

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY - Part 1

Increasing Physical Activity/Reducing TV Viewing

Training Curriculum: Survey Question 1

OBJECTIVES

1. Staff will be able to state benefits of physical activity.
2. Staff will be able to provide caregivers with parenting tips on how to promote physical activity in young children and decrease TV viewing.

MATERIALS

Staff Reference Sheet

Nutrition Education Plan Survey

Nutrition Education Survey Module: Question 1A

Nutrition Education Survey Module: Question 1B

Participant Handouts:

Get Them Moving

Easy Ways To Be Active

Children and TV

American Academy of Pediatrics Position Statement on TV

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Distribute the Staff Reference Sheet and then discuss the following.

Part of the obesity prevention objective is to promote physical activity. Besides maintaining weight, what are the benefits of physical activity?

Allow staff to respond. Supplement with the following points which are also listed on the Staff Reference Sheet.

- improve strength and endurance
- build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- develop motor skills and coordination
- build lean body mass and reduce fat
- promote self-esteem and sense of well-being
- reduce feelings of frustration or depression
- lower risk of cardiovascular disease, breast and colon cancer and diabetes
- control blood pressure

Your Reference Sheet mentions that physical activity can mean a regular exercise or an aerobics program, or even simple daily tasks like gardening, walking or going up and down the stairs.

Break down into groups. Have each group write down 'physical activity' in a vertical line on a sheet of paper. Tell each group to name an activity that begins with one of the letters. Include some activities that kids can do and others that adults can do or that both could do together. Have each group share their 'acronym.'

Physical activity should make your heart beat faster but still allow you to talk while doing the activity. Some activities are more intense than others.

How much activity should adults and children get each day.

Allow staff to respond.

At least 1/2 hour for adults and at least 1 hour for children.

What keeps a person from being active?

Allow staff to respond and supplement with the following points as necessary. (These are addressed in more detail in the Staff Reference Sheet.)

- Technology: Lives are easier
- TV, video and computer
- Lack of a safe place
- Time constraints

The two modules on physical activity and reducing TV viewing provide WIC with guidance on how to counsel participants to overcome these barriers.

REVIEW OF NUTRITION EDUCATION MODULES AND HANDOUTS

Hand out the Nutrition Education Plan Survey, the Nutrition Education Module for Survey Question 1a, "Get Them Moving" and "Easy Ways To Be Active." Have staff read section 1 of the module and the two flyers. Generate discussion by asking the following questions.

The first question on the Nutrition Education Plan Survey is designed to get an idea of the mother's *perception* of her child's activity level. However, the introductory question in section 1 of the *module* will help you assess how much activity the child *is actually getting*. Based on how she answers the question, try to ascertain if the child gets at least 1-2 hours of activity each day. What does he do? How often?

After giving the mother a chance to respond, the module then directs staff to adjust the rest of the contact, depending on how she answered the question on the survey.

- If she perceives that her child is over or underactive (answers a or c), the module directs staff to skip the rest of section 1 and proceed directly to section 2 or 3 as appropriate. (This makes the module appear cumbersome but the education needs to be adjusted according to the attitude of the participant. The other modules are much less cumbersome!)
- If she has a positive perception (answer b), staff should continue on with section 1, assessing her understanding of how much activity her child needs and reviewing the information in “Get Them Moving” as appropriate. Be sure to ask her how much activity *she* gets! Stress the importance of role modeling and review the flyer “Easy Ways to be Active.”

What might be some typical ways that participants will answer when you ask them about their children’s activity?

How would you respond to them?

The parent may likely express some degree of frustration over how active her child is! Establish rapport by empathizing with their feelings before going on to promote even more activity!

Have staff read section 2 of the module.

The first two questions in this section of the module are designed to assess how much activity the mother thinks her child needs and what she may do to slow her child down. Try to assess if the mother overuses play pens, TV, etc. to ‘babysit’ the child. Then review the information in the two flyers as appropriate, emphasizing the importance of being a role model.

Parents are *very interested* in parenting information. She can read the information in the flyer. What other kinds of creative activities would you suggest *besides* the ones in the flyer?

Have staff read section 3 of the module.

The open-ended questions are designed to assess how much activity the mother thinks her child needs and what are roadblocks to her child being more active. (This will probably not be a very common concern and may be indicative of some other kinds of problems within the household.)

Then review the information in the two flyers as appropriate, encouraging the mother to be creative and make activity fun if her child is resistant to it. Also, stress that activity can be fit into her schedule if time is an issue. Review the information in the two flyers emphasizing the importance of being a positive role model.

**What are some typical roadblocks to children getting activity?
What other ideas might you suggest to resolve them?**

Hand out the Nutrition Education Module for Survey Question 1b and the accompanying flyer “Children and TV.” Generate discussion by asking the following questions.

Question 1b on the Nutrition Education Plan Survey assesses how much a parent thinks TV *ought* to be limited. The module suggests that staff generate discussion with participants by asking them what programs/videos their child likes.

The module then directs staff to ask participants their opinions about TV programming and children in general.

After participants give their own opinions about TV, the module directs you to review the tips in the flyer. These tips were adapted from the AAP’s position paper on children and TV. Be sure to encourage parents to set a limit on how much TV children watch.

What would you do if parents become offended and challenge your opinion about children and TV?

Apologize for upsetting her! Explain that you merely wanted to inform her of AAP’s position statement of TV because you can tell that she is a concerned parent. Drop the discussion at this point and allow the parent to defuse. Resume with the next portion of the survey at the next visit. If the parent is interested in discussing the topic further, discuss good ways to use TV which are listed in the flyer.

The module then directs you to ask what parents could do to limit their child’s TV viewing. Listen to her ideas and supplement with the tips in the flyer.

Besides the advice in the flyer, what are some ways that parents can limit TV viewing?

Allow staff to respond.

While discussing the importance of activity, parents may ask, “what am I supposed to do when my child is throwing a tantrum?”

Allow staff to respond. Remind them that counseling parents on how to deal with temper tantrums is not a nutrition related issue. However, many parents may ask this question since it relates indirectly with activity. Having some suggestions to give them may be helpful. If the child has serious behavior problems, they should refer the parent to the appropriate services in your area.

The module concludes by emphasizing the importance of role modeling. Participants may not be willing to answer the final question suggested in the module, but at least it will get them to think about the impact they have on their child’s behaviors!

PRACTICE SESSION - USING THE NUTRITION EDUCATION MODULES

Role play the two modules in front of the group. Ask for volunteers to play the part of a typical care giver while you play the more difficult part of the nutrition aid. (You may want to ask for some volunteers prior to the training session.)

For each role play, the care giver should have a different problem or situation. Some suggestions include:

"My kid runs around all the time."

"If my kid watches TV, at least I know he is safe."

Be prepared to make some mistakes so staff realize that the role playing is a learning experience not a "command performance." After each role play, get feedback from staff by asking the following questions:

What part of the contact did you especially like?

What could be done to improve the contact?

After doing several role plays, have the group divide into pairs and practice some role plays on their own. If they are reluctant to do individual role plays, do a 'group role play' by dividing the group in half. Assign each 'half' to play the role of nutritionist or the parents. Keep the discussion going between teams by asking questions such as the following:

You are the nutritionist who is about to discuss physical activity. How would you get started? (Tell them to refer to the module.) (Elicit response from the 'nutritionist group')

Then ask the participant group, "What might a participant say in return?" (Elicit response from participant group.)

Then again ask the nutritionist group to respond.

Continue working with the group, trying to get them accustomed to using both modules.

PREVENTING CHILDHOOD OBESITY

Promoting Physical Activity/Reducing TV Viewing

WIC Staff Reference Sheet

The most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that adults get at least thirty minutes of physical activity each day and children, at least sixty. Engaging in physical activity helps children and adults to:

- control weight
- improve strength and endurance
- build and maintain healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- develop motor skills and coordination
- build lean body mass and reduce fat
- promote self-esteem and a sense of well-being
- reduce feelings of frustration or depression
- lower risk of cardiovascular disease, colon cancer and diabetes
- control blood pressure

Physical activity can involve a regular exercise program or incorporating more common daily activities such as walking, gardening or trips up and down the stairs. For children, physical activity should mean active playtime. From earliest infancy, play is the primary way children learn.

In spite of the many benefits of physical activity, Americans are significantly inactive, even young children. The health and psycho-social consequences of this inactivity are beginning to manifest at younger and younger ages. According to the Surgeon General's Report, the major barrier to physical activity is the age in which we live. The activities of daily living no longer require large expenditures of energy. The whole thrust of modern technology is to make life *easier* by automating and motorizing it; unfortunately, at the expense of physical fitness.

Perhaps the biggest barrier to physical fitness is entertainment. Television viewing, video games and computer use have transformed both adults and children into the proverbial 'couch potato.' Next to sleeping, TV is the most common leisure 'activity' among children. By the time students graduate from high school, they will have spent 15,000 to 18,000 hours in front of a screen but only 12,000 hours in front of the chalkboard. TV viewing is considered such a problem that the American Academy of Pediatrics has issued a position statement on it. Research shows that children who consistently spend 10 hours or more per week are more likely to be overweight, aggressive and slower to learn in school.

Concerns about safety is another barrier to promoting physical activity among children. Minorities are more likely to report that their neighborhood is not safe. Parents no longer let their children 'cruise around' on bikes or play team games with the 'neighborhood kids.' Some parents feel that the safest place for their children is in front of the TV set.

Physical activity may also be viewed as too time consuming or expensive and that it requires a gym or an expensive fitness center. Some do not know how to employ simple, inexpensive methods to become more active!

WIC staff can help reverse this trend by informing parents of some tips for increasing physical activity. The flyers, "Get Them Moving," "Easy Ways To Be Active" and "Children and TV" can be used to provide the necessary nutrition information and parenting skills.

Promoting Physical Activity: Survey Question 1a

Section 1

You answered a question about your child's activity. That includes things like running, jumping, crawling, climbing, playing with push toys, doing exercises, or riding Big Wheels.

Tell me more about what your child does during the day.

Assess child's activity level: What does he do? How often? (Try to estimate how active the child is.)

*If mother perceives child to be overactive (answer a), skip the rest of this section and go to section 2.
If mother perceives child to be underactive (answer c), skip the rest of this section and go to section 3.
If she has a positive perception of her child's activity (answer b), continue with rest of section 1.*

How much activity do you feel your child should get each day?

Discuss the importance/amount of activity in "Get Them Moving."

Children need a balance between quiet and active time. Here are some ideas for including both.
(Review examples of both in flyer.) **Which ones will you try?**

How much activity do you usually get each day? *Emphasize importance of role modeling.*

Review "Easy Ways to Be Active." **Which activities will you try?** *Conclude contact at this point.*

Section 2

You indicated that your child is *over* active. **Tell me about what makes you feel s/he is.**

Discuss importance and amount in "Get Them Moving."

Activity is important but parents also need some quiet time. Kids do too! **What do you do to try to slow your child down?**

(Does parent frequently use high chairs, playpens, videos, TV to keep her child quiet?)

Here are some ideas to help balance quiet and active time. *Review suggestions in flyer, emphasizing active time activities, especially if parent seems to be overusing methods to keep child quiet.*

Which ones will you try?

How much activity do you usually get each day? *Emphasize importance of role modeling.*

Review "Easy Ways to Be Active." **Which activities will you try?** *Conclude contact at this point.*

Section 3

You indicated that your child is *under* active. **How much activity do you feel your child needs?**

Discuss importance and amount recommended in "Get Them Moving."

Tell me about the things that prevent your child from being more active? *(Mother may mention no time, no place, child doesn't want to.)*

Your child can be active without having to make special arrangements. Or...Your child may want to be more active if you make it seem like fun! Here are some examples of active exercises. *Review the active examples in "Get Them Moving."* **Which ones will you try?**

Activity is important but parents also need some quiet time. Kids do too! Here are some quiet time activities you can do to balance the active time.

How much activity do you usually get each day? *Emphasize importance of role modeling.*

Review "Easy Ways to Be Active." **Which activities will you try?** *Conclude contact at this point.*

Reducing TV Viewing: Survey Question 1b

You answered a survey question about how often you feel your child should watch TV.

What shows does your child like to watch?

Allow parent to share. Does she use educational videos, regular TV? What use does she make of TV in her house?

What are your opinions about TV shows and children?

Allow parent to share.

Here is a summary of what the Academy of Pediatrics has to say about children and TV. They are concerned with the lessons children are learning at a young age.

Review the points listed in the flyer.

What do you do to limit what your child sees on TV?

Allow parent to respond.

TV can be a good or bad influence, depending on how you use it. Here are some ideas on how to use it effectively.

Point out tips on flyer.

Which ones will you try?

Perhaps one of the most important tips on the flyer is about setting an example for children. Children learn to do what you do. They will want to watch what you watch.

What could you do to set an example for your child?

Get Them Moving!



Children learn and grow by **doing**. They improve their skills through **activity**. Active children learn better, deal better with frustrations and have better coordination. Did you know that:

- * Children spend 30 hours a week watching TV or playing video games.
- * One in five children are overweight. Also, diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol are even showing up in pre-schoolers.
- * Inactive children often become overweight teens.

You may wish that your child would slow down! However, children need 1 to 2 hours *or more* of activity each day. Here are some ideas to keep your child quiet and ways to get your child moving. These activities cost little or nothing, need little room and many can even be done inside.

Active Time

- * Have your children play with toys that will make them move: Scooters, bikes, push toys, etc.
- * Plan family outings: take a walk, adopt a highway, park or beach to keep clean, find free swimming pools and playgrounds, make a play area (with a mat or blankets) in the house where jumping and tumbling are allowed.
- * Have your children help with chores. Make it *fun!* Feed the alligator (putting clothes in laundry), chasing away the dust bunnies (sweeping).
- * Dance to music or do exercise videos with your child.
- * Play active games with your child: jump rope, obstacle course from cardboard boxes, musical chairs, active "Simon says," tag, water pistols, races, dodge ball, play "be an animal" (imitate motions of a frog, kangaroo, bird, dog, duck, etc.), hopscotch, hide and seek, outside nature walk. (Ask your child to look for rocks, birds, squirrels etc.)

Quiet Time

- * Blocks or Legos
- * Books (read to your child).
- * Painting/drawing/coloring
- * Puzzles/Play dough
- * Crafts
- * Flash cards/Game cards
- * Board games
- * Watch educational videos or TV with your child.

When parents are busy doing other things, children must learn to play by themselves. Your child can have fun doing simple things like playing with the pots and pans in a safe place. Rather than turn on the TV, give your child toys that challenge his creativity and imagination.

Children learn the least when they are entertained by TV. They learn more by using their muscles and their minds. They learn *best* by playing and interacting with *you*.

Remember: Active time is as important to your child's development as good nutrition!

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Children and TV



Is your child running around the house? Creating *stress*? TV may seem like an easy way to distract him or her. But before you turn it on or let your child turn it on, ask these questions.

What will my child learn?

- ❖ If a cartoon teaches kindness, children learn to be gentle.
If it portrays violence, children learn to deal with problems through temper tantrums and aggression.
- ❖ If it teaches family values, children learn to care and share.
If it teaches disrespect to parents, children learn to follow the example.
- ❖ If TV ads teach good nutrition, children learn to eat healthy foods.
If it advertises sweet and salty foods, children want candy and chips for snacks and fast food for supper.
- ❖ If TV teaches that only brand names will do and that more is better, children feel deprived unless they have more and more expensive products.
- ❖ If soap operas, music videos or talk shows portray sex, children grow up too fast.
Without seeing these images, children stay children longer.

What will my child miss?

- ❖ The more children watch TV or videos, the less they interact with real people.
- ❖ The more children watch TV or videos, the less they use their own creativity and imagination.

How much exercise does my child get?

- ❖ In order to grow and maintain normal weight, children need to run, jump, crawl and roll!
- ❖ In order to learn, children need to engage their minds **and** their bodies!

TV can be a good influence if you use it wisely. Here are some tips:

- ❖ Choose what your child watches. Sesame Street, Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, Barney, nature programs and educational videos will broaden your child's mind and teach numbers, colors and letters. If you cannot find good programs on TV, borrow or rent videos.
- ❖ Watch TV with your child. Children learn as they interact *with you* about what they see. Ask them questions about it. If they see bad behaviors, negative attitudes or unhealthy habits and choices, criticize it and talk with your child about it.
- ❖ Limit TV to no more than 1 to 2 hours per day. Start early. Children adopt favorite TV shows by the age of three. Fill your child's day with people, quiet learning activities, and play. Praise your child when he entertains himself without relying on TV.
- ❖ Be a good role model. Limit your own TV viewing.



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Easy Ways To Get Active



You already know that being active is **good** for you. But, have you thought about just how good it really is. Being active will . . .

- * Give you energy and make you feel better about yourself. Activity helps fight feelings of depression and stress.
- * Help you to relax and to sleep better at night.
- * Help you control your weight.
- * Lower your blood pressure and your risk of heart disease, diabetes and breast cancer.
- * Set a positive example for your child.

Being active does **not** mean you have to join a gym or begin an aerobics program. Here are some simple ways to get started:

- * Find activities that you like. Take a walk, ride a bike or dance to the music in your house.
- * Walk to a nearby store. Find a walking partner. Knowing that someone is waiting for you at the corner is great motivation.
- * Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Park your car near the end of the parking lot and walk.
- * Get off the bus early and go the rest of the way on foot.
- * Play active games with your children. It is a great way to get them active too.
- * Even things like vacuuming, sweeping the floor or washing windows count as exercise!

Get at least 30 minutes or more of activity each day. If you can't get it all at once, get ten minutes here and there. Every bit of activity adds up to a healthier you! Every bit of activity you do with your child helps both of you!

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