



Alabama Department of Public Health

Montgomery, Alabama

Intensive Site

“I made a visit on their last day of the CATCH curriculum and the students were eating the snack. I don’t know if they were just saying the right things because the dietitian was there. I don’t know if they were just putting on a little show for me, but they seemed to really be enjoying it. The teachers did a really great job implementing the program. The teachers were asking the students questions, and they knew the answers.”

Description

The Alabama Department of Public Health’s Worksite Wellness Division (WWD) and the Nutrition and Physical Activity (NPA) Division worked collaboratively on the **We Can!** project. The WWD has provided annual health screenings and health education for state employees for more than 11 years and for public education employees for five years. The NPA was established in 1995 and consists of three master’s level registered dietitians and one registered nurse. The Division strives to improve the health of Alabama residents through education on lifelong behavior changes related to nutrition and physical activity.

The Alabama Department of Public Health extended its work with afterschool programs across the state by offering CATCH Kids Club and parent programs to augment nutrition and physical activity information. Alabama Department of Public Health described its partnership with the state education department as one of its strongest successes.

Key Site Success:

- The Alabama Department of Public Health reached a broad range of different areas throughout the state with **We Can!** programming and many of the sites have expressed an ongoing interest in continuing to implement the program.

Community Outreach

The Alabama Department of Public Health worked hard to disseminate **We Can!** statewide. The site participated in three community events that attracted over 700 community members. **We Can!** materials along with other public nutrition materials were distributed in different areas of the state; Montgomery and Selma were reached in central Alabama, as was Crossville in the northeast corner of the state.

The Alabama Department of Public Health developed three partnerships to support its *We Can!* activities and created local media contacts to aid in *We Can!* publicity.

Community Events

Success by 6 Beach Party (June 2005). This event, held at Nehemiah Love Center in the Chisolm community of Montgomery, attracted 75 community members who enjoyed the outdoor venue with plenty of food, health information, and activities for youth, such as fruit and vegetable face painting, ring toss, volleyball, and bounce house. Success By 6 partnered with the Alabama Department of Public Health (Diabetes Branch, Tobacco Branch, and the Nutrition and Physical Activity Division), as well as two churches—First Baptist and Chisolm Baptist. These partners provided lunch, staff support for games and activities, and health information.

Parental Involvement and 21st Century Community Learning Center Health Screening and Health Awareness Fair (October 2005). Micasita Community Learning Center in Crossville worked with several partners, including Baptist Medical Hospital, Red Cross, ALL Kids, DeKalb County Migrant Education Program, Alabama Department of Public Health, Crossville Elementary School, and the Advisory Council, to host this event held at Crossville Elementary School. Over 125 adults and youths attended the event and enjoyed several activities. The school/Mi Casita personnel worked with families to complete Child Safety Kits, conduct games in the gym using CATCH Kids Club activities, and set up a computer lab so parents and students could print out personalized Food Pyramids. In addition, Baptist Medical Hospital conducted health screenings, the Red Cross provided information, ALL Kids provided information and freebies, and DeKalb County Migrant Education Program provided information in Spanish and English. The site submitted a report and photographs from the event to the statewide Extended Day/Extended Year newsletter, as well as to the local newspaper.

Annual Black Belt Community Health Fair (May 2006). This event, held at Wallace Community College in Selma, attracted over 500 community members. The event, organized by Selma City Schools and Dr. Bruce Taylor and Associates, included exhibits, health screenings, physician consultations, interactive computer games on nutrition and physical activity for kids, a poster contest on health topics, and song, dance, and mime performances by local school children. Numerous groups partnered with the coordinators of this event, including Wallace Community College, University of Alabama at Birmingham, the Alabama Department of Public Health-Nutrition and Physical Activity Division, Arthritis Foundation, ALL Kids, the Dallas County Extension System, Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Curves, Vaughn Regional Medical Center, pharmaceutical representatives, and the fire department. These partners provided incentives such as wrist bands, stickers, stuffed animals, lanyards, bags, magnets, pens, and pencils; distributed informational materials on topics such as arthritis, nutrition, physical activity, healthy snacks, obesity, and diabetes; conducted health screenings for diabetes, cholesterol, blood pressure, and body mass index; and performed song, mime, and dance routines. This event was covered by the local radio station and newspaper.



Children from Clark Elementary's afterschool program in Selma, who completed the Catch Kids Club curriculum were highlighted in a *We Can!* display. The children attended the event and were photographed with the display.

Media Outreach

The Alabama Department of Health worked with the Parent Teacher Organization and local media to publicize its activities and programs. Some of their efforts included creating and displaying large *We Can!* banners in high-traffic areas of the city. They received radio and newspaper coverage of their Annual Black Belt Community Health Fair and issued a press release to publicize their programs and events.

Partnerships

The Alabama Department of Public Health was able to recruit three partners to support its *We Can!* activities. Success by 6, a nonprofit United Way program, provided staff support, facilities, and participants for community events and programming. It also worked with local churches to coordinate snacks. The Department of Education partnered to provide nutrition and physical activity resources to its Extended Day/ Extended Year programs afterschool using *We Can!* programs and materials. Staff support was an essential component for implementation. The Obesity Task Force provided communication support by acting as liaison to various state and local agencies as well as industry and nonprofit organizations with interests in lowering obesity rates in order to share information.

Parent and Youth Curricula

We Can! Energize Our Families: Curriculum for Parents and Caregivers

This six-lesson curriculum was developed specifically for parents and caregivers by *We Can!* In a fun and hands-on way, it teaches participants essential skills that help families make healthful food choices and become more physically active. The Alabama Department of Public Health worked with its partner, Success by 6, to implement the Parent Curriculum to a group of adults that met on a regular basis. By offering the program in three sessions, meeting once per week for three weeks, they were able to accommodate the parents' schedules. The participants especially loved the "portion-distortion" lesson and asked lots of questions about their children's nutrition habits.

Success by 6 began implementing the Parent Curriculum in October 2006 to 15 parents—13 women and two men. An analysis of eight respondent surveys found significant increases in **healthy food behaviors**. By the end of the Parent Curriculum, parents reported more often reading nutrition fact labels and ensuring that foods high in fat and sugar are not easily available at home. The analysis also suggested positive movement on nine measures (**energy balance knowledge and attitudes; healthy eating attitudes; portion size attitudes and behaviors; physical activity knowledge and behaviors; and screen time attitudes and behaviors**) related to *We Can!* objectives. These findings were not significant.

Parent Curriculum Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
Gender		Age		Adults in Household	
Females	100 (8)	18-25	25 (2)	1	38 (3)
		26-35	25 (2)	2 or more	63 (5)
Race		36-45	25 (2)	Education Level	
African American	38 (3)	46-55	13 (1)	Less than high school	13 (1)
Caucasian	50 (4)	Ethnicity		High school graduate	38 (3)
Other	13 (1)	Hispanic	13 (1)	Some college	38 (3)
		Non-Hispanic	88 (7)	College degree	13 (1)

N = 8

Summary of Parent Curriculum Findings

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	Percent Change	t Value	df	p
Energy Balance Knowledge	1.88	2.13	.25	13%	.55	7	.60
Energy Balance Attitudes	7.50	9.00	1.29	17%	1.59	6	.16
Portion Size Knowledge	1.88	1.63	-.25	-13%	-.61	7	.56
Portion Size Attitudes	3.75	4.75	1.00	27%	2.00	7	.09
Portion Size Behaviors	7.50	8.38	.88	12%	2.20	7	.06
Healthy Eating Knowledge	3.00	2.63	-.38	-13%	-1.43	7	.20
Healthy Eating Attitudes	12.25	12.50	.25	2%	.45	7	.67
Healthy Eating Behaviors	22.50	21.75	-.75	-3%	-1.11	7	.30
Healthy Food Behaviors	9.63	11.63	2.00	21%	2.57*	7	< .05
Physical Activity Knowledge	2.38	2.63	.25	11%	1.00	7	.35
Physical Activity Attitudes	23.25	22.75	-.50	-2%	-.27	7	.80
Physical Activity Behaviors	20.63	21.63	1.00	5%	.74	7	.48
Screen Time Knowledge	2.50	2.25	-.25	-10%	-.68	7	.52
Screen Time Attitudes	13.63	13.88	.25	2%	.51	7	.63
Screen Time Behaviors	14.25	16.50	.38	3%	2.05	7	.08

*Statistically significant finding

CATCH Kids Club

The Alabama Department of Health worked with Clark Elementary to offer 34 children the CATCH Kids Club program during afterschool and summer sessions. Designed for children in grades K–5 in afterschool or summer-care settings, CATCH helps children adopt healthier dietary and physical activity behaviors by positively influencing the health environments of recreation programs, schools, and homes. The field-tested materials include an Activity Box with snack recipes and physical and nutrition activities.

An analysis of 34 respondent surveys found statistically significant increases in **food attitudes: intentions to reduce fat** and decreases in **screen time behaviors: weekend video gaming**. By the completion of the CATCH curriculum, youths reported increased intentions to reduce intake of higher-fat foods and reduced video game playing and Internet surfing on weekends. Although not statistically significant, the analysis also suggested positive movement toward *We Can!* objectives related to **physical activity attitudes; screen time behaviors: weekday TV viewing and weekday video gaming; food knowledge; food attitudes: self-efficacy and intentions to drink skim milk; and healthy eating behaviors: eating fiber, and eating fruits and vegetables**.

CATCH Curriculum Demographic Characteristics

Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)	Characteristics	% (n)
Gender		Grade		Age	
Males	53 (18)	Third	27 (9)	8	3 (1)
Females	47 (16)	Fourth	35 (12)	9	32 (11)
Race		Fifth	38 (13)	10	24 (8)
African American	94 (32)			11	32 (11)
Other	3 (1)			12	9 (3)

N = 34

CATCH Summary of Findings

Measure	Pre-Test Mean	Post-Test Mean	Mean Difference	% Change	t Value	df	p
Food Knowledge	20.56	20.81	.63	3%	.75	29	.46
Food Attitudes: Self-Efficacy	15.47	16.32	.61	4%	.97	30	.34
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Reduce Fat	10.00	11.16	1.30	13%	2.55*	26	< .05
Food Attitudes: Intentions to Drink Skim Milk	1.53	1.58	.06	4%	.63	30	.54
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reducing Fat	2.48	1.34	-.93	-38%	-2.42*	28	< .05
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fiber	2.15	2.25	.19	9%	.80	31	.43
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Eating Fruits and Vegetables	11.82	12.07	.26	2%	.43	26	.67
Healthy Eating Behaviors: Reading Labels	1.06	.94	-.12	-11%	-.89	33	.38
Physical Activity Attitudes	6.59	7.10	.40	6%	1.42	29	.17
Physical Activity Behavior	.88	.91	-.03	-3%	-.57	32	.57
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday TV Viewing	5.65	5.03	-.67	-12%	-1.68	32	.10
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend TV Viewing	5.15	4.88	.18	3%	.46	32	.65
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekday Video Gaming	2.30	1.91	-.38	-17%	-1.13	31	.27
Screen Time Behaviors: Weekend Video Gaming	2.09	1.53	-.55	-26%	-2.13*	30	< .05

*Statistically significant finding