Shaping Healthy Choices Program (SHCP)

University of California, Davis, Department of Nutrition, Center for Nutrition in Schools

Overview

The Shaping Healthy Choices Program (SHCP) is a direct education and PSE change intervention designed to improve children’s health through a school-based, multicomponent approach. The program consists of 4 components: 1) Nutrition Education and Promotion, 2) Family and community partnerships, 3) Foods available on the school campus, and 4) School wellness policy. Program activities include nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, family newsletters, instructional school garden, salad bar, regional produce, school-site wellness committees, and community health fairs. Activities and programs were designed to operate on multiple levels of the Social Ecological Model (SEM) framework, integrated principles from Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), and a program evaluation was conducted. The goal of the program is to improve child diet and physical activity behaviors to prevent obesity. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating, Physical Activity **Intervention Type:** Direct Education, PSE Change

Intervention Reach and Adoption

SHCP targets children in schools. Specifically, the Shaping Healthy Choices Program team implemented the intervention in 4 elementary schools in 2 counties in California over 4-years. **Setting:** School **Target Audience:** Elementary School **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

SHCP includes 4 primary components: 1) Nutrition Education and Promotion, 2) Family and community partnerships, 3) Foods available on the school campus, and 4) School wellness policy.* Descriptions of each program component are provided below. These intervention components provide comprehensive, evidence-
based strategies for improving child health and preventing obesity. Program activities include nutrition education, cooking demonstrations, family newsletters, instructional school garden, salad bar, regional produce, school-site wellness committees, and community health fairs. SHCP integrates principles from Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and the Social Ecological Model (SEM) framework. SHCP components targeted the following SCT constructs: 1) reciprocal determinism, 2) outcome expectations, 3) behavioral capability, 4) self-efficacy, and 5) reinforcements. The interaction of factors across multiple levels of the school community was emphasized using the SEM.

- **Nutrition education and promotion**: Development and implementation of a nutrition education curriculum (Discovering Healthy Choices, adapted from the Nutrition to Grow curriculum), cooking demonstrations (Cooking Up Healthy Choices), and instructional school gardens.
- **Family and community partnerships**: Using promotional and reinforcing materials like family newsletters. Newsletters (Teaming Up for Families) had 8 lessons to reinforce SCHP components, and at least 1 health fair was held at each intervention school.
- **Foods available on school campus**: Increasing healthy foods available in schools by creating/promoting salad bars and sourcing local, healthy foods to include on menus.
- **School wellness policy**: Establish a school wellness committee including school staff, parents, and community members to guide program planning, implementation, and sustainability.

*It should be noted that the Best Practices manual indicates the 4 program components above, while the Methods publication indicates an additional component: Supporting Regional Agriculture.*

### Intervention Materials

- **Cooking Up Health Choices Curriculum**: [http://cns.ucdavis.edu/content/shcp/cooking/cooking_up_healthy_choices.pdf](http://cns.ucdavis.edu/content/shcp/cooking/cooking_up_healthy_choices.pdf)

### Evidence Summary

As stated in the Best Practices manual, “Data analyses showed an increase in student nutrition knowledge and physical activity, improvement in student dietary behaviors, and a decrease in Body Mass Index Percentile.” Additionally, the following potential benefits for children and schools are presented in the Best Practices Guide:

**Potential Benefits for Students**

- Increases nutrition knowledge and use of critical thinking skills
- Improves dietary patterns and physical activity
- Improves overall health

**Potential Benefits for Schools**

- Helps fulfill federally mandated district wellness policies
- Adheres to Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Science Standards
Assists with the fulfillment of HealthierUS School Challenge requirements

Additional Publications and Reports:


Classification: Research-tested

Evaluation Indicators

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

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<th>Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)</th>
<th>Changes – Medium Term (MT)</th>
<th>Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)</th>
<th>Population Results (R)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>ST1, ST3</td>
<td>MT1, MT2</td>
<td>LT1, LT3</td>
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<td>Environmental Settings</td>
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<td>MT5, MT6</td>
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<td>Sectors of Influence</td>
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<td>MT9</td>
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Evaluation Materials

Nutrition knowledge was assessed using a validated 35-point questionnaire and a validated Test of Basic Science Process Skills was used to examine science process skills. A vegetable preference assessment, a plate waste analysis, and a block food frequency questionnaire were all used to assess various aspects of dietary intake. A physical activity assessment, child anthropometrics, and parent questionnaires were collected and various measures were used to assess local produce procurement. Finally, the School and Community Actions for Nutrition Survey was used to evaluate various aspects of the school environment, including policies and partnerships. Citations for all the evaluations measures are available in the methods paper listed in the evidence summary.

Additional Information

Website: The Shaping Healthy Choices Program website http://cns.ucdavis.edu/programs/shcp/index.html
includes an overview of the SHCP as well as links to the best practices guide, curriculum, cooking demonstrations, family newsletters and SHCP news Contact Person(s): Sheri Zidenberg-Cherr Email: sazidenbergcherr@ucdavis.edu Rachel Scherr Email: rescherr@ucdavis.edu

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