



Overview and Framework of Wisconsin Fit Families SNAP-Ed

Introduction and Background

Fit Families Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) is a successful behavior change program targeting primarily families of 2-4 year old children enrolled in WIC at Fit Families projects in Wisconsin. Fit Families Coaches empower families to adopt healthy eating and physical activity behaviors. Coaches offer individualized guidance, support, and tools to the families every month over a 12-month period. Evaluation results for children that have completed the program indicated a significant positive effect on fruit and vegetable consumption, juice consumption, physical activity, and TV viewing. Fit Families strives to help prevent childhood overweight/obesity and is collaborating with other SNAP-Ed projects and partners on this effort.

Fit Families was designed in 2005 using evidenced-based and promising strategies that focus on helping families eat healthier and be more active. Fit Families provides the framework for achieving healthy food and beverage consumption, daily physical activity, and healthy supportive environments. Projects use individual or group approaches to nutrition education in combination with organizational, community, and/or public health approaches to increase their effectiveness. The role of SNAP-Ed regarding Policy, Systems, and Environmental (PSE) changes is to provide consultation and technical assistance regarding implementation in collaboration with other partners to help make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Messages

Fit Families employs three core messages and one over-arching message to combat overweight and obesity:

Core messages:

- **Move More...Watch Less**
Encourage Fit Families participants to engage in active play or physical activity for at least 60 minutes every day and to reduce screen time to two hours or less each day.
- **Make Every Bite Count...More Fruits and Vegetables**
Encourage children and their parents to eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables each day.
- **Make Every Sip Count...More Healthy Beverages**
Encourage families to reduce or eliminate use of sugared beverages.

Over-arching message:

- **Eat Healthy, Be Active: Your Kids are Watching**
Encourage parents to be good role models for their children.

Components

Fit Families engages three components to build a strong environment for families:

- The **Family Component** is directed at families with children age 2 to 4 years. Families enroll and work with a Fit Families Coach to set wellness goals. The families and coach work together throughout the year to attain those goals.
- The **Organization Component** is directed at Fit Families Centers. The Centers are the organizations offering the Fit Families Program. Centers develop an environment which practices and promotes healthy lifestyles for the Center staff, Fit Families staff, the families they serve, and the broader community.
- The **Community Partnerships Component** reinforces Fit Families health messages and helps to promote and protect the health of all children in participating communities.

Fit Families Projects

In Federal Fiscal Year 2018, the Fit Families Program will include 34 Fit Families projects across Wisconsin (plus three tribal sites through Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council) administered by WIC projects through local county health departments or private, non-profit agencies: Barron, Bay Area, Buffalo-Pepin, Chippewa, Eau Claire, Family Health/La Clinica, Fond du Lac, Forest, Healthfirst Network, Green, Jackson, Jefferson, Juneau/Adams, Kenosha, Kewaunee, La Crosse, Marinette, Milwaukee (City), Monroe, Northwest Community Services Agency (NWCSA), Oneida, Outagamie, Pierce, Polk, Portage, Sauk, St. Croix, Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program (SWCAP), Vernon, Walworth, Waupaca, West Allis, Winnebago, and Wood.

Mentoring, Training, and Materials

The Fit Families Mentoring and Training projects are: La Crosse, Healthfirst Network, Waupaca, Chippewa, Sauk, Portage, and Wood. These projects mentor and train other SNAP-Ed projects. Fit Families agencies receive training on program operations, management, and evaluation. A Fit Families Toolkit complete with learning modules, materials, and resources is provided and guidance is available from the Fit Families Mentoring Team. The Mentoring Team developed Fit Families Staff Competencies and an assessment tool for use by all projects.

Funding and Administration

The Fit Families Program is supported by Wisconsin Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) funds. Wisconsin SNAP-Ed is administered by the Division of Public Health and the Bureau of Community Health Promotion, WIC and Nutrition Section, per a Memorandum of Understanding between the Division of Medicaid Services (DMS) and Public Health. DMS administers SNAP or FoodShare in Wisconsin. SNAP-Ed provides nutrition education to low income individuals and families eligible for SNAP. The Wisconsin SNAP-Ed Coordinator, who works in the WIC and Nutrition Section, coordinates Fit Families with representatives from the Fit Families Mentoring and Training projects and an Evaluation Team from the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

Documentation/Evaluation

The Fit Families Coach documents contacts with the families at enrollment and each month thereafter using a tracking form. Baseline data are collected regarding nutrition and physical activity behaviors at enrollment and a goal is set. After each monthly contact the Fit Families Coach notes the family's progress toward goal attainment, educational materials provided, barriers they encounter reaching their goal and success realized. At program completion, data are again collected regarding behaviors and are submitted to the Evaluation Team. The Evaluator Team analyzes the data and prepares an annual evaluation report to describe process and outcomes for each project in the Fit Families Program.

Evidence-Base Summary

The evidence base for Fit Families has been demonstrated through rigorous evaluation, although the results have not yet been submitted for scientific review and publication. The Fit Families childhood obesity prevention intervention was developed with practice-based evidence, and the quasi-experimental study in 2009 found a positive impact on children's fruit and vegetable consumption, juice intake, activity, and screen time. The ongoing evaluation has continued to show these favorable outcomes, along with decreased intake of sweetened beverages. The evaluation has also documented that the behaviorally-focused intervention continues to be feasible and effective, meaningful for parents of 2 to 4 year old children, and implemented with fidelity as intended in multiple program agencies.

Contact Information

To find out more information about the Fit Families SNAP-Ed Program contact Tony Zech, Wisconsin SNAP-Ed Coordinator at 608-266-3742 or anthony.zech@wisconsin.gov or Kay Perkins, Fit Families Mentoring Team Chair at 800-246-5743 or kperkins@healthfirstnetwork.org.

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