

Physical Activity Integrated with the Youngest



Lakes and Prairies Head Start Values Physical Activity and Healthy Eating

“PartnerSHIP 4 Health has opened our eyes to a need and supported our staff in learning

and implementing new, fresh, developmentally appropriate ideas.” States Patty Lopez, Health and Safety Manager.

Head Start has always focused on the development, education and socialization of children from low-socio economic households. In 2014 PartnerSHIP 4 Health developed a relationship with Lakes and Prairies Head Start through the Health Equity Initiative. This partnership helped to bring innovative ideas on physical activity and learning opportunities for children about healthy eating.

Head Start was able to welcome SchoolsAlive!, active recess consultants, into a teacher training to assist teachers in the importance of getting all children engaged to move, overcoming barriers and unique physical activity ideas for the appropriate developmental stage. After this training Head Start teachers were purposeful in incorporating movement throughout their learning day with their students. Through exploration into their classrooms on space that can be used for movement. They used weekly emails to reinforce and provide new movement ideas to all teachers.

Head Start provides events for families in the evenings where there is an educational component. “Because of our growing partnership, we have developed a sense of urgency to include physical activities in all of our events that we host,” shares Lopez. At their February event “Heart Pump” while each family was able to put

together a First Aid Kit to take home, there were movement stations incorporated. Also, at these events a healthy snack is provided along with the appropriate serving size to model behaviors that can be carried through at home.

Demonstrating and teaching about healthy foods has also been incorporated into the classroom setting. Children are able to learn about growing seeds and foods that come from gardens. Each child started a kale, beet or squash plant in the classroom. There were lessons that involved watching the seedlings develop and grow, measuring growth, and what produce tastes like from the plants.

Early Head Start Incorporates Physical Activity from the Beginning

The Early Head Start program was started in Fall of 2015. Due to the positive effects of physical activity with the children and families being served by Head Start, when this program was starting to be developed Head Start knew the importance of incorporating physical activity with the families that are being served through this program.

Through the partnership with PS4H resources kits were provided to teachers. These kits are used with families to mentor and coach parents on their child’s physical, social and mental development. The teacher demonstrates to the parent how to encourage that skill and help them brainstorm and adapt toys they already have to encourage specific skills at each stage in development.

