

## **ILLINOIS ADOPTS PROVEN PROGRAM TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

*Goal is preventing chronic disease by changing activity and nutrition habits of children and parents*

### **Public Health Problem**

- Type 2 diabetes and overweight is increasing in Illinois children and adults.
- Almost 40 percent of Illinois third graders are either overweight or at risk for being overweight, according to survey of 99 schools done by the Healthy Smiles, Healthy Grow program of the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH).
- The scientifically-proven Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH) Program has demonstrated that changing the school environment can lead to improvement in student eating and physical activity behaviors.

### **Program**

- Teams are trained to use the evidence-based CATCH program.
- Participating schools receive a \$5,000 grant from IDPH to implement the curriculum, purchase necessary equipment and promote activities and program philosophy.
- Each school completes the School Health Index, a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention tool that helps schools identify strengths and weaknesses in existing health programs and develop action plans and wellness policies for improving students' health.
- Trained observers determine the level of activity in physical education classes to evaluate effectiveness of increasing activity.

### **Impact**

- Follow-up evaluation shows that students in CATCH physical education classes are more active during class time. Moderate to vigorous physical activity during class increased by 32 percent and the time students were *very active* during class more than doubled.
- The CATCH curriculum and physical education activities are now aligned with the Illinois State Board of Education learning standards for physical development and health for grades 3 to 5.
- About 100 CATCH Team members have been trained, reaching about 6,000 elementary school students. About 275 students, family, school and community members participated at each of the 19 schools.
- Integrating CATCH with the IDPH obesity program and collaborating with the Consortium to Lower Obesity in Chicago Children will expand the Department's efforts.

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