Obesity Prevention in SNAP-Ed: Lessons Learned from Working with Elementary Schools and Child Care Centers

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The innovative program model improves student fitness, health knowledge and behaviors, while providing teachers and staff with the training and resources necessary to continue sustainable improvements on their own.
Multi-year Program Results

Service Delivery:
2,762 hours of HealthMPowers Services

Improved School Environment:
45,753 hours of school-delivered nutrition & physical activity instruction using HealthMPowers resources

Improved Behavior:
87% of students improved nutrition and physical activity behaviors

Improved Health Outcomes:
- 69% improved PACER
- 78% maintained or improved BMI percentile
HealthMPowers’ Program Model

Elementary School
- School Team
- 3 year MOU with HMP
- Assessments
- Improvement Plans
- 3 Team Trainings/year
- Nutrition/PA Resources
- On-site whole school event
- Model lessons
- Technical Assistance
- Family Events and Services

Child Care
- Center Team
- 3 year MOU with HMP
- Assessments
- Improvement Plans
- 3 Team Trainings/year
- Model Lessons
- Nutrition/PA Resources
- Technical Assistance
- Family Events
1. Lessons learned:
A whole school approach facilitates changes in programming, policies, systems and the environment
1. Translating a whole school approach to child care settings:

- Varied environments (center vs family day care homes)
- Greater focus on families
- Recognize high turnover for staff
- Recognize varied attendance for children
2. Lessons Learned:
Recognize what is important to schools.

Use Education Sectors’ Goals:

- Reduce absenteeism
- Reduce tardiness
- Improve comportment
- Improve time on task
- Improve concentration
- Improve achievement

Health benefits are a bonus benefit!
2. Translating what is important to schools to child care settings:

- Centers recognize that nutrition and physical activity are part of early childhood growth and development.
- Align with existing assessments/requirements
- Integrate nutrition and physical activity with learning standards.
- Consider “fundamental movement skills” in addition to time being physically active.
3. Lessons Learned:
Use data to drive programming, policy, system and environmental changes.

Individual School Report
- Student knowledge, behaviors, fitness
- School Health Index Results- for policy and environmental changes

Comparison Data
3. Translating **use of data to drive practice in child care settings**:

- Use of Georgia Nutrition and Physical Activity Assessment and rubrics to drive progress tracking
- Development of a quality improvement process with an evaluation logic model and continuous feedback
4. Lessons Learned:
Ongoing professional development and support is critical

- School team training 2-3 times/year
- School staff training during faculty or grade level meetings
- Personalized technical assistance as needed
- Distance learning
4. Translating professional development and support to child care settings:

- Align to staff credentialing and center rating
  - CEU’s are critical
- Provide training when it is most convenient for staff – weekends, evenings
- Assume less team meeting or training time
- Build training into their work day
  - Model lessons – and de-briefings during nap time
5. Lessons Learned:
Policy and environmental changes result in sustainable change.

Sample policy changes:
- Physical activity breaks provided to all students 2-4 times/day
- School Health Team solicits and uses annual school health data to improve school health programming
- School store and fundraisers prohibited from selling less healthy foods (Smart Snack Guidelines)
- Daily recess is provided for all students and may not be taken away as a disciplinary action.
5. Translating policy and environmental changes to child care settings:

Growing Fit: Wellness Policy Tool Kit

- Assessment
- Build Plan
- Create Policy

https://dph.georgia.gov/early-care-providers