

ND Children are On the Move to Better Health 2015-2016

The Situation

Childhood obesity has more than tripled in the past 30 years. Some researchers consider children to be “overfed” but “undernourished.” Obese children are at higher risk for cardiovascular disease, with 70 percent showing at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease. Obesity also increases the risk for diabetes, stroke, cancer and osteoarthritis.

Extension Response

On the Move to Better Health is a five-week school-based curriculum for fifth-graders. It is based on MyPlate, the current icon for good nutrition. The curriculum aims to increase fruits, vegetables and calcium-rich foods in the diets of children and improve fitness habits. Parents receive newsletters and participate in goal setting and other family-based activities.

Impacts

From 2007 to 2016, 19,172 children and their families participated in On the Move to Better Health. Post-surveys with 2,910 children in 2015-16 showed the following as a result of the program:



50 percent consumed more dairy



55 percent drank less pop



52 percent chose healthier snacks



57 percent increased daily physical activity



50 percent ate more fruits and vegetables

Surveys with 1,053 parents in 2015-16 showed the following:

- 81 percent of parents/caregivers read the newsletter and 37 percent set a weekly goal
- 35 percent increased their fruit consumption and 31 percent increased their vegetable consumption
- 13 percent increased whole-grain intake
- 18 percent increased their dairy consumption

Feedback

Children said:

- “I liked how it made my family and me more healthy.”
- “I learned to make healthier choices and be more active and how important that is.”

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.

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