

## **PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHY**

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Sara Benjamin, PhD, MPH, RD is a research fellow in the Obesity Prevention Program in the Department of Population Medicine at Harvard Medical School. Her current research focuses on policy and environmental approaches to obesity prevention in early childhood. In addition, her work includes longitudinal analyses examining early childhood predictors of later obesity.

Current projects include a state-by-state comparison of regulations related to healthy eating and physical activity for child care facilities. She has published a series of papers summarizing these results and is now providing consultation to states planning to improve their state regulations. This fall she is also completing an evaluation study of a new regulation in Massachusetts requiring 60 minutes of daily physical activity for all children in child care centers, using Rhode Island as the comparison state.

Prior to joining the Obesity Prevention Program at Harvard Medical School, she helped develop and test a novel nutrition and physical activity environmental intervention to promote healthy weight in young children in child care. Since that time, she has provided training and consultation to more than 250 health professionals in over 15 states implementing nutrition and physical activity interventions for preschool-aged children.

Her previous experience as a nutritionist for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and the Head Start Program helped prepare her for a career in early childhood nutrition education and research.