



FitTogether



FitTogether Family Nights: Promoting healthy weight by reaching out to families and school communities

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Background

Family involvement is essential for achieving healthy eating and physical activity changes, however reaching families is challenging. Following up on Health and Fitness Progress Reports, outreach activities were designed and implemented in the form of FitTogether events at each of the elementary schools in Cambridge, MA. Forty two percent of public school students participate in the free/ reduced-price lunch and 32% speak a home language other than English, with 39% African American, 35% White, 14.8% Hispanic, 10.5% Asian, and over 50 languages spoken. Though special efforts were made to include families of overweight children, events were targeting the entire school community.

Objectives

- Using the 5-2-1 message, promote healthy weight by inspiring families and school communities to modify nutrition and physical activity behaviors:
- Show new ways to be physically active
 - Show new ways to include fruits and vegetables
 - As a community, support healthy eating and physical activity



Program Components

- PE demonstration
- Healthy do-it-yourself wrap
- Panel presentation (& simultaneous kid activities in gym)
- Kid performance (hip hop dancing, cheerleading, nutrition play)
 - Evaluation
- Raffle for healthy prizes
- Promote 5-2-1 message



Program Evaluation

Attendance

	Families	Persons	Respondents
2005-2006	132	405	106
2006-2007	89	246	84
Total	221	651	190

Was this program useful for your family?

	Very	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all
2005-2006	74	24	5	1
2006-2007	53	29	2	0
Total	127 (67.5%)	53 (28%)	7 (4%)	1 (0.5%)

Would you try this meal at home?

	Yes	No	No Response
2005-2006	102	4	0
2006-2007	74	8	2
Total	176 (93%)	12 (6%)	2 (1%)

Overall Program Rating

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
2005-2006	56	47	2	1
2006-2007	38	43	3	0
Total	94(49%)	90 (47%)	5 (3.5%)	1 (0.5%)

Program Evaluation

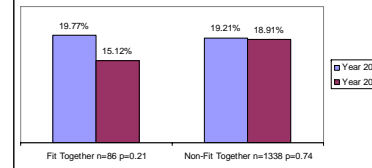
New Ideas for Physical Activity

- Be active as a family
- Bike
- Walk
- Swim
- Dance
- Before and after school programs
- Spend time outside

New Ideas for including fruits and vegetables

- Cut up fruits and vegetables to have readily available
- Eat raw vegetables
- Serve vegetables as an appetizer before meals
- Serve more often
- Cook together
- Serve fruit instead of sweet snacks or desserts

Comparison of Overweight Status in Fit Together and Non-Fit Together Youth 2004 vs. 2007

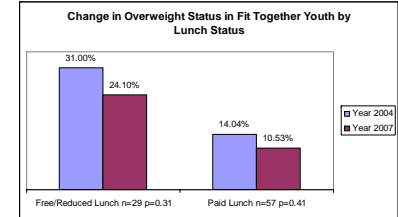


Overweight Status decreased 4.7% among Fit Together Youth
 Overweight Status decreased by 0.3% among Non-Fit Together Youth
 Difference not statistically significant

Characteristic	Fit Together N	Fit Together %	Non-Fit Together N	Non-Fit Together %	P-Value
Race					
Asian	13	15.1%	144	10.8%	0.21
Black	26	30.2%	524	39.2%	0.09*
Hispanic	8	9.3%	184	12.8%	0.24
White	39	45.4%	474	35.4%	0.05*
Sex					
Female	44	51.2%	651	48.7%	0.65
Male	42	48.8%	687	51.4%	
Lunch Status					
Free/Reduced	29	33.7%	595	44.5%	0.05*
Paid	57	66.3%	741	55.5%	

- FitTogether youth are significantly more likely to be white (45% vs. 35%) and less likely to be black (30% vs 39%)
- FitTogether youth are significantly less likely to be on free/reduced lunch (34% vs. 45%).
- FitTogether youth are significantly more likely to be 6 years old (42% vs. 22%) and Non-FitTogether youth are significantly more likely to be 8 years old.

Program Evaluation



- Among Fit Together Youth, youth on paid lunch are less likely to be overweight in both years.
- Among Fit Together Youth, a decrease in the percent of youth in the overweight category was seen for both youth on free/reduced lunch and on paid lunch.
- Youth who were on free/reduced lunch saw a larger percent decrease in overweight status than did those on paid lunch (7% vs. 4%).

Conclusions

- FitTogether events were well attended by families.
- Although the results were not statistically significant, children of families who attended FitTogether events experienced more of a decrease in overweight status than children of families who did not attend.
- FitTogether events drew more families that were white, of higher income and with younger children.
- Children of lower income families were more likely to be overweight, but they also experienced greater reduction in overweight compared with children of higher income families.
- Results suggest a positive relationship between attending FitTogether events and weight status reduction, particularly among lower income students. Although we cannot conclude a causal relationship exists, lower income families with overweight children who attend a FitTogether event may benefit in terms of child weight status.

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