

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Scotland County

Children Reduce Risk of Obesity with Healthy Choices

According to the 2014 Scotland County State of the County Report, 30.8% of the children, ages 2 to 9 years, and 30.6% of children 10 to 17 years of age who are living in the county are either overweight or obese. These rates have not changed significantly since 2006. Based on the county's 2013 Community and Health Assessment Survey, poor nutrition and lack of physical activity are two risk factors that contribute to the continued high rates. Concerned Scotland County leaders have been encouraging community resources to work together to address this public health issue.

Two key resources working diligently to resolve the issue are NC Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and Scotland County schools. Through this partnership the EFNEP Program Assistant leads hands-on learning experiences and introduces MyPlate's basic nutrition and physical activity guidelines for healthy living to all school children. They learn that including foods from each food group when creating their daily meal plan ensures a healthy diet.

The children also learn that physical activity plays an equally important role in staying healthy. Walking the dog around the block, playing dodge ball during recess, or riding their bike to a friend's house can quickly add up to the 60 minutes recommended each day.

To measure the impact of the program, each child is asked to complete a pre and post program survey. A comparison of the two shows knowledge gained and subsequent behavior change. A recent comparison of the surveys taken by Scotland County children indicated that 100% had improved their ability to make healthy food choices and had also become more physically active.

The teachers supported these results. They had observed that prior to the children participating in EFNEP, snacks requested for school parties or celebrations were chips, candy and cookies. However, now because of what the children have learned in EFNEP, popcorn, fruit and veggie selections were requested instead. The teachers also stated that the students had begun asking their parents to send fruit and veggies to school as their daily snacks.

Resources:

ADA Pocket Guide to Pediatric Weight Management
<https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0880914351>. Retrieved July 15, 2015
State of the County Health Report, Scotland County <http://www.scotlandcounty.org/Data/Sites/1/media/departments/health/sotch2014finalsigned.pdf>. Retrieved July 15, 2015
State of the County Health Report Scotland County, North Carolina December 2012. <http://www.scotlandcounty.org/Data/Sites/1/media/departments/health/sotchreport2012.pdf>. Retrieved August 24, 2015.
Scotland County Community Health Assessment 2013. <http://www.scotlandcounty.org/Data/Sites/1/media/departments/health/char2013.pdf>. Retrieved August 24, 2015.

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100% of Participating Youth Increase Daily Activity After EFNEP's Boot Camp

In 2012, a nationwide sample of adults determined the greatest health concern facing children today was physical inactivity. The poll taken by the University of Michigan C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, concluded that 38% of the adults surveyed still considered obesity a concern, but knowing physical inactivity is a major contributor to obesity, 39% ranked that behavior, or lack of it, a greater health concern.

According to Nemours Health and Prevention Services' only 36% of our American youth participate in the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity a day. To improve that outcome, it is important we provide opportunities throughout the day that will allow our children to become more physically active. And, to encourage participation, those activities need to be fun and engaging.

The advantages of being physically active are numerous. Besides being a weight loss mechanism and deterrent to obesity, children who are physically active build strength, endurance, healthy bones and muscles. They are also attentive, learn better in school, and have a greater sense of overall well-being. Research has shown that physically active children become physically active adults who enjoy health benefits that also include a reduced risk of heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

In Scotland County, where the rate of obesity is a major concern, the NC Cooperative Extension Service offers physical activity opportunities to children participating in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program's (EFNEP) health and fitness Boot Camp. Partnering with a local recreation center, the children are physically active a minimum of 60 minutes each day. They participate in exercises such as Taebo kicks, exercise along to popular videos, dance, and play organized games like basketball that get them up and moving.

In pre/post program surveys, 100% of the over 200 youth said they are more physically active now than they had been before their Boot Camp experience. One young man said that after learning the value and experiencing the fun of being physically active at EFNEP's Boot Camp, he now asks his parents to take him to the park or recreation center where he can exercise each day.

Resources:

Best Practices for Physical Activity: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy—For Organization Serving Children and Youth. Page 19.
<https://www.nemours.org/content/dam/nemours/www/filebox/service/preventive/nhps/paguidelines.pdf>
Top 10 child health concerns: Exercise, obesity & smoking lead list
August 20, 2012 Volume 16 Issue 3
<http://www.futurity.org/survey-says-child-inactivity-is-1-health-risk/>



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