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**Contact:** Fred Lewis, (202) 412-2167, [Fred.Lewis@dc.gov](mailto:Fred.Lewis@dc.gov)

## **OSSE Awards First Healthy Tots Wellness Grants to Support Healthy Lifestyles for DC’s Youngest Learners**

The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) recently awarded more than \$460,000 in Healthy Tots Wellness Grant funds to six organizations in support of healthy eating, physical activity, and wellness programming in the DC child care community, State Superintendent of Education Hanseul Kang announced today. This is the first time OSSE has released this grant.

The funding will allow recipients to implement health and wellness programming at targeted community-based child care facilities in the District of Columbia. Health and wellness programs supported by the funding range from professional development courses and policy development to programs that focus on healthy foods and nutrition.

“We know that children thrive in learning environments that foster healthy habits, such as proper nutrition and physical activity, and we know that early exposure to nutritious foods, physical activity, and wellness programming can have a lasting impact on children,” said State Superintendent Kang. “These Healthy Tots Wellness Grants will help programs that serve our youngest learners create a culture of health and wellness that children can carry with them throughout their lives.”

A total \$500,000 was available for the Healthy Tots Wellness Grants. According to the request for application, no more than six applicants would receive funding, and the maximum amount of each grant award was \$100,000. Applicants were awarded funding to implement programming in six areas: Gardening/Environmental Sustainability; Farm to Childcare/Local Food Procurement; Nutrition Education; Physical Activity & Education; Staff Wellness & Center Wellness Policy; and Family-Style Dining. The following table lists the organizations that received a Health Tots Wellness Grant, how much each received, and a brief description of how they propose to use the funding.

Recipients of the Fiscal Year 2018 School Year Healthy Tots Wellness Grant*			
Organization	Location	Amount Awarded	Program Description
American University	Districtwide	\$100,000	American University’s Department of Health Studies and Institute for Innovation in Education, in partnership with 12 United Planning Organization early child care sites in wards 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8, propose to implement the Healthy Tots program for more than 200 children, their families, and 90 staff, with nutrition education, staff and center wellness policies, and health promotion. The goal is to increase health

			outcomes for children, families, and staff. Coordinated activities include professional development on food/nutrition education, facility-based wellness councils and activities, and parent engagement.
City Blossoms	516 Kennedy St. NW	\$78,432.00	City Blossoms' Early Growers program will work with child development centers in DC to connect underserved children, ages 2-5, to garden-based programming and family-style dining experiences. City Blossoms will provide each center with 12 weeks of workshops, four garden excursions, four professional development trainings for educators, and three family celebrations. The program's Community Green Spaces will act as fresh-food hubs for child development centers that do not have access to gardens of their own. Over the course of this program, students will learn concepts such as composting, harvesting, and the importance of eating together.
CentroNia	1420 Columbia Road NW	\$58,066.00	CentroNia's "Start with the Stars" will work with staff and families in child development centers throughout the District to create or enhance the centers' wellness policies, cultivate healthy habits, and implement family-style dining. CentroNia will assist each center in implementing a staff wellness program that supports good nutrition, physical activity, stress management, and the formation of healthy habits. Early educators will receive extensive training and technical assistance, along with the necessary supplies, to implement family-style dining at the centers. CentroNia will also support each center in hosting family meal nights to introduce parents and guardians to the impact of family-style dining on children's health and wellness
Community Foodworks	1380 Monroe St. NW	\$98,867.93	Community Foodworks brings fresh, local food to child care facilities through an innovative model that aggregates and delivers directly from farmers markets. The program avoids significant barriers that otherwise prevent child care sites from accessing local food, while also enabling them to take advantage of an additional reimbursement rate of 5 cents per child, per day. Participating institutions receive a weekly delivery of five local produce items to serve Monday-Friday.
Good Karma Enterprises	13 Ingate Terrace, Baltimore, MD	\$70,193.00	The Center for Social Emotional Wellness will implement the Healthy Teachers-Healthy Tots Program to enrich the physical, mental, emotional, and occupational well-being of child development center employees in wards 5, 7 and 8. Teachers will participate in a staff program that includes wellness workshops, challenges and an online employee wellness portal that is designed to reduce the stress levels and promote improved well-being among employees. The project will also address child wellness through a yoga program designed to help infants, toddlers, and preschoolers explore movement milestones, gain

			confidence, build strength and fitness, and learn a tool for self-regulation. Family wellness nights will also set the foundation for a healthy lifestyle.
Washington Tennis & Education	200 Stoddert Place SE	\$57,383.00	Located in Ward 7, the Washington Tennis & Education Foundation's Tiny Tennis Tots program proposes to enhance its early childhood tennis instruction program for 10 eligible Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) child care agencies with wellness and nutrition education. The foundation will serve 130 preschool students at 10 centers with 60 to 90 minutes of physical activity weekly and 30 minutes of wellness and nutrition education weekly throughout the year.

\*Note: Total amount available was \$500,000. Maximum amount awarded was \$100,000 as stipulated in the Healthy Tots Wellness Grant Program request for applications (RFA) released Dec. 4, 2017.

The Healthy Tots Act of 2014, which went into effect Feb. 26, 2015, builds on the success of the DC Healthy Schools Act by extending many of its key nutrition, physical activity and wellness provisions to child development facilities, which helps level the playing field between community- and school-based providers. The act aims to reduce obesity and improve the health, wellness, and nutritional status of the more than 6,000 children enrolled in community-based child care and family daycare homes in the District of Columbia through healthy meals, physical activity, and nutrition education.

In addition to providing reimbursements for facilities to serve more nutritious meals, the act requires OSSE to make competitive grants available to support child care facilities in the dissemination of healthy eating, physical activity, and wellness education initiatives in the District of Columbia early child care community.

For more information on the Fiscal Year 2018 Healthy Tots Wellness Grant, [visit OSSE's website](#).