HEALTH: Healthy Early Childhood Activities Lead To Healthy Kids

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Objectives

- To discuss how nutrition and physical activity became part of Arkansas’s Quality Rating and Improvement System, called Better Beginnings (www.ARBetterBeginnings.com).
- To provide information on the implementation of NAP SACC in child care programs in Arkansas.
- To share future plans regarding NAP SACC and an evaluation of the Program.
Why should nutrition and physical activity matter?

- Childhood obesity remains a pressing public health concern.
- Over the past three decades, obesity rates have nearly tripled for children ages 2 to 5.
- Unhealthy weight leads to chronic health problems/issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and others, even in younger children.
- Overweight 2 to 5 year olds are more than four times as likely to become overweight adults as their normal weight peers.
- According to the statewide BMI assessment process, in 2007-2008 approximately 35% of the children in Arkansas entered school overweight or at risk of overweight.
- Teaching healthy lifestyles at a young age helps insure healthy lifestyles in adulthood.
Child Health and Development In QRIS/Better Beginnings

- The development of AR Quality Rating Improvement System began as part of the Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative (AECCS) in 2005.
- System development led by AECCS Early Care and Education Work Group.
- Other Work Groups, including Medical Home and Social-Emotional Health also involved.
- Based on child health data in the state, Medical Home and Social Emotional Work Groups successful in including a “Child Health and Development” category in Better Beginnings standards.
Better Beginnings: Every Child Deserves Our Best

Child Health and Development component includes requirements such as:

- Distribution of ARKids (child health insurance program) information to uninsured families.
- Sharing information on child development and children’s health, including stages of development.
- Assuring that medical and educational plans involving a child are written and on file, and implementation is documented.
- Sharing information on Medical Homes for children.
Better Beginnings/Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Creation of Early Childhood Health Initiative (ECHI, 2005) started during Better Beginnings development process.
- Major focus of ECHI: obesity prevention in early childhood by improving nutrition and physical activity.
- ECHI included NAP SACC (Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care) as its obesity prevention component.
- One major objective of ECHI: to raise awareness concerning the importance of obesity prevention in early childhood and educate child care providers on their roles in helping prevent obesity.
Better Beginnings/Nutrition and Physical Activity

- With implementation of ECHI and NAP SACC, early childhood professionals/child care providers developed awareness of importance of nutrition/physical activity.
- AR state-level Coalition for Obesity Prevention created a sub group for Early Childhood and Schools, reinforcing important role of child care in obesity prevention.
- In late 2009, AECCS presented draft of proposed QRIS/Better Beginnings to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education for implementation.
- Internal Committee made recommendations to add nutrition and physical activity standards to Better Beginnings.
Better Beginnings/Nutrition and Physical Activity

- Training on developmentally appropriate PA.
- Plans for appropriate PA for all children.
- Sharing with families information on nutrition and PA for children.
- Implemented as part of BB in July, 2010.
The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self Assessment for Child Care Project (NAP SACC)

Goal: to promote healthy eating and physical activity in young children in child care and preschool settings.
NAP SACC

- NAP SACC implemented in 5 child care programs in 2005 as part of ECHI.
- 2 Child Care Health Coordinators trained to work with 5 NAP SACC sites.
- Sites selected based on set of criteria, including BMI data, geographical location, local support.
- Small stipends provided.
Intervention Model

NAP SACC --designed to use trained staff to support changes at child care. We:

• work with Child Care Health Coordinators, ABC Program and other child care staff, and school district staff.

• have trained staff in all six Child Care Resource /Referral Centers to help expand and support NAP SACC.

While BMI data was used in initial criteria, it is no longer used, based on high rates of obesity in AR.
In 2006-2007, five school-based ABC Programs helped implement NAP SACC in Arkansas. 4 additional sites implemented NAP SACC in 2007-2008; 25 were added in 2008-2009; 25 more in 2009-2010.
What Programs said about NAP SACC

- “The training was helpful and provided assistance to “non health professionals” on how to develop plans to improve the health of students.”
- “The nutrition components helped parents and children select better snacks.”
- “NAP SACC was useful in determining the nutrition and physical activity needs of the center.”
- “Participating in ECHI/NAP SACC helped plant “seeds for the future.”
What’s Happening Now?

- During 2010-2011, around 85 sites throughout the state will use NAP SACC in their child care programs.
- Fit Kids training is now offered with NAP SACC training.
- Fit Kids is an innovative program which provides helpful information to help plan regular physical activity and nutrition education experiences for children in child care.
Evaluation Plans for NAP SACC

- Division of Child Care contract with Child Care Resource and Referral Center (R&R) includes annual report.
- Report will include data from mid course and year end surveys, developed for use in Arkansas.
- Contract R&R will contact participating programs from previous years to complete surveys.
- State level NAP SACC meeting to be held in June, 2011.
- Linking BMI data from all state-funded pre k programs with BMI data collected from schools by the AR Center for Health Improvement.
- Preliminary discussions with College of Public Health on formal NAP SACC evaluation.
Questions/Comments

• Thanks!

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• www.ARBetterBeginnings.com