



Successfully Increasing Physical Activity in Early Childhood

Grantee: Supporting Families Together Association

Grant Title: Promoting Physical Activity in Child Care

Geographic Location: Statewide

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Dates: 7/1/2011–6/30/2015

Amount: \$388,148

Program: Community Academic Partnership Fund

The Challenge: Childhood obesity rates continue to reflect substantial health disparities with 43.9 percent of Native American children, 35.6 percent of Hispanic children and 23.5 percent of African American children being overweight. Children ages two to five are establishing eating habits and activity levels; therefore, this stage of development provides the ideal window of opportunity for developing foundations for physical activity and obesity prevention.

Project Goal: This project aimed to attain 120 minutes (half unstructured) of physical activity each day for toddlers and preschool children in 14 early care and education settings. The sites for the intervention were strategically chosen to include high proportions of children who are minorities or have lower socioeconomic status, including rural and urban communities. Providers received four hours of

training, which outlined evidence-based practices and policies, physical activity resources, equipment and curricula. Then they received individualized technical assistance, focusing, in part, on achieving parent engagement.

Results: Toddler and preschool children increased their average number of minutes of physical activity by 49 percent (see Figure 1). The project reached an average of 470 children each year. Additionally, 122 early care and education professionals were trained. These providers doubled the amount of teacher-led physical activities and included more intentional and planned activities. Providers also engaged parents in helping their children achieve physical fitness using strategies such as interactive activities during drop-off/pick-up and family fun nights with nutritious meals and physical activities.

The project sustained physical activity as sites with written activity policies of at least 60 minutes/day significantly increased. The project also collaborated

to influence statewide policy and licensing for early child care providers. Starting in 2017, Wisconsin's child care quality rating and improvement system will guide child care providers in offering 90 minutes of daily physical activity versus the previous 60-minute requirement.

Average Minutes of Physical Activity

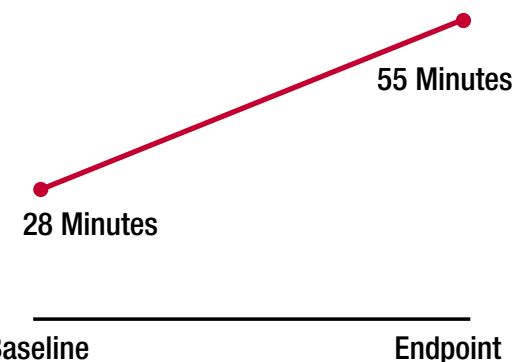


Figure 1. The average minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity from the beginning of the program to the end increased 49 percent.

