



CENTER FOR COLLABORATIVE SOLUTIONS

Unleashing the Power of People Working Together

Healthy Behaviors for Children and Families: Strengthening Afterschool Programs through Exemplary Nutrition, Physical Activity and Food Security Practices

A public-private partnership initiative among the California Nutrition Network for Healthy Active Families, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, CCS and private foundations

PROJECT OVERVIEW

PURPOSES OF THIS INITIATIVE

The overall purposes of this exciting three-year initiative are 1) to improve the health and well-being of low-income children and families by strengthening California's afterschool programs through development and implementation of exemplary afterschool practices in nutrition, physical activity and food security, 2) to make a new source of matching funding available to afterschool programs throughout California, and 3) to enable the California Nutrition Network for Healthy Active Families (a division of the California Department of Health Services) to utilize afterschool programs as another way to reach low-income families and their children with interventions to increase fruit and vegetable consumption and physical activity and to support increased participation in the Food Stamp Program and federal food assistance programs.

APPROACH

In July of 2004, CCS was funded by the California Nutrition Network for Healthy Active Families (the Network) to identify and develop exemplary afterschool program practices and indicators in the areas of nutrition education and physical activity, as well as to investigate and recommend a preferred mechanism to administer the Network's LIA program grants to afterschool programs. This work, which was completed September 30, 2005 by CCS, was achieved with the guidance and counsel of a Stakeholder Advisory Group that included over 40 experts in the fields of health, nutrition education, physical activity and afterschool.

With the funding of this new, three-year initiative, a great opportunity now exists to bring about extraordinarily positive change in the lives of California's low-income children and youth. Through the project strategy outlined below, we hope to achieve the purposes of this initiative utilizing the existing infrastructure of afterschool programs combined with the expertise of our Stakeholder Advisory Group and incorporating other available resources into our work. This three-year effort will:

- 1) Network currently successful afterschool programs into a Nutrition Education Leadership Learning Community (NELLC) that embeds the exemplary practices in nutrition education, including physical activity promotion and Food Stamp Program promotion;
- 2) Through the work of the NELLC, improve and expand upon the existing exemplary afterschool program practices and indicators in the areas of nutrition education and physical activity;
- 3) Design and implement training programs delivered throughout the state;
- 4) Conduct nutrition education community summits to connect afterschool programs with community resources in the areas of nutrition and physical activity;
- 5) Develop promotional and educational strategies to actively engage low-income families with their children for the purpose of improving nutritional and physical activity *family* practices and supporting increased participation in federal food assistance programs;
- 6) Provide outreach to open and establish the afterschool LIA channel in two ways – through bringing about intermediary LIAs for groups of afterschool programs, and by encouraging current K-12 LIAs to expand their initiatives to include their afterschool programs; and
- 7) Establish afterschool program Regional Learning Centers across the state to serve as resources to other programs in the areas of nutrition, physical activity and food security.

Our vision for this initiative is that it will help transform California's afterschool landscape – making nutrition education, physical activity and food security a central theme in across-the-board practices that permeate the whole of afterschool programs. We expect our efforts to play an important role in ensuring that programs effectively reach low-income families and communities and result in increasing healthy behaviors for children and adults alike, increasing utilization of federal food assistance programs and contributing significantly to afterschool program sustainability through increased matching funding.