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PLUS Legacy Report

**a) Title:** Evidence Based Obesity Prevention in an Inner-City Elementary School

**b) Key Words:** obesity, metabolic syndrome, physical activity, screen time, sugar sweetened beverages, school based intervention

**c) Learning Objectives**

- 1) To determine which school based obesity prevention and intervention strategies have been proven to be successful
- 2) To learn how to develop a successful community partnership that addresses the pediatric obesity epidemic

**d) Project Objectives**

- 1) To increase physical activity, decrease screen time, and decrease consumption of sweetened beverages among 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders at Starr King Elementary School.
- 2) To empower teachers and parents to be agents for healthy change in the school community by engaging in evidence based practice.
- 3) To assist other schools and community groups interested in similar projects by documenting and reporting our outcomes and challenges.

**e) Activities**

- 1) Implementation of the S.M.A.R.T. curriculum on reducing screen time which has been demonstrated to lower rates of obesity
- 2) Parent newsletters in Spanish and English at a low literacy level to accompany each lesson
- 3) TV turn-off campaign for the 4th and 5th graders with incentives for participation
- 4) Performance by students of a no-TV skit for parents and the school community at a the school-wide winter assembly
- 5) Classroom lessons on the benefits of physical activity with opportunities to be active during the lesson
- 6) Creation of “Starr King Trekkers” a walking club at lunch with incentives for classes and individuals who participate

- 7) Collaboration with nearby recreation center to create an after school track program for students including an annual track meet for participants
- 8) Focus group with parents on barriers to accessing physical activity resources in the community
- 9) Campaign for enrolling all students in an organized physical activity program for the summer of 2010
- 10) Classroom lessons on decreasing sugar sweetened beverage consumption for 4th and 5th grade
- 11) Classroom lessons for the second graders on decreasing sugar sweetened beverage consumption taught by the 4th and 5th graders

**f) Outcomes**

- 1) Strong partnership between school nurse and pediatric resident
- 2) Obtained a resident CATCH grant
- 3) Teachers enthusiastic about intervention and expect continuation of the lessons
- 4) Intervention content evidence based
- 5) Increase physical activity opportunities during the school day
- 6) Some evidence that key messages are getting to parents and changing behaviors at home

Sample quotes from a parent survey regarding the screen time lessons:

“Es muy interesante, tambien porque Christian a estado haciendo otro tipo de actividades con su hermano mayor y ya esta bajando de peso.”

“Fue bueno porque, Ella misma nos motivaba para apagar la television y salir a la calle a jugar a saltar la cuerda, andar en bicicleta o jugar con la hula-hula.  
GRACIAS.”

“He can concentrate doing his homework. My son understand what is going on why we need to turn off the TV. He can finish it early. It's very helpful doing this screen time.”

“Please send me more information about screen time on how it could affect children.”

“I think that there should be more screen time lessons.”

- 7) Presentation of project at PAS in Vancouver
- 8) Addendums: PLUS noon conferences in R1, R2 and R3 year of residency, PLUS Grand Rounds presentation, PAS poster

#### **g) Lessons in Implementation**

- 1) Effective community partnerships require a champion in the community based organization.
- 2) School based health promotion efforts will reach the widest audience if they are incorporated into existing school activities that parents and students are already motivated to attend.
- 3) Teachers are enthusiastic about health promotion but have a limited ability to teach the health lessons themselves because of their numerous other responsibilities and a lack of para-professional support.
- 4) Parents of children in the target population were enthusiastic about receiving obesity prevention information from school and in many cases were not already aware of the key program messages.
- 5) Low-income minority parents in San Francisco have difficulty enrolling their children in organized physical activity programs.
- 6) Giving students the opportunity to teach what they have learned to their parents and to younger students increases their enthusiasm about health promotion messages.
- 7) Educating community partners on evidence-based practices can lead to more effective interventions and is an important contribution that pediatricians can make to community-based health interventions.

#### **h) Future Directions**

- 1) Reduce the number of classroom lessons to increase the feasibility of teachers teaching the lessons rather than the school nurse
- 2) Increase parent outreach efforts
- 3) Assist parents in finding and signing up their children for physical activity programs

- 4) Advocate at a systemic level to simplify the Parks and Rec enrollment process
- 5) Advocate at the level of the school district to use evidence based practice in the design of school based nutrition education

**i) Resources**

- 1) Bay Area Nutrition and Physical Activity Collaborative (BANPAC) has a helpful listserv with monthly newsletters about grant opportunities and local projects related to obesity treatment and prevention.

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- 2) San Francisco Childhood Obesity Task Force

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