

On the Move Junior Program offered in Burleigh County Improves Nutritional Intake among Children 2015-2016

The Situation

More than 30 percent of North Dakota children 2 to 5 years of age are considered overweight or obese (with a BMI-for-age above the 85th percentile). According to the Youth Behavior Risk Surveillance Survey (2015), 42 percent of North Dakota students in grades nine to 12 consumed vegetables less than one time daily, 75 percent of adolescents were not physically active at least 60 minutes per day, and about 12 percent were not physically active 60 minutes on at least one day during the seven days prior to the survey.

Extension Response

“On the Move Junior” is a five-week school-based curriculum for second-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for nutrition, and includes children’s story books and hands-on activities. The curriculum aims to improve the variety of healthful foods that children consume, especially the amount of fruits and vegetables they consume. It also aims to improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts

In 2015-16, 176 students attending four different schools both public and private in Burleigh County completed the program. They improved their knowledge of nutritional recommendations as shown by test scores:



87 percent ate more milk or yogurt



85 percent ate more fruit



82 percent tried a new food



74 percent ate more vegetables



80 percent tried fruits of different color



86 percent engaged in more exercise

According to survey results, 87 percent of parents read the weekly newsletter. Parents reported that their children asked questions about food (67 percent), offered help with food preparation (58 percent), requested healthful snacks (450 percent) and tried a new food (50 percent).

Feedback

Parents said:

- “I like what is being taught at school because it is what is being taught at home.”
- “My daughter liked learning about eating a rainbow of fruits and vegetables. She educated me on the digestive system and fiber.”
- “His favorite part of the program was learning to identify whole grain foods and their health benefits.”

Public Value Statement

Improving health behaviors can increase quality of life and save millions of dollars in collective health-care costs for North Dakotans throughout their lifetime.

County Contact

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