

Child Care Physical Activity Intervention

Progress report: January 2011 – June 2011

Prepared for Brown-Nicollet Community Health Board as part of their SHIP evaluation

Brown-Nicollet Community Health Board (CHB) is working with child care centers in their service area to implement policies and practices that support improved and increased physical activity. The project is part of a larger effort by Brown-Nicollet CHB, which is funded by the Minnesota Department of Health Statewide Health Improvement Program (SHIP).

This report provides a snapshot of progress from January through June 2011. Results of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) from Brown County and Nicollet County home day care providers, who participated in the Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) trainings, were used to complete this report. New Ulm and St. Peter ECFE provided resources to home day cares for improving the physical activity environment and completed follow-up visits for ongoing support. This report was prepared by Wilder Research.

Reach

Brown-Nicollet SHIP is working with 30 out of 115 licensed home day cares in Brown County, or 26 percent. In Nicollet County, this intervention is currently reaching 15 out of 91 licensed home day cares in Nicollet County, or 16 percent. In Nicollet County, the intervention has focused on providing training to three School Readiness pre-school programs as well. The reach of this intervention is approximately 510 children, which is 15 percent of the child care-age population in Brown and Nicollet Counties.

Activities

From January 2011 through June 2011, SHIP staff continued to conduct follow-up NAP SACC assessments with participating child care providers that looked at the amount and quality of physical activity opportunities offered to children. Assessments were completed at three different points in time by providers who participated in the SHIP funded training. The assessments measured changes in child care centers' physical activity environment over the course of the intervention. (See Figure 1).

1. NAP SACC assessment administration

County	Baseline	First follow-up	Final follow-up
Brown County	June 2010	August 2010	January 2011
Nicollet County	October 2010	November 2010	June 2011

Among Brown County providers, those who provide teacher-led physical activities at least once per day increased from less than half (47%) at the baseline to about 90 percent of providers at the final follow-up. At the final follow-up, Nicollet County respondents reported providing more active play time for children than at the baseline.

As of January 2011, physical activity-related workshops, activities, and take home materials intended for parent education were offered at least once per year by 45 percent of participating Nicollet County child care centers.

At baseline, 7 out of 8 Nicollet County provider respondents said that staff training opportunities on physical activity are offered *less than* once per year. At the final follow-up, however, 2 of the 5 respondents said that trainings are offered once per year.

Policy, systems, and environments

One of the goals of SHIP is to change policies, systems, and environments to make the healthy choice the easy choice. In the case of this Child Care Physical Activity Intervention, it means specifically changing policies, systems, and environments to create opportunities for physical activity among children, parents, and staff in child care facilities.

At the final follow-up, the majority (88%) of Brown County providers said that their center has a comprehensive physical activity policy. This is an improvement from the baseline assessment when well over half of providers did not have a formal policy.

For Nicollet County providers, all eight of those who completed the NAP SACC assessment reported having no physical activity policy. When asked again at the final follow-up, all of these said that they had a written physical activity policy that is available and followed. Only five providers responded at the final follow-up, three of which said they still have a written policy that is followed.

Another effective way to demonstrate support for an active lifestyle is by displaying posters, pictures, or books about physical activity throughout the center. Brown County providers who had materials displayed in most or all rooms increased from 10 percent at baseline to nearly 30 percent at the final follow-up.

Impact

According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, about one-quarter of U.S. children ages 2 to 5 are overweight or obese. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), almost 80 percent of children age five and younger whose mothers work are in child care for an average of 40 hours a week. With so many young children spending a large proportion of their week in child care, providers have an important role to play in ensuring children have ample opportunities for physical activity. In addition, reaching children at a young age provides a greater opportunity to prevent obesity.

Short-term outcomes of Brown-Nicollet SHIP's efforts to improve the physical activity environment in home day care centers include the following:

- Many participating home day care providers in Brown and Nicollet Counties developed written physical activity policies that are available and followed.
- Providers, particularly in Brown County, are encouraging active lifestyles through environmental displays of support for physical activity (e.g., posters, pictures, and books on physical activity).
- Training opportunities for staff, children, and parents are being provided more frequently to increase knowledge of physical activity.
- Active play time has increased in many of the home day care centers in both Brown and Nicollet Counties, giving children more opportunities for physical activity. Teacher-led physical activity has increased as well. This shows evidence of longer-term outcomes, including home day care centers making physical activity a priority throughout the day.

The goal Brown-Nicollet SHIP staff is to implement and improve physical activity opportunities in child care settings to ultimately have an effect on children's lifelong habits. Improved social norms and the environment in child care settings will also support physical activity. In the long-term, this has the potential to lead to an increased proportion of children and adults in Brown and Nicollet Counties who develop physical activity habits that promote a healthy weight.



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