

**Governors' summit promotes aligned efforts for children**  
*New report offers strategies for preventing childhood obesity*

Against the backdrop of federal action on pending early childhood learning legislation, state teams are being formed to develop a coordinated policy agenda among early childhood education and health and human services systems that would promote more positive outcomes for American children.

During a Sept. 16-18 summit held by the [National Governors Association](#) 's [Center for Best Practices](#) designed to jump-start the process, governors from almost 40 states participated in discussions about the challenges children face to their long-term academic and health success. Experts say that many hardships experienced by children are brought on by economic factors, as well as a lack of access to high-quality early learning and health opportunities.

"Children's future success is influenced by a variety of interrelated factors at an early age," **NGA Chairman and Vermont Gov. Jim Douglas** said during the summit on Wednesday.

"Given the current economic climate, state initiatives that foster high-quality early childhood programs and children's health and welfare are even more critical to addressing these factors and ensuring that all kids are equipped to lead healthy, productive lives," Douglas said.

Participants focused on issues such as the convergence of state efforts to improve child outcomes, integrating public services across state systems, and creating a comprehensive state children's policy agenda. Organizers said the summit goals were to help states:

- Understand the links among economic status, health, and early care and education that affect a child's lifetime success.
- Explore how public expenditures can be coordinated to improve efficiency and accountability across state systems.
- Identify strategies to enhance the operational alignment among states agencies, initiatives and desired outcomes.
- Learn about strategies that demonstrate high returns for individuals, families and states.

**Obesity strategies**

Also during the summit, the NGA Center's Health Division released a new report, [Shaping a Healthier Generation: Successful State Strategies to Prevent Childhood Obesity](#), which looks at what states are doing to prevent obesity and how to encourage kids to eat healthier and be more active in child care, school, community and health care settings.

The report outlines three key strategies designed to help prevent childhood obesity. States should:

1. Set a vision and build public awareness for obesity-prevention programs.
2. Coordinate state agencies' obesity-prevention efforts through governance structures.
3. Collect data on children's health to better address their needs.

The NGA Center offers numerous resources that can help states address issues that impact children in education, health and social areas as they work to develop policy agendas.