 10 years as the Kent County WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor!



Jennifer is an indispensable part of our Kent County WIC Team. Her knowledge, integrity, expertise, and skill are appreciated by her coworkers and her clients. Jennifer consistently shows genuine compassion for the people she is serving every day by actively listening and relating to her clients. Jennifer exhibits great pride in her work and provides all clients, both internal and external, with great customer service. She is willing to go above and beyond what may be needed to accomplish a job responsibility, while displaying her commitment to the importance of forming positive relationships with WIC families in Kent County. We are so thankful to have been able to work alongside Jennifer here in Kent County and we value all that she has accomplished in the past 10 years. Congrats, Jennifer!

Submitted by Abby Bishop, WIC Coordinator

## STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

#### **Policies and Procedures:**

- #2022-163: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 4/20/22 Meeting Minutes See E-Notice attachments for minutes, chat record, and slide deck.
- #2022-171: Certification Over Multiple Days Process See E-Notice attachment for process document.
- #2022-173: Revised Nondiscrimination Statement and Timeline for Implementation See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-185: New Income Guidelines Effective June 1, 2022 Access income guidelines here.
- #2022-203: Policy Reminder "Infant Foods" and "Infant Cereal" Food Packages require a Formula and a Special Formula/Food Request form See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-210: New Coordinator Orientation & Training Webcast July 21 Click here to access archived webcast.
- #2022-216: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 6/15/22 Meeting Minutes See E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record, and slide deck.
- #2022-244: Resources for Laboratory Skills and Ordering Controls See E-Notice for details.

#### **Nutrition:**

- #2022-151: Emergent Situation Abbott Formula Recall #35: Redemptions of Alternative Formulas, & Walgreens Inventory -
- Refer to subsequent E-Notices with the same title, numbered sequentially, for additional formula recall information.
- #2022-174: Recall on Jif Peanut Butter Products See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-183: The 2022 WIC Project FRESH season starts June 1 See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-194: 2022 WIC Project FRESH Updates See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-200: Nutrition Education Workgroup (6/9/22) Follow-up Resources See E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record, and slide deck.
- #2022-201: New Food Guide Effective 6/1/22 and Upcoming Authorization Cycle See E-Notice for details.

#### Vendor:

- #2022-188: WIC Vendor Online Training Course, Live Instruction Monday June 6 See E-Notice and attachments for instructions on how to access archived course.
- #2022-214: Summer 2022 WIC Vendor Newsletter Click here to access newsletter.

#### **Breastfeeding:**

- #2022-172: Breastfeeding Support During Formula Shortages See E-Notice and attachments for resources.
- #2022-208: Breastfeeding Updates: Workgroup, Breastfeeding Connections, Milk Sharing Webcast, Peer of the Year Nominations

   See E-Notice and attachments for details.
- #2022-238: Breastfeeding: Change in Documentation Guidance and September Breastfeeding Basics See E-Notice for details.

#### **Promotion and Retention:**

- #2022-161: Promotion and Retention Updates See E-Notice for instructions on how to access the NWA WIC Share Portal.
- #2022-177: Promotion and Retention Workgroup Meeting Minutes May 13, 2022 See E-Notice and attachments for details.
- #2022-190: June WIC News Access newsletter here.
- #2022-198: Promotion & Retention Updates See E-Notice for details on NWA social media content, outreach strategic planning sessions, and more.
- #2022-232: Promotion & Retention Updates See E-Notice for details.
- #2022-251: Promotion and Retention Workgroup Meeting Friday, September 9, 2022 See E-Notice for calendar invite and agenda.

## STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

#### **Events:**

#2022-195: Registration is Now Open! The 2022 Michigan WIC Virtual Coordinator Summit – Click here to register.

#2022-231: FY 2022-2023 WIC Training and Event Schedule – Click here to access schedule.

#### **Legislation and Partner Updates:**

#2022-166: National Maternal Mental Health Hotline - Accessible by phone or text at 1-833-9-HELP4MOMS.

#2022-215: COVID-19 Vaccines for ages 6 months and up – See E-Notice and the <u>Kids' COVID Vaccine website</u> for more information.

#### **Data and Systems:**

#2022-159: Biannual Breastfeeding Report – Click here to access report.

#2022-199: MI-WIC LMS Training Module Changes – See E-Notice for details.

#2022-218: WCC Enhancement Training – What's New with WIC Client Connect? – Click here to access archived training.

#2022-234: Announcing WIC's First Breastfeeding Data Report – Click here to access report.

#2022-248: Child-to-Women Category Change in MI-WIC – See E-Notice and attachment for details.

## **Training, Evaluation & Compliance (TEC) Corner**

#### **Nutrition and Breastfeeding Education Time Study**

USDA requires WIC agencies to spend 1/6 of funding on nutrition and breastfeeding education. To ensure Michigan WIC meets that requirement, WIC local agencies participate in three randomly selected time study weeks every three years. The schedule for participating time study agencies is announced in November of each year. To give an idea of what 1/6 of time looks like, for an hour appointment, providing ten minutes of nutrition and/or breastfeeding education fulfills the requirement. Staff who do not spend at least 5 percent of their time providing nutrition education or breastfeeding education are exempt from participating in the time study. Many staff exceed the minimum amount of time for nutrition education and breastfeeding education, which shows the dedication of staff to assisting clients with working on their nutrition goals.

Descriptions of activities that qualify as nutrition and breastfeeding education are included in the time study announcement. <u>Time Study webcasts</u> are archived on MPHI's website which provide more detail in completing the Time Study. For questions, contact the Time Study lead, Joyce Bryant, at bryantj5@michigan.gov or 517-335-8943.



## Longer Family Participation in WIC is Associated with Lower Childhood Sugar-Sweetened Beverage Intake

Christopher Anderson, Shannon E. Whaley of PHFE WIC, and colleagues recently released an analysis finding that longer family participation in WIC was associated with lower sugar-sweetened beverage intake among participating children. Children of families with two years of WIC participation consumed significantly fewer daily servings of total sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) compared to children of families with one year of WIC participation. Click here to read more!

Source: California WIC Association Flash Newsletter January 13, 2022

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, WIC Division Elliott-Larsen Building 320 S. Walnut St. Lansing, MI 48913



**November** 2-3: Clerical

3: Regional PC (South Central & SW)

10: Webcast: ME Record Review

15-17: Breastfeeding Basics

30: Advanced CPA

Questions/Comments E-mail: JacksonW6@michigan.gov

## **Human Resources Happenings**

#### Looking to advertise a position for your local WIC agency?

State and local health departments and non-profit agencies may post WIC positions on the Michigan Association for Local Public Health (MALPH) website by sending a request to Jodie Shaver at <a href="mailto:JShaver@malph.org">JShaver@malph.org</a>.

If you would like to expand the reach of your announcement, please consider posting on the National WIC Association website by sending a request to info@nwica.org.

#### Interested in learning more about health department and other WIC job opportunities?

- Click here to view the MALPH Job Openings website
- Click here to view the National WIC Association Job Postings website

## **UPCOMING EVENTS/TRAININGS/WORKGROUPS**

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9: Promotion & Retention Wkgp 4: Lab

13: BF Peer Update

15: Nutrition Ed Wkgp

20-22: BF Basics 21: Advanced CPA

#### **October**

4: BF Coordinator

5: Anthro

5: Peer Counselor Manager

11: Regional PC (UP/Northern)

12-13: CPA

13: Webcast: Exploring Filipino Culture

20: Clerk/Tech Wkgp

21: Breastfeeding Wkgp

25-26: Coordinator Summit

27: Regional PC (Metro Detroit)

<u>Visit MPHI to sign up</u> for trainings!

> Note: Training dates are sometimes adjusted. Please be sure to verify training information on MPHI's WIC Events Calendar, as this list may not reflect the final schedule.