Family Focused Obesity Prevention Programming: Why & How

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Learning Objectives

* Define Family Focused Programming
* Identify elements of a family focused program
* Understand empirical evidence for utility of family focused approach
* Develop at least one idea for using family focused approach with your programming
Family-focused refers to interventions designed to identify and alter how family members interact, communicate, and support each other regarding nutrition behavior and lifestyle changes. (Kaplan et al., 2014)

- ~2/3 of children’s dietary intake occurs in home
- Home and family environments shape attitudes towards food and satiation assessment
- Family & home environments play integral role in shaping eating & physical activity behaviors
## Prevalence of Obesity* Among U.S. Children and Adolescents (Aged 2–19 Years)

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*Sex-and age-specific BMI ≥ 95th percentile based on the CDC growth charts

Source: Centers for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/childhood/prevalence.htm
Developmental Stages

- Infancy (0 to 1 year)
- Toddler (1 to 2 years)
- Preschooler (2 to 5 years)
- Early School Age (5 to 8 years)
- Middle Childhood (8 to 12 years)
- Adolescence (13 to 18 years)
- Early Adulthood (18 to 25 years)

“Early Childhood”
Developmental Stages: Infancy

* Physical
  * Primary sensory systems (sight, audio, visual)
  * Basic motor function (sit, crawl, stand, reach, grip, pinch)

* Social
  * Self vs. other awareness
  * Social play
  * Attachment & separation anxiety
  * Basic communication & language (words refer to objects, body language, babbling, first words)

* Cognitive
  * Memory
  * Imitation
  * Cause/effect
Developmental Stages: Toddler

* Physical
  * Walks, climbs, runs
  * Coordinated hand movements to manipulate objects

* Social
  * Self-awareness/ Defiance
  * More sophisticated emotions (embarrassment, fear, envy)
  * Parallel play, imitation of others
  * Language explosion = individual words and combinations (2 to 3 word sentences)

* Cognitive
  * Learning through repetition
  * Recognizes self in a mirror
  * Early pretend play
Developmental Stages: Preschool

* **Physical**
  * Coordinated fine (turn pages, doorknobs, drawing/writing) & gross motor movements (pedaling, running, jumping)
  * Self-care: dressing, washing, utensiles

* **Social**
  * Understands social standards of behavior
  * Begins to regulate emotions on own – tantrums are normative
  * Feels guilt & pride
  * Cooperation and social interaction with other children

* **Cognitive**
  * Problem solves
  * More involved pretend play
  * Understands deception
  * Basic understanding of time
**Developmental Stages: School Age**

- **Physical**
  - More coordinated large & fine motor movements

- **Social**
  - Regulates own emotions
  - Identifies with peer group
  - Growing sense of self identity

- **Cognitive**
  - Future planning
  - Abstract organization of thoughts
Scenario of a 3 year old

High energy child
Defiant behavior
Picky eater
Low income household
High risk neighborhood

Family Interactions
Behavioral Predictors of Pediatric Obesity

- **Diet**
  - Fruit/veg consumption
  - High energy density of foods
  - Sugar sweetened beverage consumption

- **Lifestyle**
  - Physical activity
  - Screen time

- **Parent feeding**
  - Pressure to eat
  - Food restriction
  - Food as reward
  - Modeling
  - Style of interactions
Family Focused Programming Model

Psychosocial and Environmental Factors

Parental Change

Family Based Intervention

Child Change

Environmental Change

Parenting & Child Feeding
Parenting & Child Feeding

* **Feeding Practices**: Goal directed behaviors that are contextually influenced

* **Feeding Styles**: Parenting styles specific to child feeding
Feeding Practices

* Feeding Practices: Goal directed behaviors that are contextually influenced
  * Restriction
  * Pressure
  * Food as reward
  * Modeling
  * Structure of home food environment
Feeding Practices

* **Restriction (overt & covert limits on the availability of foods)**
  * Overt: Increases preference for restricted foods & food intake
    * may hinder self-regulation
    * may be stronger for children with higher initial BMI
  * Overt: Linked to higher BMI, including some longitudinal
  * Covert: Linked with healthier outcomes

* **Pressure to Eat**
  * Increased calories consumed & child weight.
Feeding Practices

- **Food as a reward or comfort**
  - Increased sweet consumption
  - More likely to eat for emotional comfort
  - Modestly related to child overweight
  - Decrease preferences for healthy foods when used as incentive for eating “healthy” foods

- **Modeling enjoyment of healthy foods**
  - Increased preference of healthy foods
Feeding Practices

* Structure
  * Routine structure of meal/snack times
    * healthy weight
  * Family meals
    * Improved diet quality (during those meals; older children)
    * Decreased tv viewing
Feeding Styles: Parenting styles specific to child feeding

- Authoritative (high demandingness, high responsiveness)
- Authoritarian (high demandingness, low responsiveness)
- Indulgent (low demandingness, high responsiveness)
- Uninvolved (low demandingness, low responsiveness)
Feeding Styles

- Authoritative feeding styles
  - Increased F/V intake
- Indulgent feeding styles
  - Increased fat/sugar intake
  - Increased weight
Feeding Styles

- Feeding styles are related to parenting styles
  - Authoritarian feeding → Authoritarian parenting
  - Authoritative feeding → Authoritative parenting
  - Indulgent feeding → Permissive parenting
  - Uninvolved feeding → Neglectful parenting
# Feeding Styles vs. Parenting Styles

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<td>Weight</td>
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**Parenting Style**

**Feeding Style**

¹Authoritative not directly tested (used as comparison w/ other styles)

²Few direct tests w/ mixed results
Parenting as Moderator

- Moderator = A variable that influences the strength or direction of an association between 2 other variables.

Family Focused Programming

- Can include both parents and children or just parents as the “agents of change”
- Targets of change are broad across program
  - Parenting
  - Child weight
  - Child dietary behaviors
  - Home dietary and physical activity environment
- Several reviews have established the benefits of including parents – either exclusively or with children – in increased effectiveness\(^1\),\(^2\),\(^3\) and lasting changes\(^4\) in children’s BMI.

Family Focused Programming: Examples

* Lifestyle Triple P (Parents Only)
  * Utilizes Triple P parenting program + nutrition & physical activity
  * 10 in-person parent group parent sessions (weekly for 8 weeks, then 2 3-weeks apart) + 4 30 min telephone sessions
  * Led by health professionals accredited by Triple P training
  * Set goals for change in children’s diet and activity
  * Receive instruction in nutrition and physical activity strategies and positive parenting

Family Focused Programming: Examples

* Parent-Child Audiotutorial (PCAT) & Counseling
  * Self-Paced (targetting hypercholesterolemic 4-10 yr olds)
  * 10 audio book lessons w/ accompanying picture books
  * Follow-up paper-pencil activities for children
  * Manual for parents
  * 1 story and accompanying activities completed each week for 10 weeks
  * Child and parent attend a 45-60 minute counseling session w/ a registered pediatric dietician

Bridges/Puentes Project

- Aims to improve Latino adolescent (7th grade) school engagement via family strengthening
- 3 program components: parenting, adolescent coping, family strengthening
- 9 sessions of each component (1.25 hr parenting/adolescent + .75hr conjoint family session)
- Family sessions offer direct, structured opportunities to practice skills taught in the individual groups
Ayer Elementary Kindergarten Orientation

- Partnership between UC CalFresh and a school site served.
- Parents attend orientation on the first day of school with their students.
- Students do a MyPlate activity with UC CalFresh Staff while parents attend a 30 minute workshop adapted from ESBA.
- Students and parents participate in a MyPlate activity and recipe together.
- Pre-school parents attended the Plan, Shop, Save and Cook series.
- Parents brought their school aged children to the final class for a My plate youth lesson while parents attended the final lesson of the series.
- During the last 45 minutes of class, parents and children came together for the presentation of graduation certificates and to prepare a healthy snack.
Community “Family-Centered” Events

- UC CalFresh staff participates in community wide events by providing the following:
  
  • Nutrition education for adults/parents through interactive poster displays adapted from ESBA curriculum demonstrating key messages.
  
  • Nutrition education for children through interactive games reinforcing MyPlate key messages.
  
  • Encouraging adults to sign up for further information regarding on going nutrition education classes offered in their community through UC CalFresh.
Family Centered Programming

Yolo County
Family Centered Nutrition Education Classes offered to:

* State Preschool sites
* Local agencies and non-profits that serve low-income families like Communicare Health Clinics and The Family Resource Centers.
* Local county Foster & Kinship Education Program
Healthy, Happy Families class series

- Four class series for parents with children 0-5 years of age.
- Focus is on parent-child feeding practices: The Division of Responsibility
- Healthy Routines
- Healthy Habits
Main Concept Taught: 
Division of Responsibility

* The parent is responsible for 
  **what, when, where**
  * What food is served, when it is served (time), where the food is served

* The child is responsible for 
  **how much and whether**
  * How much they eat of any particular food and whether they eat or not

* Source: Ellyn Satter, excerpted from Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family
Preschool Curriculum and “kits” that mirror the series:

- *Happy, Healthy Me Curriculum is our foundation*
  - “Kits” are loaned to state preschool sites & child development centers. Teachers conduct lessons with the preschool students.
  - “Feast for 10”
  - “D.W. The Picky Eater”
  - “Ratatouille”
  - “Lunch”
  - “Taking Care of My Teeth”
  - “Sleep”
  - “Hand-washing”
Our quarterly newsletter, “Fuel Their Minds” is mailed directly to preschool sites for staff and parents to read.

The “Parent Insert” is provided in English and Spanish so sites may reproduce for their parents or post at the site for all to view.

Parent insert topics cover age appropriate and developmentally applicable topics like: Division of Responsibility, Meal Planning, Picky Eating, Healthy Routines, Sleep, Screen Time, Sugar Sweetened Beverages, and Physical Activity.

Contact us!

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Limitations in the field

- Approach primarily applied only to parents and children
  - Fails to recognize influence of other family dynamics
    - Marital/co-parenting relationship
    - Sibling/step-sibling relationships
  - Multigenerational family structures present unique challenges
Family Focused Programming

- What works based on the empirical evidence:
  - Incorporation of parent education with nutrition & physical activity education
  - Parent education = focus on building foundational parenting skills to promote authoritative parenting practices
  - Applications to feeding children
  - Account for child and family factors: child age, ethnicity, family structure
Questions?
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