



*EatPlayGrow*TM

ACS Training Evaluation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Report Prepared for:

The Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)

Prepared by:

BLiP research

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Evaluating the ACS/CMOM *EatPlayGrow*TM Pilot

- With a grant from New York Community Trust, New York City's Association for Children's Services (ACS) and the the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) have developed a new initiative to extend the outreach and impact of its highly successful *EatPlayGrow*TM (*EPG*) early childhood obesity prevention program.
 - One of the desired outcomes of this first year's pilot effort is the creation of a effective scalable model for providing like trainings in the future
- As part of this initiative, CMOM implemented the *EPG* curriculum with a pilot group of 152 Family Child Care (FCC) providers from ACS' network.
- In addition, a Family Festival at CMOM hosted 297 participants drawn from this network.
- In order to examine the program's efficacy, CMOM contracted *BLiP Research*—a New York City-based research and consulting firm specializing in children and families—to conduct a statistically extendible “experimental” protocol to examine how this training model impacts the behavior of participants subsequent to participation.

Training Was Enjoyable, Impactful, Sharable

- The *EPG* training was incredibly well received by participants, receiving an high approval rating of **93%**: likely a strong contributing factor to its palatability, as well as its impact.
- While just three-hours long and administered just one time, the training had significant long-term impact on caregiver's knowledge (**5% increase**) and confidence (**9% increase**) regarding information related to capacity for preventing early childhood obesity.
- One of the greatest areas of impact came in caregivers' capacity to find and share information about early childhood obesity prevention (**10% increase**), behaviors which would yield the greatest impact to the communities they serve, especially were the program to be scaled up.
- The training also had significant effect on notable healthy lifestyle-related behaviors across the range of constituent stakeholders.
 - Caregivers
 - Families
 - Children

Training Impacted Key Repeated, Scalable Behaviors

- The training had its most significant impact on the frequency of a few key caregiver behaviors
 - Serving Fruits (6% increase)
 - Providing Activities to Build Strong Bones (14% increase)
 - Adjusting Portion Size (16% increase)
- Notably, these were behaviors that were already occurring most frequently amongst surveyed caregivers, reinforcing the idea that it is easier to enhance behaviors that are already habituated (to “nudge”) than to introduce brand new behaviors.
 - It would be interesting to conduct research prior to or concurrent with a further scaling up of this program to investigate what further behaviors might be appropriate targets for this kind of suggestive change.
- Participants often noted small changes in behavior, but because the behaviors targeted here are consistent and constant and have highly repeated incidence (eating, sleeping, exercising) even small changes can compound to create significant impact.
 - This is particularly true as scale increases.

Program Was Disseminated to Key Constituencies

- The *EPG* pilot training clearly found its way from caregivers to children to families, indicating its communicability.
 - A notable proportion of families of children who participated in the program (40%) were made aware of the existence of the *EPG* program.
- An overwhelming majority of these families (80%) attributed their awareness directly to the FCC providers who attended the training, or their own children in these providers' care.
- Families indicated an increased understanding of issues related to healthy living.
 - Making Healthy Food Choices (43%)
 - Importance of Active Play (24%)
 - Songs, Movement, Art, Books Related to Healthy Choices (24%)
 - Families also noted some key behavioral changes based on this program with a full third of families *indicating a large change in behavior* based on the program.
 - What We Eat (33%)
 - What We Drink (29%)
 - Importance of Active Play (24%)
- These gains in the flow of information and action were based on a relatively small sample size, suggesting that a much larger effect could potentially be achieved were the training more widely disseminated.

Success Predictive of Future Scalability

- The numerous, quantitatively-proven behavioral changes indicated from this analysis of the *EPG* pilot training—which were derived from one interactive three-hour training—strongly suggest that a this program would lend itself well to a larger, scalable initiative.
- Furthermore, because the *EPG* training was easily integrated into regularly scheduled ACS FCC trainings, such a program could be readily embedded into the existing childcare professional development mandate of ACS.
- Moreover, the clear and effective chain of dissemination of information and action—from CMOM educator, to ACS FCC caregiver, to children and families served—reinforce the idea of a scalable program that could provide an exponentially scalable effect.

Qualitative Observation Reinforced Positive Findings

- Observations, and the solicited and unsolicited responses of participants, reinforced the quantitative findings: the training was remarkably well received.

“The information and activities that we've learned are priceless.”

“Considering that there were two full sessions that lasted the entire day in both English and Spanish, we were so grateful that their energy and positivity never failed to amaze us.”

- The participants found the activities interactive, compelling, useful, and eye-opening.

“I never knew there was that much sugar in the juices.”

- Participants were strongly motivated by the ability to personalize the activities, and to relate them to their own personal experiences and those of the children and families they serve.

“We can do these sleep mobiles in whatever way we want. The kids will love that.”

“I will never get a Dunkin' Donuts muffin again!”

Contact Us

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