TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for children who are 4 to 5 years old.

SUMMARY
Color Me Healthy, an educational program for preschool, day care, and classroom settings, is designed to encourage children to eat healthy foods and increase their physical activity.

EVIDENCE
A randomized controlled trial demonstrated that 1 week and 3 months after completing the program, children who participated in the Color Me Healthy program consumed significantly more target fruits and vegetables during the day-care’s snack time than children who did not participate in the program. No evaluations were located that assessed the effectiveness of the program’s physical activity component.

COMPONENTS
The Color Me Healthy program uses in-class lessons; singing activities; and health promotion materials, such as posters and newsletters, to teach children about eating a variety of fruits and vegetables and making other healthy lifestyle changes. Children use their senses to explore fruits and vegetables through a variety of circle-time lessons and imaginary trips.

- One circle-time lesson invites children to explore mystery fruits and vegetables hidden in a brown bag. Children reach into the bag and guess, based on shape, texture, and smell of the item, which fruit or vegetable they are feeling. The produce is taken out of the bag, and the teacher explains the shapes and colors of the produce. The children are invited to taste the produce at the end of the activity.
- Imaginary trips engage children in active play. For example, children pretend they are hiking up a mountain, going for a canoe ride, or preparing and eating a healthy meal.

The Color Me Healthy kit is needed for program implementation and includes a teacher guide, four picture card sets, a CD of seven songs, 14 parent newsletters in English and Spanish, three classroom posters, and a hand stamp to reward child participation. The website listed under Source includes additional educational materials for families to use in the home setting.

PREVIOUS USE
The Color Me Healthy program was developed by experts from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service and North Carolina Division of Public Health. Seven states, including Indiana, Kentucky, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Tennessee, have statewide adoption plans. More than 50,000 child-care providers have attended Color Me Healthy training workshops. Training has been provided in 17 states, and more than 12,000 Color Me Healthy kits have been purchased by organizations in 48 states.
Training is required. Color Me Healthy staff are available to conduct training in North Carolina, and they can also conduct training workshops in other states. During training, child-care providers learn how to implement the Circle Time activities and become comfortable implementing all program activities. The Color Me Healthy Training manual provides guidance on planning and conducting training if states want to create their own train-the-trainer model based on their needs. The manual also provides content on facilitating the delivery of program activities. It is suggested that child-care providers receive a minimum of 4 hours of hands-on training in Color Me Healthy prior to implementation in the classroom. Training workshops are most effective with a small numbers of providers (i.e., less than 25).

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring teacher buy-in, ensuring adequate classroom time is available to devote to activities, understanding that child-care providers must be trained before implementing the program, photocopying handouts to send home to families, and understanding supplies and food for classroom activities will need to be purchased.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email clearinghouse@psu.edu

If you are interested in implementing Color Me Healthy, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email clearinghouse@psu.edu

This program includes 12 circle-time lessons and six imaginary trips. Each activity requires 15 to 30 minutes of classroom time.

Kits cost $78 to $88 per kit, depending on the quantity purchased. Please add $29 to $34 per set for versions in Spanish. Music CDs cost $7 to $12 per CD; training manuals cost $108, and all prices include shipping charges. Costs for supplies and food items will vary.

To move the Color Me Healthy program to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email clearinghouse@psu.edu

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program. Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact Dr. Carolyn Dunn, Professor and Nutrition Specialist, by mail Box 7606, NC State University, Raleigh, NC 27695, phone 1-919-515-9142, email Carolyn_Dunn@ncsu.edu, or visit http://colormehealthy.com/contact.php