

Program Teaching Youth Healthy Habits for Life

Between 1963 and 1991, the prevalence of obesity in Iowa increased from 5.2 to 10.9 percent in children ages six to eleven. Similar increases were noted in youth ages 12-17. Studies show that 25 to 50 percent of obese adolescents remain obese into adulthood. Prevention is the best way to treat this problem.

The Pick a Better Snack program is offered through Iowa State University Extension in the Wapello County school district to over 1,600 students in pre-kindergarten to fifth grade in 9 schools.



Children are taught to replace less nutritious snacks with fruits and vegetables, and drink more milk. Teachers also receive classroom support materials, books and games for use with their students. Educators are in the classroom for an average of 45 minutes per session. Each session includes a lesson, story and activity to get students active. A tasting is also done each session with simple snacks so students can make their own. This program is made possible by a BASICS grant that brings over \$110,000 into the county through federal food stamp dollars.

“The Pick A Better Snack Program has proved to be one of the most beneficial programs that we have implemented within the school day. It not only supports our work with our local Wellness Policy, but I hear first hand from parents how this information is transferring into the student's homes. For instance one parent told me that when shopping her child now encourages her to pick fruits that she herself has never even tasted, let alone thought to bring to the family table.”

Terri Schofield, Seton Catholic School Principal

For more information about this program or other Iowa State University Extension resources, contact the Wapello County Office at 641-682-5491. Information is also available on the Iowa State University Extension website at www.extension.iastate.edu.

January 2008

... and justice for all

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