Weighty Matter Intervention

TARGET AUDIENCE
This program is for children who are 4 and 6 years old and overweight and their parents.

SUMMARY
Weighty Matter Intervention, a community-based program, is designed to encourage families to adopt healthy lifestyles and promote healthy growth in children.

EVIDENCE
A pre-test post-test study was conducted in 86 Finnish families to examine the effects of Weighty Matter Intervention on both child and parental outcomes. At 12 months, weight for height for 4-year-old children was unchanged while 6-year-old children experienced a significant increase in their weight for height. There was no change in body mass index (BMI) for mothers, but fathers experienced a significant increase in BMI. No significant changes in consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages were observed for children or fathers, but mothers reported a significant decrease in consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages. Mothers also reported a significant increase in hours of sleep they received on weekends, but no changes in sleep behavior were reported for children and fathers. No significant changes were observed for other dietary habits assessed.

COMPONENTS
The Weighty Matter Intervention uses a 7-step model, which includes individual family discussion meetings and group sessions. The first family discussion includes a meeting with a nurse who evaluates the family’s readiness for behavioral change and helps the family set health goals. The second family discussion is with a pediatrician who assesses parents’ and children’s health status and provides information about living a healthy lifestyle. The third meeting is with a physiotherapist who encourages families to be more active and helps the family find an activity they can do together. The fourth session includes a meeting with a nutritionist who educates families about healthy diets and encourages families to make healthy food choices by increasing their consumption of fruits and vegetables.

The group sessions include the following activities:
- Feel Well - allows families to interact with each other while experiencing a cultural event;
- Active with Ease - provides families the opportunity to participate in indoor activities with themselves and other families; and
- Enjoy Food - encourages families to cook simple, healthy meals.

PREVIOUS USE
The program was developed in 2006, but no previous use information beyond the evaluation study was located.
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TRAINING

The program is delivered by a team of professionals: a nurse, pediatrician, physiotherapist, and nutritionist. No training information for these facilitators could be located.

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include understanding that, if possible, both parents are expected to participate in the program; finding a team of professionals to deliver the program; and acquiring buy-in and a commitment from the entire family to make health behavior changes.

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

TIME

The program lasts 12 months and includes four individual family sessions and three group sessions. Sessions last 60 to 90 minutes.

COST

No information on implementation costs was available.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move the Weighty Matter Intervention 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 Riina Junnila by mail University of Turku, Department of Nursing Science, 20014 Turun yliopisto, Finland or email rjunn@utu.fi

SOURCE

Junnila et al. (2012).