Healthy Schoolhouse 2.0
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Goal
More than half of today's children will be obese by age 35 if current trends continue (RWJF, 2018).

The School Environment
Youth consume one-third to one-half of meals at school and specific food environment policies can influence dietary behaviors (Micha et al., 2018).

The Role of Teachers
A research study on middle school teachers by Snelling, Belson, & Young (2012) found:

- 94% believe teaching health education in schools is important
- 94% believe a student's health status can impact academic achievement
- 36% reported feeling prepared, empowered, or able to integrate health education into their current curricula

Project Overview
Goal: To improve health literacy and prevent obesity in elementary school students living in Washington, DC.

Background
Nearly 1 in 5 school-aged children and adolescents in the United States has obesity.

More than half of today's children will be obese by age 35 if current trends continue (RWJF, 2018).

Methods
During the 5-year intervention study, we are comparing the effects of The Healthy Schoolhouse 2.0 program between 4 experimental schools and 2 comparison schools:

- Student nutrition knowledge surveys and fruit and vegetable consumption
- Teacher participation, lesson implementation and feedback
- Teacher participation in extension activities

Year 1 Outcomes
- 51 nutrition lessons were taught during program implementation
- 42 teachers and school staff attended at least one or more of the Professional Development sessions
- An average of 142 students attended each Joyful Food Market
- 14 teachers participated in the Pedometer challenge

Nutrition Lessons Delivered in Classroom

PD Sessions

Student Nutrition Knowledge

(m=275)

Figure 1. There is a significant positive correlation between the number of PD sessions teachers attended and the number of lessons taught (r=0.233, p<0.05).

Figure 2. A significant difference was observed for student knowledge between pre- and post-assessment in students at the experimental school(E1) (t(124) = 7.1, p<0.001); as well as significant difference between the E1 and control school (C1) at post assessment (t(318) = 4.24, p<0.001).

- No changes were observed for teacher surveys related to self-efficacy and attitudes toward teaching nutrition

Lessons Learned
- Refinement of the Professional Development program for teachers later in mid-fall
- Early school and teacher engagement
- Focus on connection to personal health and wellbeing

Community Engagement

Joyful Food Markets (partnership with a local non-profit organization)

- Monthly farmer’s market at the school for students and families
- Distribution of fresh produce and non-perishable food items
- Cooking demonstrations and food tastings
- Interactive activities with students

Family Fitness Night (teacher-led initiative)

- After-school event with community partners for students, families and teachers
- Activities include: jump roping, dancing, produce taste tests, cooking demos, health screenings, and gardening demonstration

References

Contact

https://www.american.edu/cas/healthyschools/