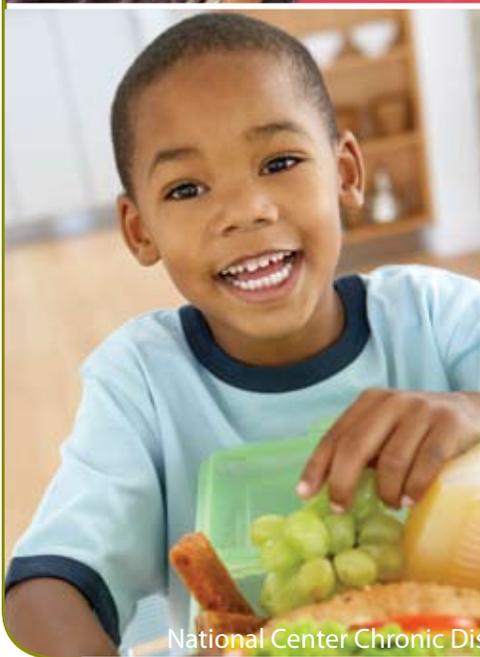


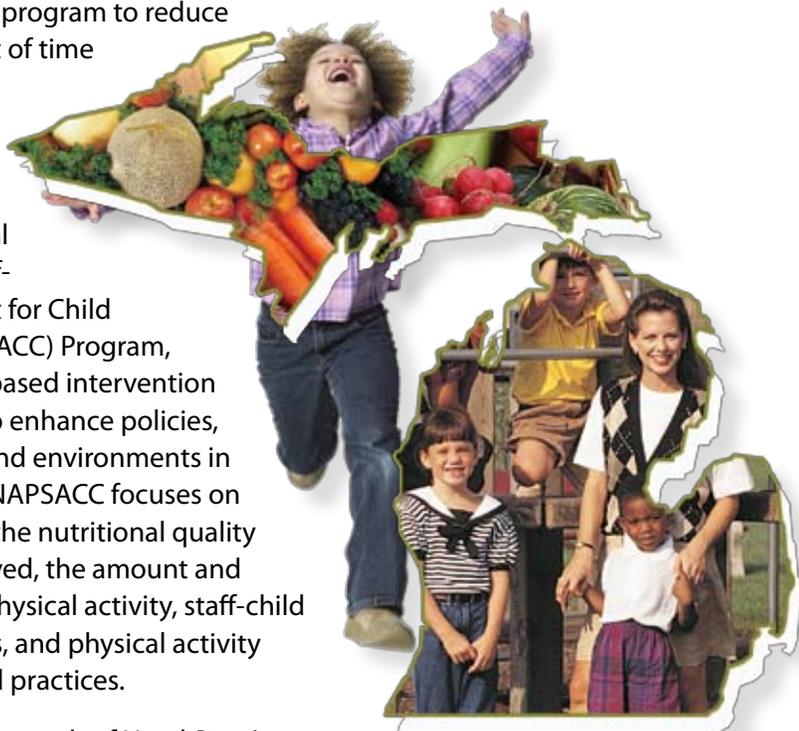
Stories from the Field: Michigan



Chronic Disease Prevention Gets a Head Start in Detroit

In Michigan, where according to 2007 data from the Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance System, nearly 30% of low-income children are either overweight or obese, a healthy start involves Head Start. Recognizing the opportunity to capitalize on existing obesity prevention programs, the Michigan Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity (NPAO) program partnered with the National Kidney Foundation of Michigan (NKFM) to reach preschool-aged Head Start children with evidence-based policy and environmental change interventions.

Specifically, the Michigan NPAO program provided training and technical assistance to NKFM and Head Start staff on implementing *Brocodile the Crocodile*, a program to reduce the amount of time kids spend watching TV, and the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) Program, a practice-based intervention designed to enhance policies, practices, and environments in child care. NAPSACC focuses on improving the nutritional quality of food served, the amount and quality of physical activity, staff-child interactions, and physical activity policies and practices.



Given the strength of Head Start's existing obesity prevention initiatives, the partnership between MDCH, NKFM, and Head Start sought to increase the following:

1. The number of state and local policies that support healthy eating and physical activity to reduce obesity among children in low-income communities
2. The number of policy and environmental supports and social and behavioral programs for healthy eating and physical activity targeting African Americans

All 12 Head Start centers in Detroit, Michigan, agreed to pilot NAPSACC, surpassing the original goal of 10 centers. More significantly, all 12 Head Start centers completed self-assessments, developed action plans, and have begun to make environment and policy changes regarding obesity prevention. Additionally, 11 of the 12 centers are piloting the *Brocodile the Crocodile* program to reduce time spent watching TV.

Importance of Early Success

The pilot program was built on hard-earned trust between key partners in disparate communities. It successfully forged unlikely partnerships and integrated chronic disease programs for maximum and long-term impact. Ultimately, this suite of creative health programs transformed the policies and environments affecting preschool-age children to help cultivate healthy lifestyles and potentially reduce children's risk of developing cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and certain kinds of cancer. As a result of the relationships established in the pilot program with 12 centers in the Detroit area, the program will expand next year to cover 40 sites.



Lessons Learned

- Earn the trust of child care center staff. It is an incredibly important process that takes time, understanding, and good will. Staff are rightly very protective of the children and families.
- Ensure Head Start staff see how the intervention will be worth staff time and make a positive difference for children.
- Ensure partnership stability by keeping in mind the perspective of Head Start staff when approaching them for collaboration. Provide support while allowing Head Start staff to determine their own needs and viable action plan.
- Consider how the program could be a burden on Head Start staff. Demands on their time are extensive, so getting buy-in to take on additional work related to health initiatives can be difficult. Take care to meet significant needs and integrate additions with existing programming.
- Build on existing programs and partnerships to add strength to strength. In Detroit, the NKFM already had a partnership with Head Start. NPAO built on that collaboration and also added the Michigan Department of Education.

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Resources:

NAPSACC
<http://www.center-trt.org>
Healthy Families Start with You
<http://www.nkfm.org/healthyfamilies>
Regie Rainbow Adventures
<http://www.kidney.org/site/306/eatrainbow.cfm?ch=306>

