ACTIVE AND HEALTHY SCHOOLS PILOT PROGRAM IN TWO PRIVATE MISSOURI K-8 GRADE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Introduction. Overweight and obesity increase individuals risk for chronic diseases. In 2009, 14% of Missouri ninth to twelfth graders were overweight. This study examined the efficacy of Active and Healthy Schools (AHS) to increase physical activity time and steps while decreasing total screen time; and increase healthy food choices among 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th students at two private Missouri schools. Methods. With AHS, school playgrounds were zoned, classroom activity breaks used, and positive nutrition behaviors reinforced. During data collection, students wore pedometers to collect physical activity time and step counts, and filled out data collection logs capturing total screen time each day. The physical activity and nutrition questionnaires were administered. Results. At school physical activity time increased at CS (p=0.001) 9.55 minutes and increased at home by 2.96 minutes. At CS, 5th grade physical activity time increased compared to sixth and eighth graders. Screen time at TS decreased (p=0.001) 8.25 minutes. Fifth graders had a greater increase in physical activity time verses 6th and 8th grades and increased physical activity time at home verses 7th and 8th grades. CS 100% fruit juice consumption increased (p=0.026). Soda pop consumption increased at CS (p=0.028). Conclusion. School-wide environmental changes (i.e. zoning playgrounds and classroom activity breaks) should be incorporated at school to increase physical activity. Future studies should focus how to decrease soda pop consumption and determine if sex- and/or grade-specific interventions are needed.