

Evaluability Assessments of Programs and Policies to Prevent Childhood Obesity

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Project team

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✦ Experts in childhood obesity and evaluation

Overview

- ◆ Background
- ◆ Evaluability Assessments
- ◆ Project Purpose
- ◆ Project Scope
- ◆ Methods
- ◆ Progress
- ◆ Conclusions

Background

- ✦ Prevalence of childhood obesity ($\text{BMI} \geq$ CDC 95th percentile) has tripled in the past thirty years
- ✦ Communities and organizations are experimenting with strategies to prevent childhood obesity
- ✦ Evidence-based programs and strategies are needed
- ✦ Evaluability assessments (EA) help to determine if community-level programs and policies are ready for evaluation

Evaluability Assessments

What is it?

- ◆ Assess program and policy:
 - plausibility of desired outcomes
 - feasibility of full implementation
 - potential for rigorous evaluation

Why do them?

- ◆ Rigorous evaluation costly & time consuming
- ◆ Programs/policies implemented without fidelity → failed evaluations
- ◆ Determination of readiness for evaluation

Project purpose

- ✦ Identify environmental programs and policies ready for rigorous evaluation
- ✦ Increase the capacity of researchers to use evaluability assessment
- ✦ Conduct a synthesis to describe environmental programs and policies

Project Scope

- ✦ Two-year project
- ✦ Topic areas
 - **Afterschool/daycare**
 - **Food access**
 - **Local wellness policies**
 - Comprehensive school physical activity programs
 - Land use and transportation policies/projects for physical activity

Methods

- ✦ Systematic process
 - Solicited nominations of programs and policies in each topic area
 - Afterschool/daycare (N=81)
 - Food access (N=55)
 - Local wellness policies (N=146)
 - Selected programs and policies that met inclusion/exclusion criteria
 - Afterschool/daycare (N=25)
 - Food access (N=22)
 - Local wellness policies (N=25)
 - Expert panel selected several for evaluability assessment

Methods

- ✦ Selection by expert panel based on:
 - Potential impact
 - Innovativeness
 - Reach
 - Acceptability to stakeholders
 - Feasibility of implementation
 - Feasibility of adoption
 - Sustainability
 - Generalizability/transportability
 - Capacity

Methods

- ✦ 26 recommended programs and policies
 - 7 Afterschool programs, 2 daycare programs, and 1 daycare policy
 - 5 programs: dedicated physical activity (PA) time, nutritious snacks
 - 4 programs: PA focused, nutrition education
 - 1 policy: regulations for PA time and nutrition
 - 10 Food access programs
 - 5 farmers markets
 - 3 supermarket or corner store programs
 - 2 restaurant programs altered menus to offer healthier choices
 - 6 Local wellness policies
 - All selected policies addressed PA and nutrition in the school

Methods

- ✦ Review of program and policy documents
 - Draft logic model
- ✦ Conducted 3 day evaluability assessment site visit
- ✦ Trained site visitors conduct:
 - Interviews with various types of stakeholders:
 - Lead administrator
 - Program manager
 - Staff
 - Partner
 - Evaluator
 - Other stakeholder

Methods

- ◆ Interviews which included the following issues:
 - Overview of program/policy
 - Logic model
 - Data collection activities
 - Staffing capacity
 - Funding
 - Sustainability
 - Current evaluation activities
- ◆ Technical Assistance (TA) or debriefing session on 3rd day
- ◆ Reports and recommendations
- ◆ Follow-up TA call with CDC experts

Progress

- ◆ Completed 25 evaluability assessments
- ◆ Four topic areas are currently being explored
 - Afterschool/daycare
 - Food access
 - Comprehensive school physical activity programs
 - Land use and transportation policies/projects for physical activity
- ◆ Synthesis reports are being developed for:
 - Afterschool/daycare, food access, and local wellness policies

Conclusions

- ✦ Innovation is everywhere
- ✦ Evaluability assessment works
- ✦ Evaluability assessment field is growing

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