

Creating a Lifetime of Health With ChildcareAlive!

Innovative Program Provides Training and Technical Assistance

More than 60 percent of children under six years of age are in arranged childcare on a weekly basis. More than 11 million children under age six spend an average of 30 hours a week in childcare, and children of working mothers spend almost 40 hours a week in such care (CDC). What if this time could be used to form healthy eating and physical activity habits? Through an innovative program called ChildcareAlive!, PartnerSHIP 4 Health (PS4H) helps childcare providers across Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties develop the knowledge and skills to incorporate healthy habits into their work.



Krystle engages providers during the 2017 training.

ChildcareAlive! is a partnership between Dakota Medical Foundation, PS4H and Lakes and Prairies Community Action Partnership, and provides services in North Dakota and Minnesota. Since 2013, it has provided coaching and technical assistance to childcare providers in PS4H's service area. Initially, ChildcareAlive! staff used on-site demonstrations to teach lessons on active play or nutrition. From 2014–2016, over 100 providers were involved, impacting 825 children through age five. Parents report that these children were more likely to try new foods, ask for vegetables as a snack and eat at least 1 cup of vegetables per day. Providers reported positive changes after completing the training and goal-setting process (see Table).

While this was fun and successful and encouraged providers to make changes, it did not offer the approved training credits providers are required to obtain annually. Krystle McNeal of Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership expanded the program in 2017 by creating a curriculum, a two-hour training and a website to host the curriculum and increase reach (<http://www.childcarealive.org>).

Table 1: Provider Reported Changes*

- 95 percent of providers give two hours of physical activity each day
- 89 percent of providers offers fruits and vegetables at every meal
- 83 percent of providers do not offer fried or pre-fried foods
- 75 percent made changes to offer adult-led physical activity more often
- 58 percent made changes to decrease weekly screen time
- 88 percent offer new foods more often
- 83 percent made changes to nutrition and physical activity program policies

* data provided by ChildcareAlive! assessments

Healthy Changes Impact Children and Parents

During the September 2017 training, local childcare provider Kristi Bradley shared her experience using the curriculum: “These activities really work. I have parents telling me that their kids still talk about ‘Go’ and ‘Whoa’ foods and tell them that they can’t say ‘yucky’ after trying a food. It’s not just affecting the kids, the parents are affected by these activities, too,” reported Bradley.

In addition to supporting training and coaching, PS4H also helps childcare providers purchase equipment like balls, hula hoops, and bean bags that encourage active play. Thanks to PS4H's support, childcare providers across Becker, Clay, Otter Tail, and Wilkin counties adopt innovative policies and practices, improving the health of children, setting the stage for tomorrow's healthy families and communities.

To view the ChildcareAlive! curriculum, visit <http://www.childcarealive.org>

Learn more about PartnerSHIP 4 Health (local public health in Becker, Clay, Otter Tail and Wilkin counties) at <http://partnership4health.org>

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