

Overview

The New Hampshire Bureau of Nutrition Programs & Services, which administers the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), is rolling out several new programs to promote nutrition and physical activity among young children. The Bureau's efforts focus on enabling child care providers who participate in CACFP to offer nutrition and physical education to the young children they serve. The Bureau is disseminating tool kits that use the I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IM/IL) approach as well as the Growing Up WILD curriculum and the Early Sprouts curriculum. At the 2010 New Hampshire CACFP conference, attendees from 25 centers received training in both the IM/IL approach and the Growing Up WILD curriculum. After the training, six centers from throughout the state were chosen as pilot centers. These centers will receive additional training and undergo evaluation. Over a three-year period, the Bureau hopes to train 75 centers and enlist 18 as pilot centers. The Bureau is applying for a U.S. Department of Agriculture Child Care Health and Wellness Grant to fund this initiative.

Groups Involved

Although not specifically part of the Bureau's health promotion efforts, the Bureau established a sponsor's group to help develop professional skills among the staff at sponsoring organizations. This group has been functioning cohesively for the past four years.

The Bureau, which is housed within the New Hampshire Department of Education, has partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the New Hampshire IM/IL team to implement IM/IL in centers participating in CACFP. The IM/IL team was formed by the New Hampshire Head Start State Collaboration Office and includes representatives from relevant divisions of DHHS, including the Bureau of Child Care Licensing, the Maternal and Child Health Section, the Obesity Prevention Program, and the Division for Children, Youth & Families, which administers the Head Start program.

The Growing Up WILD curriculum comes from a national educational program, Project WILD, which was developed by the Council for Environmental Education. In New Hampshire, the educational programs are run through the Fish and Game Department.

The Early Sprouts curriculum was developed by a professor at Keene State College in New Hampshire. The curriculum has already been used in New Hampshire Head Start centers, and the professor is working to adapt it for non-Head Start CACFP participants.

The Bureau also works with several non-profit organizations in New Hampshire, including Early Learning NH, which promotes quality early childhood education, and Plus Time, which supports out-of-school youth development activities and also acts as a CACFP sponsoring organization.

Nutrition and Physical Education Opportunities

Beginning in 2006, all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program had to have a local wellness policy that promotes child health. Because the Bureau administers the NSLP and SBP in addition to CACFP, it worked closely with schools on their policies. At this time, Bureau staff decided that health and wellness promotion should not be limited to schools, but rather should extend to all children through all of the child nutrition programs administered by the Bureau. However, the staff devoted to CACFP consists of one full-time and one part-time employee. Because of its small size, the staff's efforts were limited to offering some nutrition- and physical activity-focused training to sponsoring organizations and providing tools that helped child care providers develop their own wellness policies. To broaden their efforts, the Bureau decided to use and adapt existing nutrition and physical education resources.

I Am Moving, I Am Learning

IM/IL is an approach designed for use in Head Start programs in order to increase the amount of time spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity, increase the quality of structured physical activity, and promote healthy food choices. Staff at New Hampshire Head Start centers received initial training on IM/IL in 2009 as part of this national Head Start initiative to address obesity. In order to expand the program beyond Head Start, New Hampshire Head Start State Collaboration Office formed an IM/IL team composed of representatives from relevant DHHS divisions. DHHS and the IM/IL team partnered with the Bureau because of the Bureau's connection to child care providers participating in CACFP, an audience that could benefit from the IM/IL training and resources.

IM/IL was launched at the annual CACFP conference in May 2010. At this time, IM/IL training was offered to 40 attendees representing 25 centers that participate in CACFP. Six of the centers were chosen, based on their geographic location in the state, to participate in a more intensive pilot program. Each of the six centers was paired with a Head Start center that had not only been trained to use IM/IL, but trained to act as a mentor. In addition to having a Head Start mentor, the centers will receive ongoing technical assistance and support from the New Hampshire Head Start IM/IL program staff. Next year, the Bureau plans to offer the training to another 25 centers and choose six of those to become mentored pilot centers. The Bureau will do the same the following year, for a total of 75 trained centers and 18 pilot centers.

Because the small Bureau CACFP staff cannot directly train all child care providers, the "train-the-trainer" model of IM/IL works well in New Hampshire. However, because IM/IL is an approach rather than a curriculum, the Bureau would like to provide child care providers with Active Play! Fun Physical Activities for Young Children. The Active Play! guide was written by Dr. Diane Kraft, an expert on physical activity in

early childhood settings. These simple, developmentally appropriate activities do not require expensive supplies and would make it easier for providers to implement IM/IL. As soon as the Bureau receives external funding, the guide will be purchased for providers, and Dr. Craft will train CACFP sponsors to use it. The sponsoring organizations will in turn train the centers and homes that they oversee.

Growing Up WILD

The Growing Up WILD curriculum was created by Project WILD, an educational program administered nationally by the Council for Environmental Education. In New Hampshire, it is administered by the Fish and Game Department.

This curriculum is designed to instill a love of nature and build skills in children aged three to seven through a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. The Growing Up WILD lessons also include several health promotion components, including a section on health topics, a healthy snack idea, outdoor activities, and other activities involving movement, like dancing. However, the snack ideas do not always fulfill CACFP meal pattern requirements. To prevent confusion among providers, the Bureau presented information on the meal pattern along with the curriculum.

As with IM/IL, Growing Up WILD was launched at the New Hampshire CACFP conference. The six IM/IL pilot centers will also receive additional training and support to use Growing Up WILD. The Bureau hopes to receive external funding that will enable them to make Growing Up WILD and other resources available to other sponsoring organizations through a competitive grant process. Sponsors could choose to receive the Growing Up WILD materials and training from among a list of options, and then the sponsors would train their centers and homes that they oversee.

Early Sprouts: Gardening and Nutrition Experiences for the Young Child

The Early Sprouts curriculum was developed by Dr. Karrie Kalich at Keene State College, which is part of the New Hampshire university system.

The curriculum is designed around a working garden, where young children can learn how to grow, harvest and prepare healthy snacks. The program aims to increase children's preferences for and consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy as well as promote dietary changes in schools and families and prevent overweight. The Early Sprouts curriculum has already been implemented at several New Hampshire Head Start centers. Dr. Kalich is working with the Bureau to better adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of child care providers participating in CACFP.

This curriculum will be one of the options for the sub-grants, along with Growing Up WILD.

Funding

To date, the Bureau has received no external funding to assist with nutrition or health promotion among CACFP participants.

Challenges

As previously mentioned, the Bureau CACFP staff is small and, as of yet, has no external funding for nutrition and health promotion activities. This has made it challenging to implement new programs. It will be challenging for the Bureau to implement the all of its planned programs if it does not receive a Child Care Health & Wellness Grant.

In addition, the Bureau does not have the benefit of a New Hampshire-based non-profit organization that advocates and promotes child nutrition programs. Since the staff has limited time for outreach and promotion itself, few are aware of the Bureau's work. However, the Bureau has begun to overcome this barrier through the partnerships discussed earlier.

Future Plans

The Bureau is waiting to hear the status of its USDA Child Care Health & Wellness Grant so that it can continue with the dissemination of the curricula and resources. Along with this, the Bureau plans to evaluate its efforts and develop a mechanism for providers to share their accomplishments.

Resources

To find more information on Growing Up WILD and access program resources, please visit the website: <http://www.projectwild.org/growingupwild.htm>.

For more information on Early Sprouts, please see the website: <http://www.earllysprouts.org/>.