

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SKAGIT CHILDCARE NUTRITION AND ACTIVITY PILOT (SNAP)

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In 2009, the Skagit County Healthy Communities Project (SCHCP) partnered with the Skagit Valley Hospital (SVH), Skagit Valley Family YMCA (SVY), United General Hospital (UGH) and Children of the Valley (COV) to implement the Skagit Childcare Nutrition and Activity Pilot (SNAP), utilizing the CATCH (Coordinated Approach to Child Health) Kids Club Program for kindergarten through fifth graders at 15 YMCA childcare sites and one faith-based childcare site in Skagit County. The purpose of this executive summary is to present a synopsis of the results of the pilot.

CATCH Baseline Fitness Test Results

The baseline BMI and fitness data demonstrate a need in the Skagit Valley community: 44% of the children are overweight or obese; 48% are borderline or need work on cardiovascular endurance; 67% are borderline or need work on hamstring flexibility. A smaller percentage of children (27% for pull-ups and 34% for curl-ups) are borderline or need work on muscular strength, although there is some question of tester error.

Depending on funding and feasibility, it is recommended that both fitness testing and BMI testing be conducted on an annual basis to assess the effectiveness of the program on these measures. To promote fidelity to the testing protocol and greater confidence in the results it is recommended that fitness professionals, or volunteers who receive more intensive training conduct future fitness tests.

CATCH Student Questionnaire

Prior to implementation of the CATCH program, students were asked to complete a questionnaire regarding their eating and physical activity behaviors and their knowledge of nutrition. In May, the children were asked to complete the survey again so that changes in behavior and knowledge after four months of participation in the CATCH program could be recorded.

The following is a summary of the knowledge and behavior changes from the initial questionnaire (time 1) to the final questionnaire (time 2) found to be statistically significant:

- The percentage of children who reported that they had no fruit the previous day was reduced from 13% to 9%; those who ate fruit three or more times increased from 19% to 29%.
- Those who reported watching one TV show or video during the week increased from 17% to 27%, whereas the number who watched three or more was reduced from 59% to 45%.
- The percentage of children who reported that they usually do not play video games on the weekend increased from 16% to 29%. Those who reported playing

less than one hour increased from 36% to 41%, while those who played video games one to two hours decreased from 34% to 17%.

- The percentage of children who correctly indicated that they should eat “at least 5” servings of fruits and vegetables each day increased from 34% to 55%.
- The percentage of children who reported that they “almost always or always” eat high fiber cereal increased from 13% to 29%; those who choose low fat or skim milk over regular milk increased from 35% to 51%; those who choose to cook baked potatoes over French fries increased from 66% to 81%.
- The percentage of children who thought “low fat or skim milk” was better for their health than “regular milk” increased from 45% to 73%.
- With respect to self-efficacy, the percentage of children who reported they were “very sure” they could drink low fat or skim milk instead of regular milk increased from 31% to 51%; the percentage of children who indicated they were “very sure” they had the ability to take the skin off of chicken and not eat the skin increased from 49% to 58%.

Limitations of the survey include the length of the survey and the exclusion of children below third grade or above fifth grade. Future recommendations include:

- Development of age appropriate surveys for children below third grade and above fifth grade;
- Use of a shorter version of the CATCH survey, if available;
- Administration of the survey in two sittings to avoid survey fatigue: the physical activity portion on one day and the nutrition portion on another day.

Finally, it is recommended that parents be given the opportunity to report on their experiences with the CATCH program – how it has impacted their children and their families.

Daily Log of Physical and Nutrition Activities

Instructors recorded the number of minutes of physical activity for each child, each day prior to the implementation of the CATCH program, and after. The average number of minutes of participation in physical activity increased from 17 minutes to 29 minutes, a 71% increase.

Prior to the CATCH program, children participated in no nutrition activities. Following implementation of the program, children participated in an average of 23 minutes of nutrition activities each day.

Instructor Survey

The sites identified 29 key leaders in the pilot sites. These CATCH instructors were asked to complete an online survey asking questions about their experience with the CATCH program. Twenty-five people completed the survey.

A majority of the instructors responded positively to both the physical activity and nutrition components of the CATCH before/after school program. They indicated that it was easy to use, adaptable and effective. However, a few individuals reported that the program was challenging in their setting.

Physical activity component

- Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that children who participate in CATCH are more active as a result of the program.
- Seventy-six percent (76%) of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that children enjoy the CATCH physical activities. However, three people disagreed.
- Some instructors found it challenging to teach the CATCH physical activities. Forty-eight percent (48%) said it was easy or very easy; thirty-two percent (32%) said it was moderately easy/difficult; five people (20%) indicated that it was either difficult or very difficult.
- Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the respondents said they would recommend the program to other before/after school programs; one person neither agreed nor disagreed; two people indicated that they would not recommend the program to others.

Nutrition component

- Fifty-four percent (54%) of the respondents indicated their belief that children in their programs have better eating habits specifically because of the CATCH program; forty-two percent (42%) were not certain; one person disagreed with the statement.
- A large majority of the respondents (88%) agreed or strongly agreed that the children enjoy the snacks they made using the CATCH nutrition program guidelines. One person strongly disagreed.
- Fifty-eight percent (58%) of the respondents indicated that it did not take them too much time to prepare the snacks; 29% neither agreed nor disagreed; 13% (3 people) reported that it did take too much of their time.
- Ninety-three percent (93%) agreed or strongly agreed that they would recommend the program to other before/after school programs; two people neither agreed nor disagreed; no respondents indicated that they would not recommend the program.

School's Out Washington, Quality Improvement Grant

On behalf of the Skagit Valley Family YMCA, the Skagit County Healthy Communities Project Coordinator applied for and was awarded a \$3000 fresh fruits and vegetable grant that was used to supplement the CATCH nutritious snack program at YMCA sites. The funds allowed staffs to more fully implement the nutritious snack portion of the CATCH program which emphasizes fresh fruits and vegetables.

A staff person gave this account: "Prior to implementing this program we had a child who refused to eat any vegetables. And the fruit he consumed was always processed. After exposure to new fruits and vegetables and creative ways of preparing them, he began to eat them and even requested them at home with his parents."

A parent gave testimony of his/her child's new enjoyment of vegetables: "I can hardly believe it, my child is asking for broccoli! She has never asked for vegetables. I couldn't even get her to try them. Now she is asking for them at home."