

Summit County

Intergenerations CATCH Some Fun

Summary

In an effort to combat the increasing risk of chronic disease in children, Summit County's Creating Healthy Communities (CHC) program hosted a workshop to educate child care centers, after-school programs, and summer enrichment programs on the importance of incorporating healthy eating and physical activity into their daily curriculum. As a result of the training, three local centers have incorporated strategies to help children have fun while exercising and making healthy food choices.



Challenge

Childhood obesity has tripled during the past 30 years. Children who are overweight are more likely to be overweight as adults and have a 4-in-5 chance of becoming obese. Obesity contributes to preventable chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and heart disease. Children who are obese are at risk of developing these conditions in adulthood.

The Department of Health and Human Services Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommends that children and adolescents get 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Sedentary behavior is attributed to increased screen time (TV, computer and video games) and contributes to the decrease in physical activity, which increases the risk of obesity. Studies have shown that an increasing number of children are less active than what health experts recommend, and that characteristics of the childcare environment have been observed to be associated with decreased physical activity in children.

Solution

Summit County's Creating Healthy Communities program hosted an all-day workshop on the evidence-based program Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) Kids Club to educate child care providers on the importance of incorporating physical activity and healthy eating into their daily curriculum.

CATCH Kids Club (CKC) is specifically designed for after-school and summer youth programs for children in grades K-8. The overall goal of the program is to instill long-term behavior changes in children, subsequently decreasing the risk of becoming obese or developing a chronic disease.

Your Involvement is Key

A recent study shows that kids who are physically active achieve better grades.

- Be a role model. Rather than send children out to play, join them!
- Look for activities that are fun, include all participants, and increase heart rate

Ask if your pre-school, school, after-school program or community center has a policy that:

- Limits sugar-sweetened beverages
- Serves healthy meals and snacks
- Requires daily physical activity

Ask for CATCH Kids Club in your community!
Visit www.catchinfo.org for details.



To help get started with these initiatives, three participating after-school centers received CKC supplies including balls, hoops, a parachute, bean bags, a blender, an electric skillet, and measuring utensils.

Results

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) hosted a 90-minute program for six weeks. Seventeen residents from three generations learned the importance of healthy eating and physical activity. The program is now being expanded to include Shopping Matters, a grocery store tour conducted for low-income adults by non-profit groups.

At another center, Kidspace, 17 K-6th graders are now participating in more teacher-initiated physical activities and pre-school teachers have included dancing in their daily curriculum for 20 students. Fresh fruit smoothies are served and lesson plans allow children to make their own lunch from menus that include more fresh produce, whole grains and 1% milk. Cooking is next!

The CKC also enhanced the Akron Urban League's summer youth program. The 10-week camp runs from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. daily where 95 (5–12 year old) campers rotate between 45-minute academic classes, life skills, art, dance and physical education. As a result of the CKC program, an additional 30 minutes of physical activity has been added, 1% milk is served, and salsa with baked tortilla chips is a new snack favorite.

“I was very pleased to see such positive interaction between the youth and the older adults. It seems the adults were every bit as interested and involved in the program as the kids.”

- Inese Alvarez, Retired and Senior Volunteer Program Director, CATCH trainee

Future Directions

This serves as a call to action to make physical activity and healthy food choices a priority with healthy weight and lowered risk of preventable chronic disease as one of the outcomes.

By promoting healthy eating and physical activity in child care, school, after-school, and community settings, a healthy environment is established. Adopting obesity prevention policies and/or guidelines will be encouraged once trainees have the opportunity to review the effectiveness of the CKC program in their centers.

These policies and/or guidelines can include:

- An increase of physical activity in lesson plans
- Serving healthy foods like fruit and vegetables for snacks and celebrations
- Water as the beverage of choice rather than sugar-sweetened drinks
- Menus that contain whole grains, low-fat dairy and fresh produce

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