

**Title of Intervention:** Healthy Start

**Intervention Strategies:** Environments and Policies

**Purpose of the Intervention:** To reduce the saturated fat content of preschool meals to less than 10% daily energy

**Population:** 2-5 year old preschool children, primarily low-income and African-American or Latino

**Setting:** Head Start pre-school centers in upstate New York; school-based

**Partners:** Food service staff

**Intervention Description:**

- Environments and Policies: The primary dietary intervention was a pre-school Food Service Modification plan designed to help pre-schools meet the requirements for a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reimbursable meal pattern. In addition, pre-schools had a goal of achieving a five-day meal /snack plan that provided no more than 30% of energy from total fat and no more than 10% of energy from saturated fat.

**Theory:** Not mentioned

**Resources Required:**

- Staff/Volunteers: Cooks
- Training: Not mentioned
- Technology: Not mentioned
- Space: Not mentioned
- Budget: Not mentioned
- Intervention: One day training program that addresses menu planning, recipe development, food purchasing and food preparation
- Evaluation: Nutrient analysis software, 24-hour food recalls facilitated by observation and phone interview

**Evaluation:**

- Design: Quasi-experimental
- Methods and Measures:
  - Total dietary intake for the day was collected through observation while at school and telephone interviews with the primary caregiver
  - Menus were analyzed to determine adherence to fat guidelines

**Outcomes:**

- Short Term Impact: Not measured
- Long Term Impact: Consumption of saturated fat from school meals significantly decreased in the intervention group, whereas saturated fat intake increased at schools that did not have the intervention. In addition, total fat content of menus significantly decreased in intervention schools compared with controls.

**Maintenance:** Not mentioned

**Lessons Learned:** Despite the large number of factors which influence dietary behaviors and nutrient intake in childhood, the present intervention demonstrates that a structured food service intervention implemented in pre-school can be a safe and effective way of increasing the number of children who consume heart healthy, lower saturated fat meals and snacks that are consistent with current dietary guidelines.

**Citation(s):**

Williams, C. L., M. C. Bollella, et al. (2002). "'Healthy-start': outcome of an intervention to promote a heart healthy diet in preschool children." *J Am Coll Nutr* 21(1): 62-71.