Fitter Critters

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for children who are 8 to 12 years old.

SUMMARY

The Fitter Critters™ program is a school- or community-based, online health game that is designed to improve participants’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding healthy eating and help them to understand the relationship between nutrition and general health and well-being.

EVIDENCE

Post-test results from a pilot study indicated that participants demonstrated significant increases in positive attitudes toward healthy eating and in self-efficacy (i.e., a person's perceived ability) for healthy eating. There was no change in self-efficacy for physical activity, and there were decreases in knowledge of physical and sedentary activity after playing the game.

COMPONENTS

In the Fitter Critters game, players are given the responsibility of caring for a virtual pet, or critter, and making healthy choices for the critters. Players shop for the critter's food and read nutrition labels to help them make nutritious choices, or they gather food from the garden. In addition, players cook for and feed their critter in this virtual setting.

Meters, displayed on the screen, indicate daily nutritional requirements. Participants choose foods for their critter to eat, and, as healthy choices are made, the critter becomes stronger, wins more sport games, goes to work, earns more money, and is sick less often than the critters who do not have healthy diets. Critters who regularly exceed the fat, sugar, or calorie limits become unhealthy over time, earn less money, become sick more frequently, and perform poorly in sport games. In addition, critters fed unhealthy food begin to reject healthy choices, which demonstrates the concepts that poor choices reinforce one another, and all choices have consequences.

An accompanying interdisciplinary unit plan expands on the game's content and meets several national education standards for health, mathematics, education technology, English language arts, and arts education.

PREVIOUS USE

This game was created in 2010 by Megazoid Games. No additional previous use information was located.
# Fitter Critters

**TRAINING**

No training is required to implement this game.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Considerations for implementing this game in the classroom include acquiring buy-in from school administration, teachers, and students; making time to teach lessons and for students to play the game; obtaining access to computers with internet capabilities for all students; and understanding additional materials may need to be purchased for classroom lessons.

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

**IMPLEMENTATION**

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

**TIME**

This game is played daily for several weeks. The curriculum contains eight lessons that are designed to be used weekly and in combination with the game.

**COST**

Information on implementation costs was unavailable.

**EVALUATION PLAN**

To move Fitter Critters to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects, with no negative effects, lasting at least one year from the beginning of the program or at least six months from program completion and no negative effects.

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**

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

You may also contact John Ferrara by email ferrarajc@yahoo.com or contact Megazoid Games by email mega@megazoidgames.com or visit http://fittercritters.com/game.php

**SOURCE**

http://appsforhealthykids.challengepost.com/submissions/6134-fitter-critters