



South Dakota Fit from the Start Initiative

Overview

The South Dakota CACFP agency under the South Dakota Department of Education, Health and Social Services and other partners have developed the Fit from the Start Initiative to improve nutrition and physical activity practice, policy and environment in child care facilities throughout South Dakota. The initiative aims to reduce childhood obesity and children's risk for developing obesity by encouraging a healthy child care environment through targeting child care providers. The initiative is designed to provide low-cost, no cost strategies and resources to child care providers to promote physical activity and healthy eating in children 2-5 years of age in their care. The Fit from the Start Initiative also seeks to educate child care providers about the importance of healthy living to support positive role modeling and their individual wellness. The initiative is primarily funded by a grant from the Wellmark Foundation.

Fit From the Start Components

- **Fit from the Start Training Program – Including Self-Assessment and Action Plan**
 - Assessment training adapted from the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC) program. The training provides strategies and resources for child care providers to self-assess and improve their child care facility's nutrition and physical activity practice, policy and environment
 - Training components include:
 - Preventing Childhood Obesity
 - Healthy Eating
 - Physical Activity
 - Nutrition and Physical Activity to Fit Busy Lifestyle
 - Participants receive:
 - South Dakota Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children Resource Cards
 - Healthy South Dakota incentives
 - Access to resources and equipment to support nutrition and physical activity
- **Healthy Kids for Childcare Providers**
 - A series of classes developed by the Sanford Children's Hospital that offers participants insight and materials to assist in combating childhood obesity.
 - Classes include:
 - Healthy Kids = Healthy Adults
 - Learning and Movement Go Together
 - Turn Off the Screen
 - Healthy Food Choices Matter
 - Participants receive:

- Games and Activities for children
 - Classroom Posters
 - Parent Messages
 - Home Connection Activities
 - Home Connection Posters
- **Technical assistance**
 - Reinforced training and kept track of how centers were doing
 - Provide support to individual child care programs in implementing and sustaining changes to their programs as per their chosen action plan goals.

Who is Involved

- This initiative was designed, implemented, and evaluated with the South Dakota Department of Health in partnership with the Department of Social Services, Early Childhood Enrichment (also known as Child Care Resource and Referral (CC R&R)), South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension, Department of Education Child & Adult Nutrition Program, Family Day Care Food Program Sponsors, and Sanford Children's Hospital– Growing Healthy.
- Early Childhood Enrichment (CC R&R) Training Specialists, Cooperative Extension Educators, and FDCFP Sponsors received training from the Department of Health and Sanford Children to conduct the Initiative with childcare providers.
- This initiative aligns with the state Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan priorities.

Funding for the Initiative

- *Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings* and accompanying *South Dakota Physical Activity and Healthy Snacks for Young Children* were adapted from Iowa materials using a USDA Team Nutrition grant and other funding.
- Funding for the Fit from the Start initiative was originally to be provided as a planned intervention with the Centers for Disease Control. South Dakota was not refunded by CDC in 2008. Funding was secured from the Wellmark Foundation and the state's Maternal and Child Health Block Grant.

Resources

Policies and Best Practices for Nutrition and Physical Activity in Early Childhood Settings and accompanying South Dakota Physical Activity and Healthy Snacks for Young Children can be found at:

http://www.frac.org/pdf/sd_policies_best_practices_nutrition_physical_activity_early_childhood_settings.pdf

South Dakota Physical Activities and Healthy Snacks for Young Children Resource Cards can be found at:

http://www.frac.org/pdf/sd_physical_activities_healthy_snacks_young_children.pdf

Overcoming Challenges

- Lost time making major changes in project because of funding changes
- There is a lot of turnover in childcare providers

Future

- Will contract with outside evaluator to conduct a follow-up survey which will measure behavioral change. Funding needs to be secured to continue the initiative beyond June 2010.

Contact Information

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