

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do It! (MEND)

Healthy Weight Partnership Inc.

Overview

Mind, Exercise, Nutrition...Do it! (MEND) program is a direct education intervention designed to manage overweight, obesity in children 2-13 years old and their families by improving health, fitness, and self-esteem. The MEND programs combine physical activity, healthy eating, and behavior change to facilitate safe, effective weight management and lasting changes in lifestyle. Programs run for 10 weeks and the child and at least one parent or primary caregiver must attend. MEND programs help families in the following areas:

- Mind – improving children’s self-esteem and supporting families to change their behaviors around eating and activity
- Exercise – engaging in regular physical activity that is fun
- Nutrition – learning about good nutrition and healthy eating
- Do it! – taking action to make healthy lifestyle changes long term

The newest program, Healthy Together, for children ages 6–13 years and their families, is based on MEND 7-13 but with simplified delivery and focus on critical content. Healthy Together can be delivered by one person and is ideal for smaller groups and spaces. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity and Reducing Screen Time
Intervention Type: Direct Education

Intervention Reach and Adoption

MEND programs target children ages 2–13 who have or are at risk of developing overweight or obesity and their families. The programs are offered in communities, using local facilities such as recreation centers, healthcare settings (FQHC networks), schools, YMCAs, and other suitable locations that have safe and adequate facilities. MEND has run in 7 countries and with a variety of funding mechanisms, now including reimbursement models. MEND reports that over 130,000 people have been served to date. MEND has been primarily delivered to low-income audiences in California, Colorado, Texas, Illinois, Mississippi, Florida, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Washington, D.C. **Setting:** Community, Early childcare and education, Faith-based, Healthcare, Schools, USDA program sites (not National School Lunch Program), Parks

and recreation, Gyms **Target Audience:** Preschool (<5 years), Elementary School, Middle School, Parents/Mothers/Fathers **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

MEND 7–13 includes material for meeting twice a week for 10 weeks (46 curriculum hours, including 17 hours of physical activity material) and maintenance support for up to 2 years. This program includes one-hour family sessions on nutrition, behavioral topics including building a healthy meal, fats/sugars, label reading, eating out, one-hour parent sessions including setting goals /rewards, role modeling healthy behaviors, being an active family, and one-hour children exercise at the same time as parent session. MEND 2–5 includes material for a meeting once a week for 10 weeks. Each 90-minute weekly session includes 30 minutes active play session for children and parents/caregivers, 15 minutes of snack time material for children and parents/caregivers and 45 minutes of parent/caregiver group materials. Healthy Together, a modular program for kids 6-13, includes material for a meeting once a week for 10 weeks. Three modules cover 10 one-hour families' sessions nutrition and behavioral topics, 10 one-hour parents' sessions including setting goals/rewards, role modeling healthy behaviors, being an active family, and 10 one-hour physical activity sessions including a variety of activities (optional).

Intervention Materials

MEND programs include intervention materials for leaders and coaches to deliver programs. All programs include:

- Comprehensive leaders/coaches' manuals
- Leaders kit with resources and demonstration materials
- Family learning materials include engaging materials and resources for children and their parents, handbooks (available in English and Spanish) to reinforce learnings.

Information on materials can be found at [the MEND website](#).

Intervention Costs

The MEND 7-13 program is \$215 per child (first order \$4,888 minimum + training). The MEND 2-5 program is \$215 per child (first order \$3,349 minimum + training). The Healthy Together program is a \$99/month subscription + materials (first order \$1300 minimum).

Evidence Summary

Interventions are evaluated pre- and post-program data using validated anthropometric measurements and psychosocial questionnaires. Children who received the MEND 7-13 program showed reduced BMI and waist circumference. Additional health and psychosocial benefits included increased physical activity levels and cardiovascular fitness, reduced sedentary behaviors, improved dietary intake, and raised self-esteem and body image. MEND is an evidence-based intervention with over 35 peer-reviewed scientific publications

demonstrating a wide range of positive program outcomes. For example, a randomized [controlled trial of the MEND 7–13 program](#) found:

- At 6 months, there was a significant decrease in waist circumference and BMI z-scores, along with improvements in recovery heart rate, physical activity levels, sedentary levels and global self-esteem in the intervention compared to the control group.
- At 12 months, there was a significant decrease in waist circumference and BMI z-scores, and improvements in recovery heart rate, physical activity levels, and self-esteem were sustained.

A comprehensive list of peer-reviewed publications on MEND can be found at [this website](#). **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	ST1 , ST3	MT1 , MT3	LT1 , LT3	
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence				

- ST1: Learning about good nutrition and healthy eating
- ST3: Engaging in regular physical activity and reduced sedentary and screen time
- MT1: Learning about good nutrition and healthy eating/supporting families to change their behaviors around eating and activity
- MT3 Engaging in regular physical activity and reduced sedentary and screen time
- LT1: Learning about good nutrition and health eating/supporting families to change their behaviors around eating and activity

Evaluation Materials

MEND uses the secure, proprietary web-based OMMS system to collect and analyze pre- and post-program outcome data, track operational metrics such as attendance and drop-outs, and produce reports for both families and organizations. A range of physical and mental health outcomes and risk factor data are collected, including anthropometric measurements, dietary and physical activity behavioral risk factors, and psychological data such as quality of life and self-esteem.

Additional Information

Website: The [MEND website](#) includes information about the different programs, research, partners, testimonials, and press coverage. **Contact Person:** Teresa Earle – Partnership Director Healthy Weight Partnership Inc. 818-879-0493 info@healthyweightpartnership.org