Growing Healthy Kids (GHK) Program

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for families with low income who have at least one child who is 6 years old or younger.

SUMMARY

Growing Healthy Kids (GHK), a community- and family-based program, is designed to teach families about proper nutrition, healthy eating, and growing their own vegetables through the use of a community garden.

EVIDENCE

After 3 years of the program, a pre-test / post-test study was conducted to examine change in children's body mass index (BMI) classification, availability of fruits and vegetables at children's homes, and children's daily intake of fruits and vegetables. A significant number of children with an obese BMI at the beginning of the program achieved a BMI classification of overweight (13%) at the end of the program. A significant number of children with an overweight BMI at the beginning of the program achieved a BMI that placed them in the normal weight category (23%) at the end of the program. The program also significantly increased the availability of fruits and vegetables in children's homes at the end of the program compared to the beginning. Finally, the program also impacted children's daily servings of fruits and vegetables with children consuming significantly more daily fruits and vegetables at the end of the program compared to the beginning.

COMPONENTS

The GHK program consists of three main components:

- Weekly gardening sessions - Affords families the opportunity to learn and practice gardening skills in their own small garden, and tools and gardening materials are provided by the program.
- Cooking and Nutrition Workshops - Teaches parents and children about how to make healthy food choices.
- Social Activities - Provides activities throughout the year for families to attend, including potluck meals provided by families with vegetables from the garden; community meetings to discuss the progress of the garden; and creative activities, such as scarecrow making and pumpkin carving.

PREVIOUS USE

The program began in 2008, and no previous use information beyond the evaluation study was located.

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**TRAINING**

No information on training was available.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Considerations for this program include locating a community space that has a water source and sufficient sunlight to grow a garden, finding staff to take care of the garden and teach families how to garden, obtaining buy-in from families to work on the garden regularly, and understanding the produce grown will be determined by the length of the growing season.

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 the GHK program, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you!
Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

| TIME   | The program lasts for an entire year. The cooking and nutrition workshops are offered for 7 weeks, and the session length varies. |
| COST   | No information on implementation costs was available. |

**EVALUATION PLAN**

To move GHK 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**

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

You may also contact Dina Castro by mail University of North Texas, Matthews Hall 206-U, Denton, TX 76203, phone 1-940-565-2590, or email Dina.Castro@unt.edu

**SOURCE**