

Juntos Y Saludables: Outcomes of a Peer Led Approach to Obesity Prevention for Head

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to evaluate Juntos y Saludables (Get Healthy Together), a multi-component obesity prevention pilot tailored for Mexican American Head Start children (ages 3-5). For the parent education component, researchers trained seven peer parent educators to deliver health information via afterschool parent education sessions. When parents attended the sessions, they received a take-home bag with a book and family activity to promote physical activity in the home. **Methods:** Parent intercept interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires were collected (average 80% participation rate). **Results:** Average participation rate at the parent education sessions was 46% and rates varied between 34% (61 parents) and 53% (94 parents). More parents in the intervention school reported that their child ate fruit at least 3 times (83.5% versus 79.17%), ate in front of the television less than three times (70.87% versus 49.38%) during the typical week and more parents reported that their child watched 2 hours or less of television each day (73.79% versus 13.19%), compared to the comparison school. 81% of parents interviewed correctly identified the program name. On average, parents could recall almost 3 (M=2.94, SD=1.92) of the 8 key messages without a prompt and about 6 (M=5.91, SD=1.88) when prompted. Messages recalled the most, without a prompt, included (1) preschoolers need 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and (2) children who get all five servings of fruits and vegetables each day are more likely to get the nutrients they need. In the focus group, parents reported that they enjoyed the peer-led session format and session scheduled time. **Conclusions:** when addressing childhood obesity prevention.

KEYWORDS: Obesity prevention, Children, Peer led approaches