

## Purpose

Arizona's Office for Children with Special Health Care Needs (OCSHN) conducted a systematic review of health promotion curricula with an emphasis on nutrition and physical activity. The goal of this review was to identify effective, empirically supported health promotion curricula so that professionals and families can make curriculum choices informed by the best available evidence.

## Method

A comprehensive review of published, peer-reviewed research was conducted to identify health promotion curricula that combined nutrition and physical activity components. Articles were selected for review if they were printed in English, implemented a specific health promotion program or curriculum, and included both physical activity and nutrition components in the curriculum. Each article was examined for study quality and intervention effects. In addition, each curriculum or program was rated based on its relevance to children with special health care needs and their families. We considered programs and curricula that were inclusive and appropriate for a variety of children with special health care needs, had the potential to prevent secondary conditions, involved family members, and were suitable for implementation in a variety of home and community settings to be most relevant.

## Results

The initial literature search resulted in 693 articles. After reviewing the titles, abstracts, or complete articles, 42 met the inclusion criteria and were examined further. The table displays the appraisal of each article according to study quality, intervention effects, and relevance. Results are displayed through shading, where more shading indicates higher quality, stronger effects, and greatest relevance to children with special health care needs and their families. Based on the current findings, three curricula have the strongest research support with the greatest relevance to children with special health care needs and their families. These include: (1) Healthy and Ready to Learn; (2) Media-Smart Youth; and (3) Let Us Protect Our Future. Although the evidence and relevance are not as high, the following three curricula are considered promising: (1) Be Smart; (2) Family Fitness Program; and (3) Pathways.

## Evidence-Based Health Promotion Initiative: Review of Health Promotion Curricula

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### Introduction

Evidence-based health promotion has become increasingly important and visible. There are numerous health promotion programs and curricula disseminated in schools and communities across the U.S, but their quality and effectiveness vary drastically. In the context of evidence-based health promotion, programs with research-based components and that have been empirically validated have the greatest potential for benefitting children and youth.

Children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) have or are at increased risk for a chronic physical, developmental, behavioral, or emotional condition and who also require health and related services beyond those required by children generally. The 2009/10 National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs (NS-CSHCN) indicates that, compared to their peers, CYSHCN are more likely to develop secondary conditions related to poor health and are less likely to access needed healthcare services, including preventative care and health education. Given the increased risk of health problems and reduced access to healthcare among CYSHCN, it is imperative that all children and youth, including CYSHCN, have access to effective health promotion programs. The evidence-based health promotion initiative was put into place to evaluate health promotion programs and to aid individuals and agencies working with CYSHCN to make decisions regarding which health promotion curricula are equipped with the essential components for them to be effective. Two phases of the initiative have been completed: a systematic review and the development of the Health Promotion Curriculum Checklist (HPCC).

### Characteristics of Effective Health Promotion Curricula

**Research Evidence** The content in the curriculum needs to be research based. In other words, the curriculum needs to have been examined through carefully designed, high quality experimental studies and shown to be effective. Assessment instruments used to document the outcomes should be valid (instruments measure

what they are intended to measure) and reliable (the same measurement process yields the same results).

**Prevention and Promotion of New Skills** Health promotion programs should proactively and positively target the function and context of behaviors rather than focusing on strategies that are reactive or punishing. Effective programs explicitly teach and expect healthy behaviors from the onset of the program and extend these behaviors into daily routines to help form healthy habits.

**Inclusion** Inclusiveness is a critical component of an effective curriculum. Health promotion programming must be universally available and accessible to all children, youth, and families, regardless of their ethnicity, family structure, income, neighborhood, education, environment, and abilities. Effective health promotion programs value cultural diversity and respect individual worth and community.

**Longevity** Healthy weight promotion is best conceptualized as a set of life-long skills that are learned early and practiced every day. Effective programs should not only teach that healthy behaviors must occur on a daily basis throughout life, but programs should also be in effect long enough to observe progress. Physical changes (e.g., weight loss, reduction in BMI, lowered blood pressure, etc.) take a significant amount of time to see improvements, and effective programs allow enough time for progress to be made.

**Collaboration** Connection to families and collaboration with other community entities must be present for health promotion programs to achieve their ultimate purpose. Effective health promotion programs can be implemented in a variety of settings, but communication among families, schools, and other community partners is essential. Health and wellness activities make up an overall healthy lifestyle. To make health behaviors routinely apart of their lives, children and youth must learn to take the skills they learn and translate them across contexts. Communication and collaboration are critical to this process.

**Training** Effective programs include a training component or professional development opportunities for individuals responsible for implementing the program. At a minimum, programs should have a manual with lesson guides. Programs are only effective if they are implemented in the manner in which they were designed. Training is necessary to ensure implementers can deliver the program properly.

**Progress Monitoring/Evaluation of Program** A mechanism to measure progress of learners is an essential component to effective health promotion curricula. Effective programs include an assessment tool to help document whether the intended outcomes of the program are achieved and whether individuals are engaging in health promotion behaviors.

| CURRICULUM   | Study Quality | Intervention Effects | Relevance | CURRICULUM                                    | Study Quality | Intervention Effects | Relevance |
|--|---------------|----------------------|-----------|---|---------------|----------------------|-----------|
|  |               |                      |           |   |               |                      |           |
| Healthy Children, Healthy Families: Parents Making a Difference (HCHF) | ○             | ○                    | ◐         | Let Us Protect Our Future                     | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Integrated Nutrition & Physical Activity Program (INPAP)               | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Just for Kids!                                | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Body Works   | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         | Multi-Disciplinary Lifestyle Intervention     | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| Take 10!   | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         | Lekker Fit!                                   | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| Be Smart   | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Scouting Nutrition & Activity (SNAP) Program  | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| Our Bodies, God's Temples (OBGT)                                       | ○             | ○                    | ◐         | Exercise Your Options (EYO)                   | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Healthy Homework   | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Obesity Intervention                          | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| EdAL-Educacio en Alimentacio   | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         | Sport for Life                                | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| Healthy and Ready to Learn   | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Family Fitness Program                        | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Scouting Nutrition & Activity Program (SNAP)                           | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         | Pathways                                      | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Color Me Healthy   | ○             | ○                    | ◐         | Healthy Children Healthy Families (HCHF)      | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Media Smart Youth  | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Planet Health                                 | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Healthy Buddies  | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Be a Fit Kid                                  | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Be a Fit Kid   | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Jump into Foods and Fitness (JIFF)            | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| 4-Health   | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         | APPLE Project                                 | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| CLICK-Obesity & Health Kids  | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         | Kids Living Fit (KLF)                         | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Join the Healthy Boat-Primary School                                   | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         | New Moves                                     | ◐             | ○                    | ◐         |
| Nutrition on the Go  | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Great Fun 2 Run                               | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Bienstar & Coordinated Approach to Children's Health                   | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         | Eat Well and Keep Moving                      | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         |
| Program  | ○             | ◐                    | ◐         | Weight Management Program                     | ○             | ○                    | ◐         |
| WE CAN   | ○             | ○                    | ◐         | Combined Dietary-Behavioral-Physical Activity | ◐             | ◐                    | ◐         |

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