Evaluability Assessments of Programs and Policies to Prevent Childhood Obesity

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Disclaimer: The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
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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 (BMI ≥ 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
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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