

KERSHAW COUNTY PRESCHOOLERS TASTE THE BENEFITS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

Vegetable and fruit education program promotes healthy lifestyles for children and their families

Public Health Problem

- Childhood obesity is increasing dramatically and can lead to health problems not commonly found in teens and younger children, such as type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and high blood cholesterol.
- Teaching children to make healthy food and physical activity choices can help reverse the obesity trend and make it more likely that they'll practice healthy behaviors as they get older.

Program

- Four childcare centers in Kershaw County implemented the Color Me Healthy curriculum and a supplemental vegetable and fruit initiative designed to introduce them to the taste and nutritional value of unfamiliar vegetables and fruits in order to promote healthy food choices.
- This program is a partnership between Kershaw County First Steps, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, Kershaw County office and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control Region 4.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant supplies funds for a health educator who assists in teaching monthly classes and providing vegetable and fruit taste-testing opportunities for students.
- Parents are kept up-to-date on what their child is learning and the recipes from the lessons.

Impact

- Almost one hundred children and their parents were reached with the message that vegetables and fruit taste good and are a healthy choice for meals and snacks. This effort will be replicated in these centers and additional centers next year.
- Students have begun making healthier food choices and increasing their amount of daily physical activity. Homestyle Childcare Center in Elgin increased their vegetable and fruit offerings during the day and has a small school garden where the children can learn how their vegetables grow.
- Students look forward to the classes each month and are eager to learn about healthy lifestyles.

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