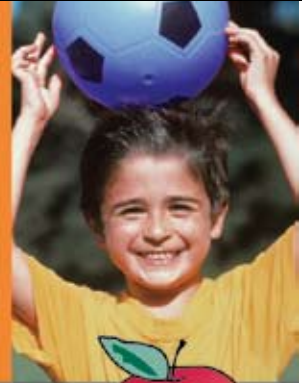


2003-2006

**Eat
Well**



**Play
Hard**



COMMUNITY PROJECTS



New York State Department of Health
Division of Nutrition
Bureau of Nutrition Risk Reduction

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Introduction

This report highlights accomplishments of the 2003 – 2006 Eat Well Play Hard (EWPH) Community Projects funded through grants administered by the Division of Nutrition – New York State Department of Health. Eat Well Play Hard is one of several New York State Department of Health initiatives designed to prevent childhood overweight and reduce long term chronic disease risks through the promotion of physical activity and targeted dietary practices. In response to emerging concerns about the growing epidemic of obesity among New York’s children, the EWPH intervention began in 1997 with the convening of an expert panel to explore development of obesity prevention strategies for children over the age of two and the integration of those strategies into existing New York State Department of Health food and nutrition programs, those programs include the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and the Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP). EWPH strategies were integrated into each program’s food policies, nutrition education efforts, staff training and marketing and outreach efforts.

The interventions are organized around the following three strategies:

Increase developmentally appropriate physical activity: Physical Activity (PA) for young children based on movement activities that assist in large muscle development help to improve strength and endurance, boost self esteem, help build healthy bones and promote life long activity, keys to weight control.

Increase consumption of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk and dairy: By age two, switching to low-fat or fat-free milk is one of the easiest ways to reduce total fat and saturated fat content of preschool and school aged childrens’ diets. It is simple and easy to do and children need the calcium for development of bones and teeth.

Increase consumption of vegetables and fruits: Vegetables and fruits are low in calories and fat and are a great source of vitamins, minerals and fiber. They add flavor, color and texture to the diet and may also help reduce the risk of certain cancers and other chronic diseases.

Eat Well Play Hard Local Demonstration Grants: The Beginning

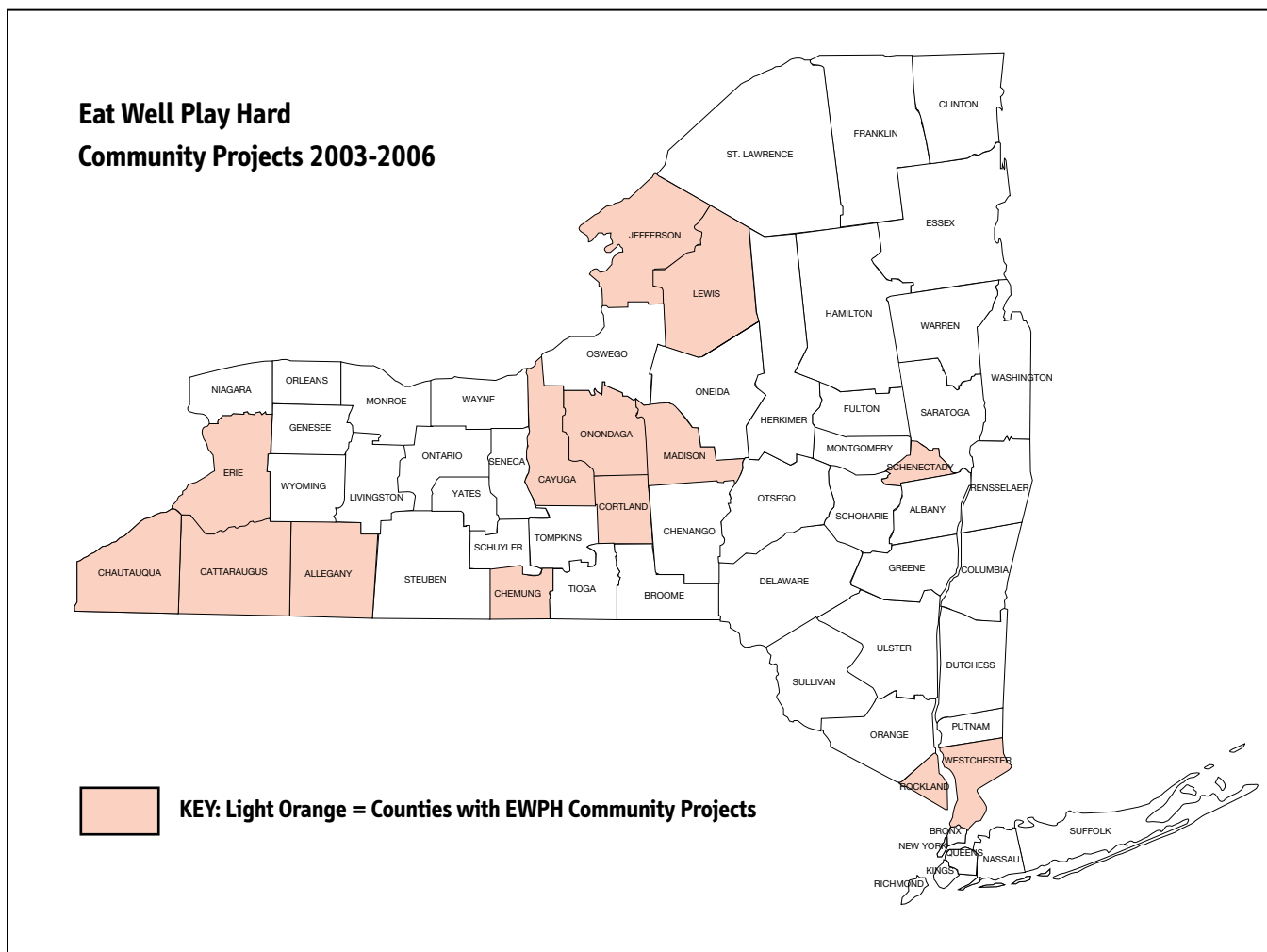
In late 1998, the Division of Nutrition awarded a grant for the first EWPH Local Demonstration Project to the Jefferson County Public Health Service. In early 1999, two additional grants were awarded to the Dutchess and Erie County Departments of Health. The intent of these demonstration projects was to reinforce, at a community level, the EWPH efforts occurring at the state level in the NYS Department of Health (DOH) sponsored food and nutrition programs. Each of these projects developed community partnerships and targeted program activities in local WIC Programs, HPNAP-sponsored emergency food relief programs, and CACFP participating child care centers. In June 2003, final reports were submitted to DOH reflecting nearly four years of demonstration activities.

These three projects were successful in establishing committed community partnerships and in developing the framework for sustainable obesity prevention activities. Key to these demonstration projects’ success was the paradigm shift from treating individuals for obesity related problems to treating entire communities with sustained environmental or policy changes. This concept became the basis for the next round of funding.

Expansion of EWPH Community Projects

A new Request for Application (RFA) was issued for Eat Well Play Hard Community Intervention Projects in 2002. From October 2003 to September 2004, eight projects began a three-year cycle to apply the best of the first demonstration projects' experience and recent scientific evidence to their communities. Two additional projects were added in October 2004. The ten projects covered fourteen counties throughout New York State. Due to the overwhelming list of individual project activities, this report will highlight the major successes and accomplishments of these ten NYSDOH-funded projects and highlight some special projects in more detail. In addition, some special and non-traditional partnerships will be mentioned.

New York State Counties



Initial Assessment and Community Partnerships

Paramount to each of the Eat Well Play Hard Community Projects was the initial phase common to all projects. Each project was required to conduct an extensive assessment of the resources and existing programs and services in the target community and to form a Community Partnership with broad representation.

The assessment phase of the project included a review of the various existing EWPH activities in the primary settings; WIC, HPNAP-sponsored emergency food relief organizations (i. e. food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens), CACFP-sponsored child care centers, and the community at large. Findings of the assessment phase were the basis for development of community-based work plans, with interventions focused on promoting policy, practice and environmental change related to healthy eating and increasing physical activity.

A list of the various types of organizations and individuals represented on the EWPH Community Project Partnerships is:

Health Care

Academy of Pediatrics
Blue Cross/Blue Shield
Medical Centers
Primary Providers

Food and Nutrition

BOCES/School Food Services
Dairy Councils/Co-Ops
Farmers/Growers
Food Banks/Soup Kitchens
WIC

Fitness/Exercise

Bowling Centers
Fitness Centers
Nature Centers
Rails to Trails
Roller Rinks
Sports Arenas/Non School
Sports Equipment Companies
YMCA/YWCA

Businesses

Chambers of Commerce
Department Stores
Hardware Stores
Radio/TV Stations
Supermarkets

Faith Based/Educational Institutions

Catholic Charities
Churches
Colleges and Universities
Head Starts

Youth Based Organizations

Boy/Girl Scouts
Child Care Councils
County Youth Bureaus

Government

Parks and Recreation
Town Planners
Transportation Council

Voluntary/Other

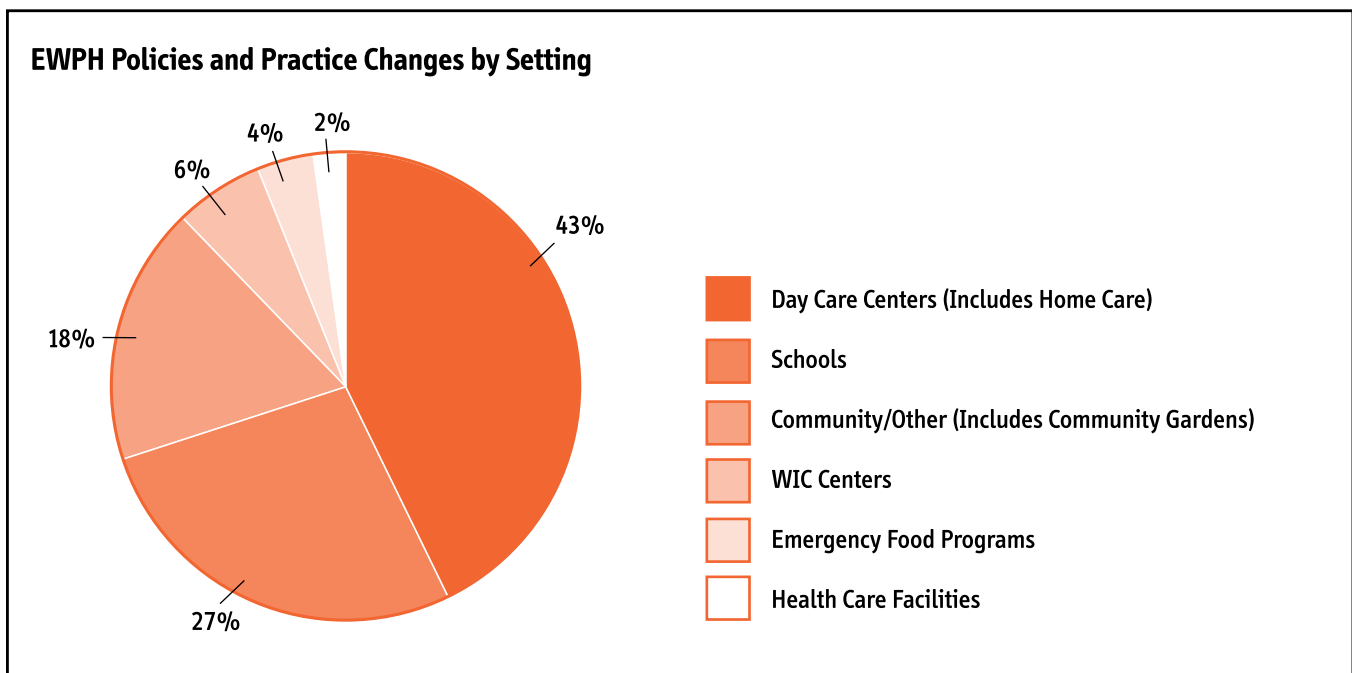
American Cancer Society
Community Action Programs
Libraries
Retired Seniors Volunteers
Salvation Army
Spanish Action League
Theatre Groups
United Way

The creation of a broad range of traditional and non-traditional partners with each EWPH community is one of the premier successes of the EWPH projects. The partnerships have forged new relationships and helped to spread the reach of EWPH throughout the targeted communities.

Eat Well Play Hard Policies and Practices

The Eat Well Play Hard strategies were first implemented at a statewide level in the NYS Department of Health, Division of Nutrition-administered programs, including: the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program. The goal of the EWPB Community Project grants was to expand and reinforce the EWPB strategies in community settings. In 2003, the Request for Application stressed the need to implement long standing, sustained policy and practice changes in the community food programs and in other community settings such as schools and health care facilities.

From 2003 to 2006, 160 policies and practice changes were implemented as a result of the work of the ten EWPB community intervention projects. The following chart shows the percent of policy and practice changes by settings:



Eat Well Play Hard Strategies

Physical Activity (PA)

Regular physical activity is associated with healthier, longer life. Physically active people have lower risks of a host of chronic diseases yet despite all the known benefits of physical activity, most New Yorkers do not engage in any regular exercise or moderate physical activity, according to the 2005 NYS Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey.

The Eat Well Play Hard strategy that addresses physical activity stresses developmentally appropriate activity. Nearly everyone can incorporate some physical activity into their day by doing simple things like taking stairs, parking a little further away from the door or moving to music instead of watching television.

To direct Eat Well Play Hard projects to engage in effective PA interventions, NYS DOH relied heavily on evidence-based strategies and proven intervention models. Previously, most national recommendations to increase physical activity were made for individuals and did not result in any sustained effects. This failure, in part, is due to the fact that the environmental factors that lead to the sedentary behavior are still in place. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guide to Community Preventive Services, a systematic review of published studies conducted by the task force on community preventive services shows evidence of five physical activity practices that work. On the basis of sufficient evidence of effectiveness, this task force recommends community-wide media campaigns, point of decision prompts that encourage people to use stairs or other access to physical activity such as trails and paths and social support in community settings. In addition, street level adds community-wide urban design and land use policies increase physical activity. These recommendations fall into two broad categories:

Informational Approaches – this includes training, presentations and community-wide campaigns designed to increase knowledge and subsequent behavior toward increasing physical activity.

Environmental and Policy Approaches – these are the most strongly recommended interventions and include the creation of enhanced access to places for physical activity and remain the primary physical activity objective of the EWPH projects.

Informational Approaches and Special Events

All Eat Well Play Hard Community Projects provided or facilitated a variety of educational approaches, media campaigns and trainings to provide consistent Eat Well Play Hard messages throughout communities. In addition, all ten projects participated in special promotional events. These included “Turn Off TV” week in April, “5 A Day” fruit and vegetable month in September and, some projects held special “Walk our Children to School” events in October to coincide with International “Walk Our Children to School Day”. In 2005, the New York State Department of Health launched the “ACTIV8Kids” campaign which served as an umbrella for a variety of New York State obesity prevention initiatives, including Eat Well Play Hard, by promoting a statewide bike ride. Elementary schools along the bike route held special events based on the EWPH strategies. Several of the EWPH Community Projects took part in or set up these special awareness events.

Some of the noteworthy special events included:

Family Fun Night – these special physical activity events began as an alternative to watching TV during “Turn Off Week” but many have become a regular community event several times yearly. These events included skating, bowling, swimming, physical activity events and exercise opportunities for kids such as “Wiggle, Giggle and Shake” (Cortland Co.). Over 8,000 family members attended one of these special events during the three year EWPH project cycle.

Walkathons and Walking Promotions – several projects held events that promoted walking by choosing a destination and tracking the miles necessary to walk to that place. Walk to New Orleans (Cayuga Co.) and North County Steps Forward (Jefferson Co.) were successful walking events. One special event “The Hunt for Gold Shoes” was piloted in Chemung County. Several pair of old shoes were painted gold and hidden along the county walking trail network. Contestants could redeem the shoes for prizes donated by businesses in the community.

Fitness Challenges and Events – some other special events included the Onondaga Co. Park Challenge and Canal Splash, bike safety rodeos, soccer tournaments and a city-wide EWPH Health Fair in Yonkers (Westchester Co.)

Eat Well Play Hard Community Project interventions resulted in over 50 permanent or sustained changes that promote physical activity in the community. Many of these changes will remain in the community even after EWPH funding. A few of these special changes include:

Cayuga County: Parks and Recreation Department teamed with EWPH to develop a Disc Golf Course using Frisbee-like flying disks. The course is open to the public and promotes year around physical activity.

Cortland County: A new walking trail was developed in Virgil, N. Y. , a community with no sidewalks. Playground equipment, picnic tables and benches were added to the fitness stations to promote use.

Chemung County: The Hunt for the Gold Shoes campaign is an annual event (plans for the third year are underway). Chemung County also worked with all the Head Start programs to implement policies that increased physical activity time.

Erie County: A specialized physical activity program was developed for functionally disabled youth by modifying games with movement and walking.

Madison County: A twice yearly parent education series is provided in cooperation with WIC, Head Start and the Child Care Council. In addition, Madison has annualized the Family Fun Day that drew 550 family members in 2006.

Jefferson County: Two Community Gardens were established which provide additional physical activity for community members who also benefit from homegrown vegetables and fruits. Jefferson Co. also piloted the distribution of FitWIC Activity bags to increase the time parents spend playing with preschool age children. This project was such a success that WIC programs statewide were funded to purchase additional activity bags.

Onondaga County: The Park Challenge (where participants logged physical activity and entered logs for a chance at a prize) doubled in size as it became a regular annual event. Participants extend the challenge to increase their physical activity throughout the year. Also, age appropriate physical activity training workshops were offered to 132 daycare providers. Surveys indicate that 80% of those trained have increased daily amounts of physical activity in their centers.

Rockland County: Through a special training effort they have successfully implemented physical activity policies in eleven child care centers serving over 500 children. EWPH staff also helped one center write a grant that resulted in \$15,000 in new playground equipment.

Schenectady County: The YWCA has incorporated swimming lessons, Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAPSACC) trainings, and physical activity curricula into all their childcare programs. The swimming lessons included a TOT DOCK, a special learn to swim apparatus for the younger learners. Free swim nights have been incorporated into the YWCA schedule for three years running.

Westchester County: A Yonkers Physical Activity Resource Guide and equipment packages that can be checked out of area libraries were developed. EWPH staff also provided Train the Trainer sessions and worked with all day care centers to increase physical activity through movement by 15 minutes daily.

All of the above physical activity related events, policies and changes will move New Yorkers closer to the goal of promoting age appropriate physical activity and help reduce the burden of inactivity in New York.

Low-Fat and Fat-Free Milk and Dairy

Choosing low-fat (1% or fat-free) milk and other dairy products continues to be one of the best ways to reduce fat intake in children. While low-fat milk and dairy products are excellent ways to provide much needed calcium, Vitamin D and protein, milk is by far the greatest single source of saturated fat in the diets of children. Experts agree that children two years old or older get the same benefits from low-fat or fat-free milk without the extra fat. Other low-fat products like yogurts and cheeses can help avoid additional unnecessary fat.

All ten of the Eat Well Play Hard Projects conducted low-fat dairy promotions, making it one of the most popular EWPH strategies. Most projects (nine of ten) worked with schools and day care to help educate about the obvious benefits of lower fat dairy products with the intent of changing policies and practices that support low-fat milk availability and purchases. All of the projects conducted blind taste tests to allow individuals to choose favorites and pledge to drink low-fat. A milk taste testing kit and a low-fat milk “pledge” form were developed to assist in the promotion. Some projects worked with supermarkets and smaller stores to place more low-or fat-free products in the store or at eye level of the shoppers. By far, one of the biggest benefits of the EWPH low-fat milk and dairy campaigns is the sweeping change in policies that schools and child care centers have implemented regarding serving 1% or fat-free milk. Child care centers and schools have been trained on cooking healthy foods using low-fat milk, cheese and yogurts resulting in seventy day care centers and forty-three schools changing milk related policies.

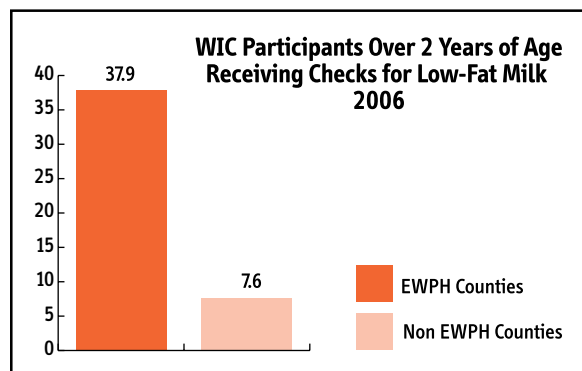
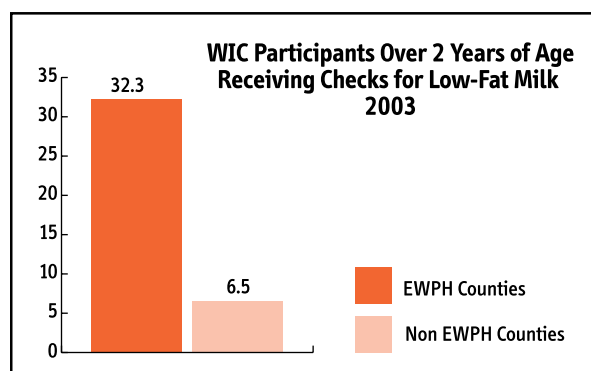
Below are some of the project highlights from the last three years of EWPH Community Projects:

In Central New York (CNY), five EWPH projects joined forces and resources to develop the CNY Low-Fat Milk Campaign. This cooperative venture covered Cayuga, Cortland, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison and Onondaga Counties and allowed the five projects to share ideas and media messages. This January to June 2006 campaign included train the trainer presentations for childcare centers, schools, pediatrician’s offices, grocery stores, WIC centers and libraries. The consistent message was also broadcast widely throughout the Central New York media market.

During the EWPH project period, over 150 milk taste test events were conducted at WIC, Child Care Councils, emergency food programs and other family events and health fairs. Over 7,000 family members took taste test challenges with 5,000 of the participants pledging to drink 1% or fat-free milk. One follow-up survey of pledges indicated that most were still using the low-fat dairy several months after the challenge.

Each EWPH Community Project included an objective to work with WIC programs to increase the percent of low-fat or fat-free milk checks issued to participants over 2 years old.

In Upstate NY, between 2003 to 2006, the percent of WIC participants over 2 years old who received checks for low-fat or fat-free milk increased in both EWPH and non-EWPH counties. However, the odds of receiving checks for low-fat milk are seven times greater in EWPH counties.



Cayuga County: This project had only two years of operation time yet managed to implement some wide reaching policies. The entire network of emergency food providers serves only 1% milk to the 7,580 clients annually. Also, the Auburn City School District adopted a similar policy serving 2,079 children.

Chemung County: All elementary schools in the county now serve only 1% fat milk and all school vending machines are stocked with milk or water products for the 9,000 students. Project staff also trained 49 child care providers in 1% or low fat dairy benefits including taste tests. A post survey determined that 80% were still serving 1% fat milk three months after the training.

Cortland County: Over 30 taste test events were provided with over 1,200 participants. This effort led to low-fat milk policies being implemented in eight day care centers throughout the county.

Erie County: This four county project developed a curriculum called “MOOOVE to Low-Fat Milk and Dairy” and implemented it in five day care centers. In addition, three schools adopted a 1% or fat-free milk policy.

Jefferson County: Students from the Belleville Henderson Health class were trained to conduct milk taste tests and launched a school-wide low-fat milk campaign, complete with a cow costume and a media component. Milk taste testing was conducted at an evening family fun night in Carthage, at Superintendent’s Day at Watertown City Schools and at several Hannaford Supermarkets. As a result of these efforts, low-fat milk policies were implemented in three school districts serving nearly 9,000 students.

Madison County: Low-fat milk was promoted at regional childcare provider training. Low-fat milk policies were incorporated into the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care curriculum and the Cornell Cooperative Extension four-six week EWPH educational series for parents.

Onondaga County: The EWPH Partnership agencies (Success by 6, Cornell Cooperative Extension and WIC) were all trained on Milk Tool Kits and provided additional trainings throughout the county. The Onondaga Nation School is only offering 1% milk and set up an award system so that empty cartons can be brought from home for a free pass to the open gym.

Rockland County: Low-fat dairy cooking classes and 1% milk policies were incorporated into eleven child care sites. A resource guide and brochure “Make the Switch to Low-Fat Dairy” were created and copies distributed throughout the community. Also, the largest day care center removed the lobby vending machine after attending a EWPH presentation. The Rockland County Child Care Council adopted a Healthy Celebrations policy which included 1% or fat-free milk.

Schenectady County: The Duanesburg School District switched to low-fat ice cream and yogurt after a successful low-fat milk policy was implemented. WIC centers in the county held a “MOOOVE Over” raffle while implementing low-fat milk policies. Bikes and exercise equipment were given as grand prizes. WIC sites increased the amount of low or fat-free milk checks issued from 17% to 27% during the EWPH contract period.

Westchester County: Low-fat milk policies were implemented in six day care centers serving over 400 children annually. One WIC site increased the issuance of low-fat or fat-free milk checks to participants from 9% to 40% in the three year period as a result of a targeted campaign.

It is clear by these examples that the EWPH low-fat and fat-free dairy strategy is working in the intervention communities.

Vegetables and Fruit

Research shows that eating generous amounts of vegetables and fruits as part of a healthy diet reduces risk of chronic diseases such as stroke, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes. Most fruits and vegetables are lower in calories and higher in fiber than other foods. Eating fruits and vegetables instead of high-fat foods also help control weight. Unfortunately, according to 2005 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey data, nine out of ten New Yorkers do not eat the recommended amount of fruits or vegetables despite the fact that most know the benefits. Children in the Eat Well Play Hard target group of age 2 to 12 eat more fruit than vegetables, but most do not eat enough of either. The Eat Well Play strategy stresses consumption of vegetables ahead of fruits for this reason. During the last three years of EWPH Community Projects, New Yorkers have benefited from the many efforts to make vegetables and fruits easier to obtain, economical and more desirable to eat.

The ten EWPH projects all had success in promoting increased intake of vegetables and fruit. Most projects have helped create sustained methods of increased availability, lower costs and general awareness of consistent messages about the advantages of, fruits and vegetables. Some of the EWPH Project highlights include:

Cayuga County: This rural Western NY project provided mini-grants which enabled the purchase of apple slicers for five elementary schools serving over 2,000 K-5 students. Cayuga County also participated in the annual Auburn Tomato Festival which drew 8,000 attendees who were exposed to the EWPH messages.

Chemung County: Chemung County developed the Summer Cohesion Program for 980 children participating in the Summer Food Program. This six-week course contained many vegetable and fruit usage tips. In addition, an after school program and a food label training program for kids was implemented in local schools. Chemung also sponsored a 5 A Day billboard that remained visible for six months. Chemung staff also provided food demonstrations for over 200 citizens at farmers markets.

Cortland County: Two Salvation Army after school care units developed the first “Nutrition Badge” which was earned by forty-three youth during the first year of operation. Cortland County staff helped to establish community gardens in two day care centers and one church. Cortland County staff also initiated a series of twelve family fun nights that included demonstrations and provision of healthy fruit and vegetable snack choices for 1,300 family members.

Erie County: A comprehensive farmer’s market promotion program included vegetable and fruit preparation demonstrations and coupons for farmer’s market goods. This two session education program reached over 4,200 WIC clients. Also a community garden project through the Fredonia BOCES served 200 residents. The Limestone Elementary School completed a 5 A Day fruit and vegetable challenge which included 90 kids per day for four weeks. Eight school districts were assisted in the development of comprehensive School Wellness Policies that included replacing high-fat and sugary foods with fruits and vegetables.



Jefferson County: Mini-grants were provided for school cafeterias to pilot a fresh produce promotion program. Over 2,000 students benefited from the policies that were established, including a free fruit and vegetable daily program in Alexandria Bay serving 300 kids. Additional benefits included salad bars at several schools and school gardens or window boxes set up in schools that helped 2,600 students and staff have access to more fresh produce. Three Emergency Food Pantries were assisted with planting of vegetable gardens. The Belleville Henderson school district established a special curriculum on healthy food preparation every Friday, serving 650 students and staff.

Madison County: Madison County initiated a pilot Farm to Pre-school project serving thirty-two families. Madison staff also worked with local farmers to make produce available in other settings, including tomatoes in the cafeteria at SUNY Morrisville.

Onondaga County: Staff helped to establish Farmers Markets at WIC locations resulting in redemption of 294 produce coupons. As a result of a WIC pilot, a new

large weekly farmers market was established at the Bayberry Mall, reaching a potential 20,000 individuals. Onondaga staff developed a Tool Kit for use at all settings which included 5 A Day literature, a kiwi scoop and a food and fitness wheel which promotes vegetables and fruits as part of a fitness program.

Rockland County: EWPH joined with the Rockland County Child Care Council to overhaul the manuals in all eleven day care centers. Changes included incorporation of homegrown produce and training for all food preparation staff. All day care centers also included enforcement of a Healthy Celebration policy limiting the offerings for parties. Over 500 students and their parents were directly influenced by the new policies. Rockland staff provided cooking demonstrations at five farmers markets in the county reaching 1,000 participants with healthy recipes.

Schenectady County: As a result of the EWPH collaboration, the Rosendale Elementary School received the “Farm to School” award for its creative efforts to use locally grown produce and educate the 375 students about healthy eating. The Center for Disability Services implemented new menu policies that increased the amount of fresh fruits and vegetables offered to the 180 clients. Also in Schenectady County, the Duanesburg Elementary school participated in a pilot project to offer bagged cut carrots and juice as ala carte items in the cafeteria.

Westchester County: For two consecutive years, EWPH provided seeds and technical help to twelve childcare centers for on site gardens. About 700 day care children per year took part in the garden activities. Comprehensive policies regarding vegetables and fruit were put in place at eleven day care centers in the county. The Westchester County Health Department established a bulletin board with recipes and tips on preparing more vegetables and fruit for the 400 or so weekly visitors.



Lessons Learned

During the three years of this round of EWPH Community Projects many practice changes and policies were put in place across New York State affecting thousands of children and their families. The ten projects funded by the New York State Department of Health implemented many sustainable changes in the three EWPH strategy arenas. As these projects evolved, the role of the NYS Department of Health and the Division of Nutrition also expanded. During the three years, the department was charged with the development of a statewide Obesity Prevention Plan which included many Department of Health organizational units. Some of the valuable lessons learned from the projects and from the NYS Department of Health response to obesity prevention follow:

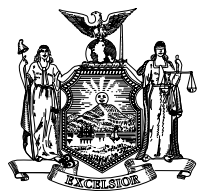
- Community partnerships are critical to success. Many organizations became project partners and assisted with valuable interventions. A list of some of the partner organizations is included in this report.
- Community assessment is key to the development of a successful work plan. Additional guidance on completing the community assessment is being provided to the next generation of EWPH Community Projects. DOH teamed up with the Association of State and Territorial Public Health Nutrition Directors (ASTHPND) to provide training on the use of “Moving to the Future”, a nutrition and physical activity planning guide. This nationally known, step-by-step guide will enable the EWPH projects to conduct a thorough community assessment and generate a report for use as a baseline for final work plan objectives. This planning guide and the one-on-one training also include objective writing and community opinion surveys.
- EWPH projects participated in “Special Events” calls with other projects to share ideas about events such as Turn Off TV Week and Fruit and Vegetable Promotional Months. Project coordinators identified this networking opportunity to learn from other projects as a key to their success.

Additionally, new resources have become available and the DOH is coordinating dissemination of promising interventions and best practices.

- Based on emerging “Best Practices and Promising Interventions”, regional training is planned for such topics as “Walking School Buses” and “Safe Routes to School”; two proven interventions to promote more physical activity.
- DOH is promoting the next generation of the nationally recognized 5 A Day Fruits and Vegetable initiative “Fruits and Veggies – More Matters” web site (www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org) will help new projects with simple messages and materials.



The EWPH Community Project local partnerships have sustained past the grant funded periods and continue to focus on making community level improvements that support healthy eating and physical activity. The success of the ten projects highlighted in this report and the valuable partnerships formed around the state prompted DOH Division of Nutrition to expand the network of Community Interventions. Fifteen new EWPH Community Projects covering twenty-two New York counties were established in 2006 to continue the great success of Eat Well Play Hard.



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