



Childhood Obesity

Issue

Over the past decade, the percentage of those overweight has steadily increased in Oklahoma. As many as one in five Oklahoma children are at-risk of being overweight or obese; and two-thirds of adults are overweight or obese. Among children and adolescents, overweight increases the risk of type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease. The health of Oklahoma youth can be improved by increasing knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors related to food and physical activity. Overweight, obesity and associated health problems have a significant economic impact. The estimated annual cost of overweight and obesity in the United States is \$147 billion. Just a 10% sustained weight loss has been estimated to reduce an overweight person's lifetime medical costs by \$2,200 to \$5,300.

What Has Been Done

OrganWise Guys

This comprehensive school wellness program teaches healthy eating and physical activity habits to Pre-K through 5th grade students in low-income schools as designated by the Oklahoma State Department of Education Child Nutrition Program. The program promotes four basic preventative health habits: (1) maintaining a low-fat diet (2) consuming high fiber foods (3) drinking plenty of water and (4) engaging in regular physical activity.

Farm to You Exhibit

OCES programs targeting youth populations joined efforts with State agencies and agricultural commodity organizations to offer an interactive educational exhibit linking agriculture as the source of nutrient dense foods and role of these foods to health. The collaborating programs and agencies include OCES Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), OCES Community Nutrition Education Program (CNEP), OCES 4-H, OCES Ag in the Classroom, Oklahoma State Department of Health WIC Service, and Southwest Dairy Farmers. Exhibit messages are consistent with and enhance the FCS and CNEP youth program messages, are research based and consistent with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 and MyPyramid.

Food & Fun for Everyone

This nutrition education program consists of a series of approximately 6 lessons taught to youth in third and fourth grades in low-income school districts. The interactive learning experiences teach the concepts of MyPyramid food guidance system, the importance of hand washing and eating breakfast every day, as well as appropriate and healthy snacking.

Impact

The cumulative total served by The OrganWise Guys in 2012 was 6,594 youth in approximately 271 classrooms throughout Oklahoma. Based on 2,054 pre-post tests, improvements were reported in the areas of increasing servings of fruit, skim milk and physical activity. Youth also reported decreased consumption of sweets, fat eaten and less screen time.

In 2012 the Farm to You exhibit traveled to 31 counties in Oklahoma, serving multiple school districts within each county. It has also been featured at summer camps, county fairs and community events. **During 2012, 22,796 youth experienced the Farm to You exhibit and 1,120 community volunteers supported the educational program.** Important improvements in food, nutrition and physical activity behaviors, which can have a role in reducing overweight and risk of related chronic diseases, were observed among Oklahoma youth participating in the Farm to You exhibit. **The statistically significant observed improvements for 2012 include:**

- 46% increase in eating whole grain breads and cereals.
- 35% increase in drinking milk or eating cheese or yogurt
- 31% increase in eating low-fat meats
- 26% increase in time spent in physical activity
- 33% increase in eating foods from 2 or 3 MyPyramid food groups for breakfast
- 24% increase in snacking only when hungry
- 47% increase in using nutrition facts labels to make food and beverage choices

In 2012 more than 3,464 Oklahoma youth participated in the Food & Fun for Everyone lesson series, with 2,846 complete evaluations. Sixteen-percent of youth increased their ability to select low-cost, nutritious foods.

Scope of Impact: State

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March 2013