

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies!

University of Minnesota Extension

Overview

Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies (Go Wild) is a nutrition education program designed to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables and increase physical activity through direct education and PSE level intervention. Go Wild can be used in curriculum for 3rd through 5th grade, and the social-ecological model to most effectively influence food and physical activity behaviors. Direct education to students consists of seven 45-60 minutes lessons. The intervention uses a multi-level approach to effect the individual child, family, and school environment to make healthy choices. At the school food service level, many school sites have adopted the Smarter Lunchroom Movement, which addresses environmental barriers to healthy eating in school dining halls and kitchens. Additional classroom activities reinforce nutrition messages between scheduled classroom lessons. Throughout the program, animal characters are used to reinforce key nutrition concepts and drive the theme of the lesson. To get children engaged, children learn about the featured animal in the introduction to the lesson. Animal characters are used to market the program in the cafeteria (posters and animal tracks) and on take home materials. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Reducing Screen Time **Intervention Type:** Direct Education, PSE Change

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Go Wild was designed for 3rd to 5th grade students in a school or after school setting. From 2017 to 2019, 103 schools have implemented the intervention in Minnesota, reaching 7,453 students. The program is now available for schools to use in a train the trainer model that was developed this past year. We recommend SNAP-Ed staff provide technical assistance to help schools with PSE efforts and to ensure the taste testing component is completed. **Setting:** School (Learn) **Target Audience:** Elementary School, Parents/Mothers/Fathers **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

The Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies program contains seven classroom lessons designed to increase intake of fruits and vegetables and physical activity among 3rd-5th grade children. The program includes one animal character into each lesson. The character was developed to reinforce nutrition and physical activity concepts and PSE and marketing interventions. Critical to program success is the exposure and tasting experiences of fruits and vegetables. Because it is more difficult to change vegetable intake, educators should offer more vegetables

than fruit. The program is supported with PSE opportunities for school food service personnel, teachers and family members. Newsletters and family challenges encourage family participation by providing discussion questions based on what the child has learned as well as a specific challenge.

Intervention Materials

Materials that are part of the curriculum package include:

- Seven 45 - 60 minute lessons:
 - An introductory lesson
 - Five lessons that focus on different color groups of fruits and vegetables
 - A celebratory/summary lesson
- Teacher Activity Resource
- School Cafeteria Promotion Resource
- Family Newsletter/Go Wild Challenges (In English and Spanish)
- Posters
- Go Wild! Eat Colors! Song

Intervention Costs

Copies of the curriculum are available to be purchased online for \$89.95. The flip books can be printed for about \$50.00 per set, otherwise the flip books presentations are included in the curriculum.

Evidence Summary

Research findings of the Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies intervention found that: The curriculum encourages kids to eat more fruits and vegetables and be more physically active. Classroom nutrition education combined with fruit and vegetable taste testing improves children's dietary intake for fruits and vegetables. During the impact study, program results showed an increase in children's fruit intake over a one year period. Parents reported a propensity for their children to try new foods (48% respondents) and that there was a ripple effect in which food-related habits were changed for members of the family (32% respondents). Common themes from parental surveys included that children were more willing to try new foods at home (48%). Parents also appreciated their children's willingness to try new foods because it would not be as financially risky to buy foods they had not eaten before. There was a positive ripple effect on the family. Parents reported that their children's participation in the Go Wild program positively affected other family members' food related habits, such as encouraging gardening or helping with food preparation. Other effects on family members included changes in food selection and increased willingness to try new foods. A total of 32% of respondents said the program had influenced more people than just the children in their family.

- [Go Wild with Fruits & Veggies! Curriculum Encourages Children to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables](#)
- [Results of an Impact Evaluation of a School Nutrition Education Program](#)
- [Go Wild with Fruits and Veggies: Engaging Children in Nutrition Education and Physical Activity with Animal Characters](#)

- [Classroom Nutrition Education Combined With Fruit and Vegetable Taste Testing Improves Children’s Dietary Intake](#)

Evidence-based Approach: Research-tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

	Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)	Changes – Medium Term (MT)	Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual		MT1 , MT3	LT1	
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence				

- MT1c,d: Tried more fruits and vegetables (n=1,054, 82%)
- MT1c,d: Consumed more fruit (n=925, 72%) and more vegetables (n= 732, 57%)
- MT3b: Exercised more (n=1,015, 79%)
- LT1l: One year after the intervention, fruit consumption continued to increase as measured in cups. Girls reported eating more fruit than boys.

Evaluation Materials

A pre and post questionnaire can be administered to participants to assess fruit intake, vegetable intake, attitudes about trying fruits and vegetables, intake of fruits and vegetables through the school lunch program, and consumption of sugar sweetened beverages. A parent survey was used during the impact study.

Additional Information

Website: The Go Wild [website](#) includes a detailed description of the intervention as well as sample materials and information on how to purchase the intervention package. **Contact Person:** Sara Van Offelen – Regional Coordinator 218-236-2007 vanof001@umn.edu *Updated as of August 29, 2023