

California Fit WIC: A Community Partnership



Poppy Strode, MS, MPH, RD
Project Manager, California Fit WIC
Department of Health Services
WIC Branch



California WIC



- 82 local agencies serve 1.2 million individuals per month at 650 local sites
- over 1 million participants are infants or children under age 5

California Fit WIC Project



- collaboration between:
 - CA Dept. of Health Services, WIC Branch
 - University of California, Berkeley
- aim:
 - develop, implement and evaluate childhood obesity prevention interventions in WIC sites and communities

California Fit WIC Project

- focus on sites with high proportion of Latino children
 - 70% of CA WIC participants are Latino
 - Latinos are at greater risk for obesity
- emphasize community empowerment and sustainability
- based on Spectrum of Prevention model



Spectrum of Prevention

- method for addressing multiple dimensions of complex issues
- moves beyond traditional educational approaches
- promotes sustainability through strategies including coalition building, organizational change, policy development



Spectrum of Prevention Levels

- strengthen individual knowledge and skills
- promote community education
- educate providers
- foster coalitions and networks
- change organizational practices
- influence policy and legislation

California Fit WIC Sites

Agency	Location	Agency Caseload	Site Caseload
Public Health Foundation Enterprises	Los Angeles	320,000	5,700
Sacramento County	Sacramento	19,500	4,100
Ventura County	Ventura	18,500	2,300

Staff Survey Findings

- 51 staff at intervention and control sites
- 49% Latino
- 69% paraprofessionals
- 51% classified themselves as overweight
- 80% trying to lose weight
- 78% participate in regular physical activity

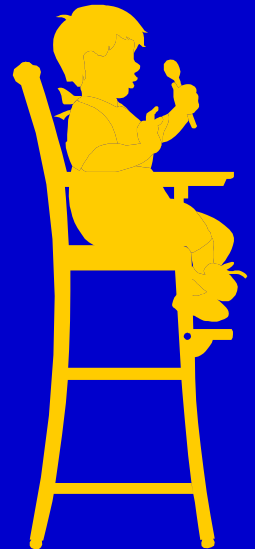


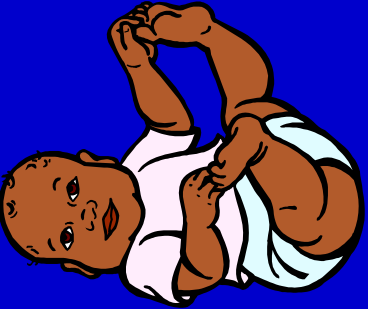
Staff Survey Findings

- obesity in WIC
 - half of staff said overweight is the biggest nutrition problem facing WIC children
 - most staff felt parents are not very concerned about a child becoming overweight
 - only 45% felt confident they could help WIC children maintain a healthy weight

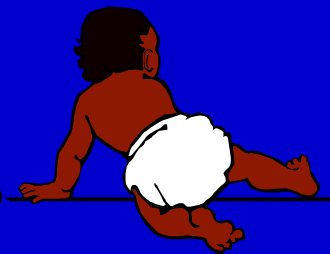
Staff Survey Findings

- barriers to talking with parents about children's weight issues:
 - denial, defensiveness, lack of concern
 - child's doctor did not mention weight
 - cultural preference for fat children
 - lack of time, skills, resources, training
 - staff members' own weight issues
 - children's eating preferences

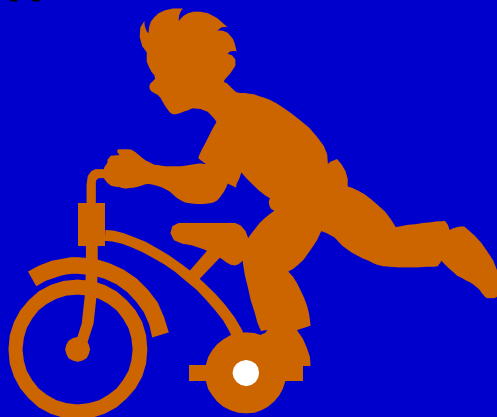
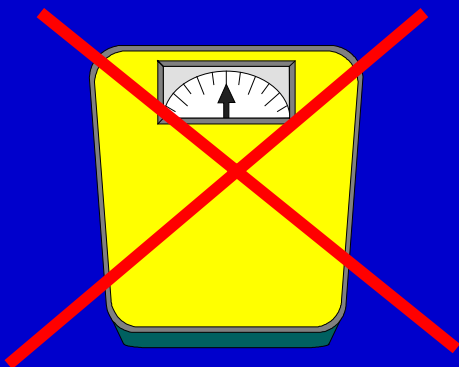




Staff Survey Findings



- how can WIC help parents prevent their children from becoming overweight?
 - focus on healthy behaviors for all children, not on weight and size
 - offer parents concrete strategies, focus more on “how”



Staff Survey Findings

- what do WIC staff members need to be successful as role models for participants?
 - a supportive environment to help in making healthy lifestyle changes (to be physically active and fit, to eat healthily)
 - additional information and training on diet, physical activity and childhood overweight



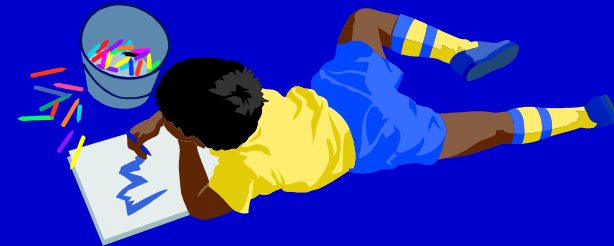
Staff Survey Findings

- WIC food package changes:
 - make WIC foods more representative of food guide pyramid
 - include more culturally appropriate foods (survey participants to determine cultural foods and appropriateness)
 - reduce juice and dairy products
 - include lower fat foods



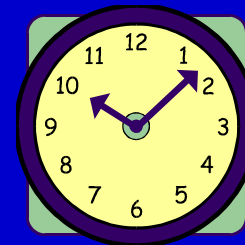
Participant Survey Findings

- 106 surveys at intervention sites
- 86% Latino, 48% born in Mexico
- 31% considered themselves overweight
- over half were trying to lose weight
- causes of overweight in children:
 - inadequate physical activity (72%)
 - eating the wrong foods (77%)
 - eating too much food (72%)



Participant Survey Findings

- barriers to physical activity:
 - have to watch children
 - don't have a place to exercise
 - don't have enough time
 - have to exercise alone
 - feel unsafe



- 80% always or sometimes watch TV at least 3 hours per day



Participant Survey Findings



- eating behaviors
 - 69% almost always eat evening meal as a family
 - 70% said their child ate fast food at least once in the past week
 - 54% said they almost always or sometimes worried about running out of food during the month

Participant Survey Findings

- most participants were interested in participating with WIC in:



- increasing safe play areas for children in the community

- attending exercise classes for parents and children

- attending cooking classes



- learning about successful parenting strategies



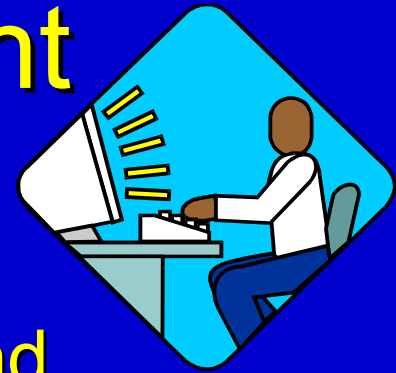
Participant Focus Groups

- 9 focus groups:
 - 5 with Spanish-speaking Latinos
 - 3 with English-speaking Latinos
 - 1 with English-speaking non-Latinos
- questions:
 - what makes children healthy?
 - feelings about children's weight, own weight
 - how can WIC help parents keep their children healthy?

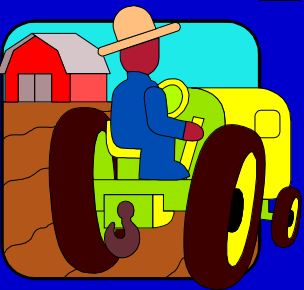


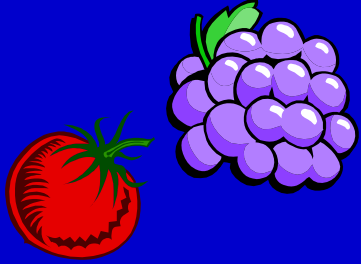


Community Assessment

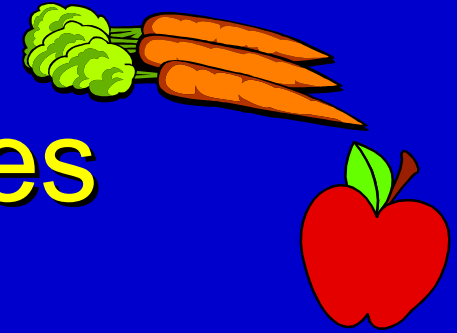


- purpose:
 - to identify community's resources and stakeholders
 - to identify individuals and organizations for potential inclusion on local children and weight task force
- focus:
 - organizations and individuals within community served by WIC site





Local Task Forces

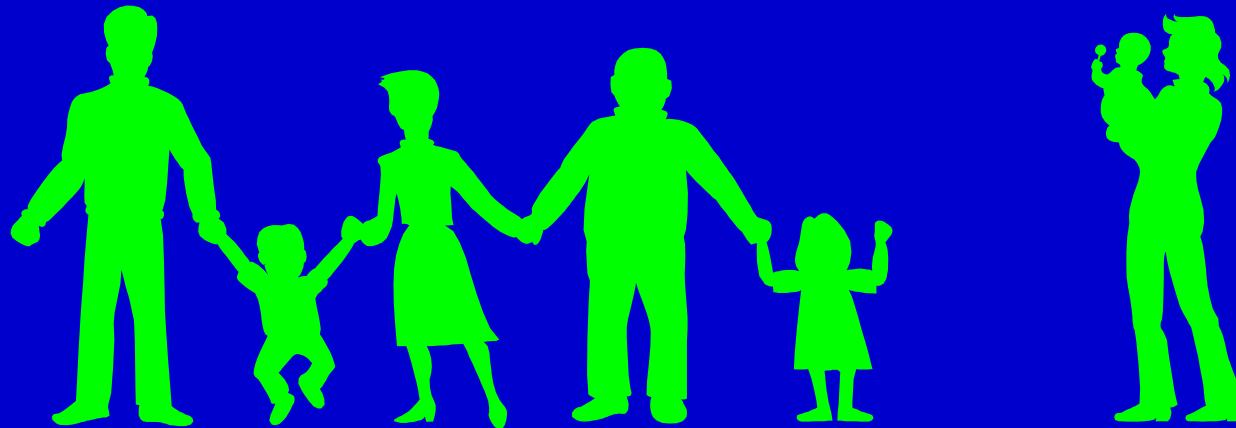


- purpose:
 - work with WIC staff to develop community interventions promoting healthy eating and physical activity among young children
 - help ensure that interventions are culturally appropriate, are sensitive to community realities, and use local assets



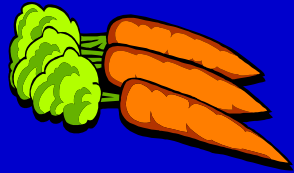
Local Task Forces

- purpose:
 - assess strengths, gaps and potential collaborations among local resources
 - coordinate community efforts






Community Intervention Ideas

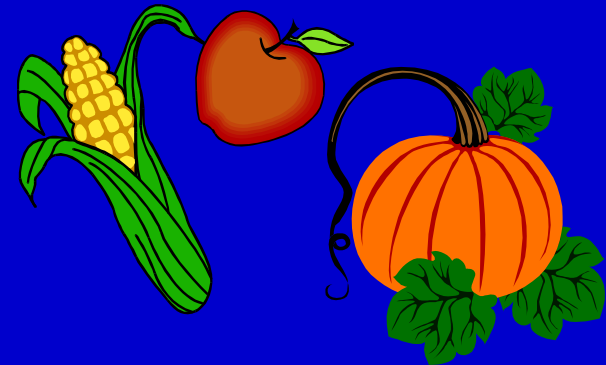


- community garden project
- community cooking and physical activity classes
- guide to community resources for healthy eating and physical activity



Community Intervention Ideas

- health fair
- farmers market
- close off street for bikes/pedestrians





WIC Site Intervention Ideas



- staff wellness/ empowerment program, staff as role models
- incorporating physical activity into WIC education
- cooking classes



