WISCONSIN EARLY CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION INITIATIVE:
FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE & EDUCATION SETTING

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Division of Public Health
Nutrition, Physical Activity, & Obesity Program
Presentation Outline

- Public Health Problem
- Initiative Background
- Methods
- Results
- Strengths & Limitations
- Next steps
- Acknowledgements
- Questions
The Public Health Problem

- 64.9% of Wisconsin adults are considered overweight or obese (BRFSS, 2006)

- 25.1% of Wisconsin high school students are considered overweight or obese (YRBS, 2007)

- 29.3% of Wisconsin children ages 2-4 participating in WIC are overweight or obese (PedNSS, 2006)
Focus on CDC’s Six Key Behaviors to Prevent Obesity

- Increase Breastfeeding (Initiation, Duration, & Exclusivity)
- Increase Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables
- Decrease Consumption of High-Energy Dense Foods (e.g. candy, chips, cookies)
- Decrease Consumption of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages
- Increase Physical Activity
- Decrease Television/Screen Time
CDC NPAO: Obesity Prevention Model

- Science Base For Obesity Prevention
- Agriculture
- Community
- Early Care & Education
- Medical System
- Land Use
- Transportation
- Schools
- Work Site
- Food & Beverage Industry
- Media
- Active Living and Healthy Eating
Time Spent in Child Care

- 60% of mothers with preschool children are employed; 70% full-time
- 73% of 3-5 year olds participate in at least 1 weekly non-parental care arrangement
- 41% of preschool-aged children are in child care for 35 or more hours per week

Kaphingst K, Story M. Preventing Chronic Disease 2009.
Regulated Child Care in Wisconsin

- **Certified Programs**
  - Family: 3,130 providers, capacity of 10,000 children
  - School-age only: 23 programs, capacity of 20,000
- **Licensed Family**: 2,910 centers, capacity of 30,000
- **Licensed Group**: 2,513 centers, capacity of 184,832

- **Total estimated maximum capacity of children in some form of regulated care is 244,834 children.**

WI Department of Children and Families, 2009.
Core Initiative Partners

- Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI)
- Dept. of Health Services (DHS)
- Dept. of Children and Families (DCF)
- Community Coordinated Child Care (4-C)
- University of Wisconsin-Extension
- Wisconsin Early Childhood Association (WECA)
- Supporting Families Together Association (SFTA)
- UW-Madison Dept. of Family Medicine
- Child Care Centers
- Head Start
Mission

To develop and implement a collaborative statewide multi-strategy, evidence-based initiative to enhance nutrition and physical activity among 2-5 year olds and their families by engaging providers, families, community partners, and other stakeholders.
Methods

Social Marketing Planning Process

1) Identification of target audiences
2) Extensive literature review
3) Formative assessment of target audiences
Target Audiences & Rationale

Primary: ECE Providers & Parents

Secondary: ECE Network Agencies

Environment & Policy Change

Decrease early childhood overweight & obesity in WI
Literature Review

Purpose
- To inform formative assessment
- To inform future intervention strategies

Framework
- Focus on 5 key obesity prevention behaviors

Challenges
- Few existing interventions in this setting
Methodology

- Key informant interviews with organizations that support ECE providers
  - n = 18
- Focus groups with in-home & group ECE providers
  - n = 43 (7 sessions)
- Head Start interviews
  - n = 2
- Observations of centers and homes
  - n = 5
- Qualitative analysis
  - Based on Constant Comparative Analysis Method (Hewitt-Taylor, 2001)
Research Questions: Stakeholder Interviews

1. How do ECE organizations currently work with childcare providers and other ECE agencies?
2. Do they see overweight/obesity among 2-5 year olds as a problem? Current efforts in obesity prevention?
3. What are the successes/barriers/challenges to preventing obesity in the child care setting?
4. How would an ECE organization benefit from the prevention of early childhood obesity?
Research Questions: Focus Groups

1. What are providers currently doing to promote nutrition and physical activity?
2. What would be the impact of potential nutrition and physical activity recommendations on child care providers?
3. What would the child care providers need in order to adopt recommendations? (e.g. barriers, resources needed)
Themes from Stakeholder Interviews

- **Policy & regulation needed at varying levels**
- **Collaboration desired & needed**
  - Needs assessment, best practices, raise awareness
- **Funding is lacking**
  - Organizations, education, training, equipment, quality care, food, to spark collaboration
- **Significant barriers exist**
  - Competing priorities, time, money, parent/provider involvement, lack of resources
- **Education needed for providers & parents**
- **Overall willingness to support the initiative**
Themes from Provider Focus Groups

- **Parent-Provider relationship**
  - Parents are a key component to the issue
  - The relationship is challenging

- **Food preparation**
  - Buying, preparing, serving food to children

- **Physical Activity**
  - Lack of priority, skills, knowledge, space, equipment

- **Lack of Resources**
  - Funding, time, space, education

- **Adult role modeling of behaviors**
Strengths & Limitations

- Representation of rural/urban
- Range of reported center incomes
- Thorough qualitative analyses
- Strong, diverse partnerships in WI PAN & WECOPI
- Strong interest in initiative participation

- To date, no representation of Asian & Hispanic minorities
- Few Head Start interviews
- Parent component needs further assessment
- Lack of qualitative analyses software
- Limited existing evidence
- Did not reach unregulated providers
Next Steps

- **Increase involvement and partnerships**
  - Statewide Early Care and Education Forum

- **Continue formative assessment**
  - Parent focus groups
  - Environmental scan

- **Finalize *What Works in Child Care* (evidence-based recommendations)**

- **Design & implement statewide intervention**

- **Emerging outcome: Child Care Rating System**
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Wisconsin Department of Health Services
Nutrition Physical Activity, and Obesity Program

- http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/
References


- Wisconsin Department of Health Services; Division of Public Health; Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program and Wisconsin Partnership for Physical Activity and Nutrition. *Obesity, Physical Activity, and Nutrition in Wisconsin* 2008: 1-152.