IMPROVING NUTRITION THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS AT INDIGENOUS SCHOOLS: THE EXPERIENCES OF THE KAHNAWAKE SCHOOLS DIABETES PREVENTION PROJECT (KSDPP)

Changing the Menu: National School Food Conference
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KAHNAWAKE MOHAWK TERRITORY

- Located in the northeast corner of Traditional Haudenosaunee Territory
- Present community established in 1716 as a Christian mission
- Indian Act system imposed in 1876
- Governance by The Mohawk Council of Kahnawake
- Traditional government has always operated within the community
Decentralized governance of organizations:
- Health, Recreation
- Social & Community Services
- Cultural Center,
- Recreation,
- Economic Development
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KAHNAWAKE SCHOOLS DIABETES PREVENTION PROJECT

• Community-based participatory research project since 1994

• Goal to prevent diabetes among children & future generations through promotion of healthy eating, physical activity & positive attitude.
  • Developing knowledge and skills among children, teachers and parents
  • Building supportive school environments
  • Building partnerships among local organizations
  • Increasing school-based healthy lifestyle activities
All Kahnawakero:non are in excellent health. Diabetes no longer exists. All the children and adults eat healthily at all meals and are physically active daily. The children are actively supported by their parents and family who provide nutritious foods obtainable from family gardens, local food distributors and the natural environment.

The school program, as well as local organizations maintain programs and policy that reflect and reinforce wellness activities. There are a variety of activities for all people offered at a wide range of recreational facilities in the community. All people accept the responsibility to co-operatively maintain a well community for the future Seven Generations.
KAHNNAWAKE EDUCATION SYSTEMS

Kahnawake Education Center
- 2 elementary schools
- 1 secondary school

Alternative traditional elementary school

Alternative Kanien’keha immersion elementary school

Pre-school
KMHC HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR DIABETES PREVENTION

- Nutrition, Fitness, Diabetes & Lifestyle
- Ten 45 minute lessons
- Grades 1 to 6
- Created by KMHC – 2 school nurses, 1 nutritionist
- Delivered in 2 schools by classroom teachers
NUTRITION OBJECTIVES

• Menus for balanced meals and healthy snacks
• Benefits of healthy eating
• Factors that influence eating habits
• Identify healthy food choices by labels
• Accept a variety of shapes and sizes of healthy bodies
KSDPP EVALUATION OF HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAM

2012 Evaluation through Health Canada opportunity
- Provide more support for curriculum implementation
- Update content and instructional resources
- Increase interactive and up to date instructional methodologies
- Increase the cultural content within the curriculum
HEALTH CURRICULUM SUPPORT
UPDATE CULTURAL CONTENT
KEC NUTRITION POLICY


- 1994 to 2000, KSDPP supported policy enforcement
- By 2001 *de facto* end to policy enforcement
- Behaviors begin to return to pre-1994
RECOMMENDED FOODS FOR HEALTHY EATING

- Whole grain breads, bagels, pita bread, pasta, rice, non-sugar coated cereals
- Vegetables & fruits; unsweetened fruit juice, vegetable juice
- Lower fat dairy products like milk, cheese, yogurt & ice cream
- Leaner meats, poultry and fish, beans, peas & lentils
- Butter, margarine, mayonnaise & gravy may be used sparingly
KSDPP EVALUATION OF KEC NUTRITION POLICY

- 2003 - 2005 Nutrition policy revised to a wholistic Wellness Policy by a team of organizations
- 2009 revised Policy was ratified and implemented
- Slow implementation process
- 2012 Evaluation through Health Canada opportunity
NUTRITION POLICY EVALUATION
FINDINGS

• Communication of the policy
• Nutrition Committee needed
• Education
• Fundraising
• Classroom celebrations
• Cafeteria
• Eating environment
• Time to eat
• Breakfast Program
ZERO TOLERANCE VS. MODERATION

- 100% clarity with a zero tolerance policy
- More control including peer supervision
- Zero tolerance drawbacks
  - The teachers bear implementation burden
    - Discipline for non-complaint students
    - Teachers seen as ‘food police’
    - Some teachers not wanting to be role models
- Moderate policy approach resulted in more relaxed attitude at school
- Junk food at school not an issue
NUTRITION POLICY FACILITATORS

• Nutritionist provides good examples & demonstrations
• Nutritionist’s consultation with cafeteria staff
• Students enjoy some healthy, tasty samples tried by cafeteria
• KSDPP information booth during report card time informative
• Recipe cards to bring home provided
• Fruit sharing at morning snack
• Food (snacks) are allowed in class
NUTRITION POLICY BARRIERS

- Few teachers & parents adhere to the policy
- No monitoring of holiday & celebration foods, bake & pizza sales
- Cafeteria as a business, healthy foods are costly and sometimes food doesn’t adhere to policy
- Too many students to follow up concerning unhealthy lunches
- Large noisy cafeteria room & not enough lunch monitors
- Nutrition education teachers, parents, students & cafeteria staff needed
- No strong definition of what is considered moderation
- Students arriving on early bus not ready to eat breakfast
EVALUATION CONCLUSIONS

- Policy evolved from working document to shelved reference
- The affected population are either unaware of the Policy or tare not satisfied with implementation
- Issues for action identified
- Recommendations to improve Policy and its implementation.
- Agreement that healthy eating environment is collective responsibility.
NEXT STEPS

- KSDPP follow-up at the two elementary schools
- Develop committee(s) to review recommendations & evolve to next steps
- Develop strategies and action plans for implementation
- Share results & explore processes at other schools to build policy & healthy eating activities
CAFETERIA SUPPORT

• Consultation with cafeteria managers on menus
• Regular review of snacks
• Healthy snack bar experimentation
PARENT PREPARED SCHOOL BREAKFAST
REPORT CARD FOD DISPLAYS
PRE-SCHOOL HOLIDAY TREATS
STUDENT COOKING CLASSES
HIGH SCHOOL FOOD TASTING
GRADE 5/6 GARDEN PROJECT
SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECTS

Quebec en Forme Project
High school garden
SCHOOL GARDEN PROJECTS

Quebec en Forme Project
Kariwahnoron Greenhouse