Project Energize

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for children in primary and intermediate schools.

SUMMARY
Project Energize, a school-based nutrition and activity program, is designed to increase children's physical activity, reduce their sedentary behavior, and improve their diet through changes in the school environment.

EVIDENCE
A randomized controlled trial that compared schools who received Project Energize to control schools that did not receive the program found that the prevalence of overweight and obesity did not change significantly between the two groups from baseline to 2 years from the start of the program. No significant changes in body mass index (BMI) standard deviation scores or diastolic blood pressure were observed between the intervention and control groups. When the outcomes were analyzed by age group, significant differences were observed for percent fat body standard deviation scores with children ages 5 to 7 having a significantly lower accumulation of body fat compared to children the same age in the control group. No significant differences in percent body fat standard deviation scores were found for 10- to 12-year-old children in the intervention group compared to the control group. However, 10- to 12-year-old children in the intervention group had a significantly reduced rate of increased systolic blood pressure compared to 10- to 12-year-old children in the control group. No significant differences in systolic blood pressure were observed in 5- to 7-year-old children in the intervention group compared to the control group.

COMPONENTS
Once schools enroll in the program, a Project Energize staff member is assigned to the school, performs a needs assessment, creates an individualized program based on the school's assessment, and assists with physical activity and healthy eating initiatives. Some examples of projects and programs that Project Energize staff help to implement include:
- Improve healthy eating in the school lunch system;
- Provide information on healthy lunch and snack options;
- Help teachers provide a variety of daily exercise activities;
- Offer teachers ideas to keep children moving during physical activity sessions; and
- Encourage children to be more active at home.

To reinforce program goals, nutrition tips are provided in weekly school newsletters; parents have the opportunity to attend three informational sessions, which includes a 45-minute practical nutrition class; and children receive integrated nutrition lessons in school and refrigerator magnets and laminated cards that remind children about nutritious eating habits.

PREVIOUS USE
The program was launched in 2005, and 44,000 primary and intermediate school children in 244 Waikato, New Zealand schools have been a part of the program.
# Project Energize

**TRAINING**

This program is delivered by Project Energize staff who are teachers or graduates in the field of exercise and nutrition and have previous experience in their fields. Before working with schools, Team Energize staff are required to complete a training program, and the staff meets regularly for ongoing training.

**CONSIDERATIONS**

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring buy-in from schools to implement the program and agree to make the changes recommended by Project Energize, understanding that the role of Team Energize staff is to provide ways for the schools to make changes but not teach classes or replace the usual class teacher, and finding funds to cover the costs associated with the program.

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

**TIME**

The program lasts the entire school year, and children at schools with the program can participate through 8th grade.

**COST**

The program costs approximately $34 per child per school year. For a school with 500 children, the program would cost approximately $17,000 a year.

**EVALUATION PLAN**

To move Project Energize to the Effective category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence at least one external evaluation must be conducted that demonstrates sustained, positive outcomes. This study must be conducted independently of the program developer.

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 Elaine Rush by phone +64 9 921 9758, email elaine.rush@aut.ac.nz, or visit www.sportwaikato.org.nz/programmes/team-energize.aspx

**SOURCE**