Case Study: Revealing The Issue Of Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity is one of the greatest challenges to the public health community. Childhood obesity are children who are aged two to 19 years old. There are several serious health risks associated with obesity that are both short and long term. Children who are obese can have high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol which can lead to cardiovascular disease. Obese children have a greater risk up developing type 2 diabetes. There is a variety and combination of factors are at play. A sedentary lifestyle has been found to play a factor in childhood obesity. Most children rather sit down and watch television or play video games than play outside with their friends. “Researchers have suggested that more time spent in front of the television is associated with poor food choices that lead to overweight and obesity and, in turn, increased cardiovascular risk”.(Ali, Y.). Childhood obesity is a public health issue that puts but children and adolescents at risk for poor health and needs to be addressed.

In 1992, a health education development program was developed at the University of California School of Medicine called Just For Kids. This program is a school setting program that was successfully tested in San Francisco schools. This program is most appropriate for the age of 6 to 10. However, Just For Kids doesn’t discriminate against younger or older participants. Just For Kids helps all participants make changes in their diet, exercise and communication. Those changes have resulted in decreased obesity, improved cardiovascular and physical fitness and increased knowledge.

This program can be delivered over periods ranging from 5 to 10 weeks depending on format. Every week there are Just For Kids workbooks that will guide children in making changes in their habits and lifestyles which will result in improving their fitness and knowledge. This program can be completed in a group format or individually at school. The Just For Kids workbook is divided into nine tabbed sections that is normally completed in one week. This time allowed the children to be able to make suggested changes in their behavior and to practice the new skills learned in each of the nine sections. The workbook includes weekly goals scoreboards, other behavior change record keeping forms/charts and tables that displays nutrition, exercise and behavior guidelines.

The Just For Kids Program is used in a classroom setting making the children feel more comfortable they’re able to role play to learn how to handle teasing, practice problem-solving techniques, and learn more effective ways to express their feeling to their peers. Teachers and instructors use a game-like approach and hands-on materials that educates them about the difference between high-fat and low-fat foods. They’re are also taught the kinds of physical activities that will help make their bodies stronger and healthier.

Just For Kids program adapted the workbook from the Shapedown Pediatric Obesity Program which is the nation’s leading weight management program for children and adolescent. Shapedown is currently offered in over 400 hospitals, HMO’S and clinics by hundreds of health professionals that provide pediatric obesity care to families nationwide. It was tested and revised over a 15 year period. “Hundreds of thousands of young people and their families have used this approach to change their lives.”(Just for Kids! Child Obesity Prevention Program. (n.d.).). Just For Kids have shown to be very successful.

The social risk factors that is being address in the program is obese children having low self esteem, being bullied, behavior and learning problems, depression, socioeconomic factors and family factors. The behavioral risk factors that are being addressed is children drinking sweet beverages, junk food, not eating breakfast, excessive game playing and watching television, and lack of physical activity. The theoretical approaches that is being used in Just For Kids program to help facilitate social and behavioral change is a setting-based approach as well as a health promotion to create a supportive environment for childhood obesity. Just for Kids has shown great effectiveness in educational intervention to tackle obesogenic lifestyle for early childhood.

The approach that Just For Kids takes is to use a variety of cognitive, behavioral and affective techniques to help children make a successive, small behavior changes that are sustainable. This program uses a developmental skills training activity that will help teach children how to modify their eating and physical activity behaviors. Obese children develop low self esteem because they're bullied and teased about their weight. The participants will learn developmental skills will help children become more self-nurturing, develop effective limit-setting skills, and build a more positive body image.

The transtheoretical is a model of behavior change that is an integrative theory of therapy that is able to see an individual's readiness to act on a new healthier behavior, provides strategies, or processes of change to guide the individual. The Just For Kids program focused more on the developmental skills that will help teach the children how to modify their eating, physical activity behaviors and building their self esteem. The program did focus on nutritional dieting but since this program setting was at school in a classroom it would of been great to have the school change their meals to a more healthier diet.

A research was done to determine whether Just For Kids a school based health intervention program could decrease obesity, improve cardiovascular fitness, physical fitness and increase the children and their families knowledge on eating healthy. In the study, it showed that the intervention group significantly improved on measurements on triceps,diastolic and systolic blood pressure, and gave children knowledge on nutrition. This study was simple and was able to achieve significant results for several outcomes after a 10 week intervention. Just For Kids is a low-cost intervention that has helped students develop healthy dieting habits and increased their physical activity.

Just for Kids has shown great effectiveness in educational intervention that has been able to tackle obesogenic lifestyle for early childhood. Just For Kids were able to address several underlying factors like psychological correlates of the child's weight-related behaviors and improved participants low self esteem. This program used cognitive and body image therapies to help improve the children's low self-esteem. It also focused on problem solving, assertive and emotionally expressive communication. In result, these techniques were able to help support all the children in the program to stop their excessive appetites for unhealthy food.

References

1. Ali, Y. (2018, February 28). An Overview of Childhood Obesity. Retrieved April 4, 2019, from https://www.verywellhealth.com/childhood-4014273
2. Just for Kids! Child Obesity Prevention Program. (n.d.). Retrieved April 13, 2019, from

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