

After-School CHASE Success

Type of Change: Practice
Risk Factor: Physical Activity & Nutrition
Setting: Community
Reach/Impact: Over 500 children that participate in the EnCompass After School Program

Issue

The Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency (FLHSA), located in Rochester (Monroe County), has undertaken a multi-pronged approach to address escalating rates of adult and child obesity and concomitant increases in diabetes. Over 60% of Monroe County adults are overweight or obese. Even more alarming is that nearly one-third of Monroe County children ages 2-18 are overweight or obese. The percentage of adults who now report that they have been told they have diabetes has spiked sharply in the last six years, jumping from 5% to 10%. Significant racial disparities in both rates of overweight/obesity and diabetes are evident. For this reason, Healthi Kids has spent the last six years focusing on the City of Rochester, where 80% of the County's African American and two-thirds of its Latino residents live.

Working with After-School Sites

One strategy employed by Healthi Kids is to work with after-school sites to improve healthy behaviors. While there has been a great deal of emphasis on wellness in the Rochester City School District, Healthi Kids felt taking this approach was a great way to remind children that being healthy goes beyond the school day. To date, we have worked with 14 sites (ranging in enrollment age, program length, and parent organization) all committed to improving the health of their students.

Intervention

EnCompass Resources for Learning "provides innovative educational services to students who struggle to learn and to the families, schools and professionals that support them." Healthi Kids had an existing working relationship with EnCompass,

thanks to our mutual participation in the Greater Rochester After-School Alliance (GRASA).

Upon receiving Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play funding, Healthi Kids approached EnCompass to invite their sites to participate in the after-school strategy. Always eager to provide the best for their participants and improve their program, EnCompass agreed. Using the Cornell Healthy After-School Evaluation (CHASE), Healthi Kids conducted assessments at each EnCompass site in Monroe County – four in total, serving between 30 and 100 Rochester City School District students each.

After conducting the CHASE pre-assessment, EnCompass identified two priority goals:

- Provide professional development opportunities for EnCompass staff to learn more about health and nutrition
- Provide children with positive messages about nutrition and physical activity

Creating Healthy Places funds were used to accomplish these goals by purchasing professional development materials for EnCompass staff (including Playworks Play Guides and materials to fully implement the games and activities within the guides), and materials with positive messages about healthy eating and physical activity for all students – pencils, bookmarks, stickers, etc.

Impact

After putting the Action Plan in place for over nine months, Healthi Kids conducted CHASE post-assessments for each EnCompass site.

Overall, significant positive improvements were made to each site, and those areas that saw negative change were not related to the Creating Healthy Places work. Changes in staffing, number of children participating at each location, behavioral issues, and time of evaluation (close to the end of the program year) had an affect on the outcome of the CHASE.



Contact Information:

Lauren Morelle, Community Engagement Communications Specialist
Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency
1150 University Avenue | Rochester, NY 14607
(585) 224-3121 | laurenmorelle@flhsa.org

Sustainability Success Story

Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency & Healthi Kids

Program Location	Areas of (+) Change	Areas of (-) Change
Discovery Charter School	4	3
School #15	7	0
School #33	6	1
School #39	5	2

Importance of Impact

The CHASE assessment and the subsequent changes made as a result of the assessment had a profound impact on EnCompass Programs. After the post-assessment was completed and the results shared with the program coordinators, EnCompass added more health education and practices into the program.

In the fall of 2012, EnCompass added dedicated staff positions at each of their afterschool programming sites focusing on health and wellness. The Health and Wellness Coaches engaged with all youth across all program sites to provide health education programming around nutrition and social-emotional wellness as well as regular opportunities for physical activity and skill development.

These positions are now embedded in the structure of the EnCompass Inquiry-Based afterschool learning opportunities for youth. Curriculum continues to be enhanced to further align with inquiry-topics and define learning objectives for health and wellness that are relating to common core standards.



Thanks to their new health focus, EnCompass students had the chance to visit Rochester General Hospital to learn hands-on about medicine and the human body.

Sustainability

Because EnCompass has taken the initiative to hire new staff and include healthy living and wellness into their program, the efforts put forth by the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play grant will be sustained in the future without need for further intervention.

Because the relationship between Healthi Kids and EnCompass continues outside of this program, Healthi Kids will continue to assist EnCompass whenever they need additional assistance or technical support.

Lessons Learned

After completing this initiative with EnCompass, Healthi Kids has learned some very important lessons that have been implemented into subsequent work with after school programs. These best practices include:

- Carefully choosing partners – a big part of the success of this project was the partnership between Healthi Kids and EnCompass. EnCompass was very willing to work with us and was very invested in the results and measures we collected.
- Consistency – Having the CHASE pre-assessment and post-assessment completed by the same instructor and administered by the same person makes a great deal of difference. This consistency allows both the recipient organization and the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play Contractor to see clear changes as a direct result of the CHASE process.



Contact Information:

Lauren Morelle, Community Engagement Communications Specialist
Finger Lakes Health Systems Agency
1150 University Avenue | Rochester, NY 14607
(585) 224-3121 | laurenmorelle@flhsa.org