



Maryland: Model Health

Overview

With funding from a 2007 USDA Team Nutrition Grant, the Maryland State Department of Education School and Nutrition Community Programs branch which includes CACFP partnered with the Maryland Committee for Children and Division of Early Childhood Development to develop and implement the “Model Health” program. This consisted of training and technical assistance for child care providers, offering mini-grants to target child care centers to support the implementation of parent and caregivers’ healthy behavior role modeling, and fostering healthy eating and physical activity habits for child care participants.

Partners for Model Health

Three Partners worked together in the development and implementation of this project.

1. The Maryland State Department of Education School and Nutrition Community Programs administer many of the USDA Nutrition programs in Maryland, including CACFP and the National School Lunch Program. It took the lead on the Team Nutrition Grant.
2. The Division of Early Childhood Development within Maryland State Department of Education whose responsibilities include licensing and monitoring child care centers and family child care providers. The Office also issues contracts and grants to child care providers to improve the quality of early care, and it administers the state’s Child Care Credentialing System. Additionally, it administers 35 Judith P. Hoyer Early Child Care and Family Education Centers, or “Judy Centers.”* Through this partnership, the “Judy Centers” were the participants in the Team Nutrition Grant.
3. Maryland Committee for Children, which is a non-profit child advocacy organization. One of the many resources that they provide is technical assistance and training for child care providers. With the Maryland State Department of Education School and Nutrition Community Programs they co-directed all activities described in the grant and functioned as a training provider for the child care centers participating in the grant activities.

Training and Mini Grant Awarding Process

Program started with intense 3 day workshop that provided training to Judy childcare center directors on good nutrition, teaching nutrition education to children, role modeling, parental involvement etc. Attendees learned how to complete the North Carolina Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Childcare (NAPSACC) to identify areas of needed improvement. Attendees also learned how to write mini-grants to help with improvements.

* Provide a central location for early childhood education and support services that promote school readiness through collaboration with community-based agencies, organizations and businesses for children birth through Kindergarten age who reside in specific Title I school districts across the state of Maryland.

- The Department of Education School and Nutrition Community Programs branch distributed mini-grants for \$3,000-\$6,000 to Judy Centers from the original USDA Team Nutrition grant that provided resources, funded event/activities for parents and children such as family fun nights and health fairs
- Technical assistance was provided throughout.
- Conduct final meeting for mini-grant recipients to share promising practices
- End of the year meeting addressed lessons learned and how to be sustainable

Challenges

- Getting busy Judy center staff committed to the project and coming to the workshop
- Difficult to teach workshop participants who weren't familiar with the grant writing process to write the mini-grants

Future Plans

- Developing a Promising Practices book from mini-grant recipients' projects/activities to distribute to all CACFP child care centers in Maryland

For more information, contact

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