

Family child care home providers with high diet self-efficacy are better equipped to manage stress

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Building family child care home providers' (FCCH) self-efficacy—an individual's belief in their ability to manage their situation—for healthy eating is an important component of health promotion and can buffer the impact of stress on their diet quality, according to a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*.

"The FCCH provider is an important source of child care in this country. A lot of families from lower-income environments use the FCCH because of its affordability and location," said Dianne Ward, EdD, of the Department of Nutrition, Gillings School of Global Public Health, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, U.S..

FCCH providers can experience multiple stressors including [work-life balance](#), lack of social support from other early care and education professionals, and difficulties managing all aspects of both child care and [business operations](#), often with little to no assistance.

To understand the potential determinants of the

health of FCCH providers, a group at risk for high stress, poor sleep, and obesity, researchers examined stress levels, sleep quality, and [diet](#) self-efficacy of 166 licensed FCCH providers over the age of 18 from central North Carolina.

The study's results showed diet self-efficacy moderating the FCCH provider stress-diet quality relationship. When stress was low, diet quality was similar among individuals across all levels of diet self-efficacy. With higher stress, those with high diet self-efficacy seem to cope with the stress and have a better diet quality. In contrast, those with low diet self-efficacy seem to be negatively affected by [stress](#) and have a poorer [diet quality](#).

"As nutrition professionals, we often get caught up in telling people what to eat. We need to remember to facilitate the how to eat. We need to give people the confidence that they can select, consume, and obtain the right food, and that if they do, they can have a healthy diet. The study underscored how important diet self-efficacy really is," noted Dr. Ward.

More information: "Self-Efficacy for Healthy Eating Moderates the Impact of Stress on Diet Quality Among Family Child Care Home Providers," *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (2021). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2021.01.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2021.01.005)

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