

Families can make small behaviour changes.

Creative materials with interesting tips on how to increase steps and cereal consumption were provided to help the intervention families make these small behaviour changes. Physical activity and cereal consumption increased significantly in the 62 experimental families as compared to the 19 control families. All members of the intervention families significantly increased steps per day, while none of the control families did. Members of the intervention families consumed just over one serving of cereal per day compared to about one-half a serving per day consumed by control family members.

Small behaviour changes can have a big impact.

Overweight girls in the intervention group had a significantly lower rate of weight gain compared to those in the control group over the 14-week intervention (1.31 vs 1.88 kg). This resulted in a significant difference in percent Body Mass Index (-0.164 vs +0.94) and percent body fat (-0.29 vs +0.97). Mothers in the experimental families also lost weight compared to control mothers (-0.54 vs +0.51 kg).

A similar trend was observed in boys and fathers in the experimental families; however, their weight gain did not differ significantly from those in the control group over this relatively

America and the world ON THE MOVE

Dr. Hill's group recently launched the national AMERICA ON THE MOVE initiative to inspire Americans to make small lifestyle changes to prevent weight gain. The program shows participants how to stop weight gain by walking an additional 2000 steps and adopting one behaviour to eliminate 100 calories of energy intake each day. The program works because it is based on small changes people can make. Future plans include expanding the ON THE MOVE program to Canada, the United Kingdom and other countries around the globe.

THE BOTTOM LINE

This research strongly supports the notion that small lifestyle changes can be achieved through a family-based program and can have an important impact on prevention of excessive weight gain in children and their parents. More work is needed to assess the sustainability and long-term impact of small lifestyle changes for the prevention of obesity. However, the fact that this intervention had a positive impact on some indicators of obesity over such a short period (14 weeks) suggests great potential for this approach.

For more information on AMERICA ON THE MOVE visit:
www.americaonthemove.org

KELLOGG'S STAR-IN-YOU EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM

Rina de Klerk, PhD

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Drs. de Klerk and le Roux shared insight on the unique STAR-IN-YOU program aimed at empowering school-aged children to achieve their full potential.

Emotional Intelligence is even more important than IQ.

Current research shows that about 80% of our ability to cope and succeed in life is related to emotional intelligence. Our thoughts tend to determine the outcome and the way we experience emotions impacts our ability to function. Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to identify, understand and control your own thoughts and feelings, communicate them appropriately to others and have empathy and interactivity with the emotions of others. A child can reach his potential so much easier when he is emotionally intelligent. The reason for this is that the functioning of the higher brain is hampered by anxiety and tension, with the result that the child cannot concentrate and think clearly. Children who have the skills associated with a high emotional intelligence enjoy better physical health as intense emotions like stress can lower the immunity levels of a person. Their self-worth and acceptance improve, they can establish relationships, make better decisions, have better survival and coping skills. Children who have a high level of emotional intelligence are more resistant to the attacks of violence, sexual events, alcohol, drugs, suicide and other.

Kellogg's STAR-IN-YOU program empowers learners.

Inspired by a desire to contribute in a meaningful way to the growth and development of South African children, the Kellogg Company of South Africa launched a fun-filled, innovative life skills developmental program founded on the principals of emotional intelligence. First launched in 2000, Kellogg's unique STAR-IN-YOU program for elementary schools is aimed at empowering learners (ages 6 – 13) to recognize and develop the "star" (unique qualities) in themselves and others.

Ronél le Roux, PhD

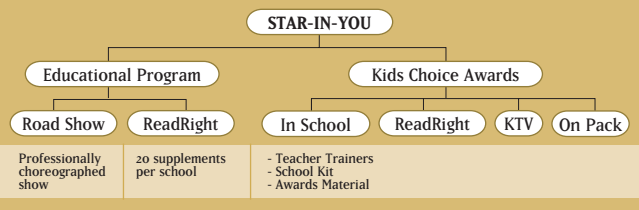
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There is a "Star" in each and every one of us.

The STAR-IN-YOU program is an experiential learning program that encourages children to use their unique "star" qualities to achieve their full physical, intellectual, emotional, personal and social potential. It offers teachers and parents materials and activities to help children nurture and develop a healthy mind, body and world using emotional intelligence techniques. The program makes sure kids realize that there is a "star" in each and every one and that true "stars" care about themselves, others and their world.

STAR-IN-YOU PROGRAM OVERVIEW



More than a million children have been enriched.

More than 1000 schools across South Africa have participated in the STAR-IN-YOU program. Teacher training workshops are used to provide teachers with the resources and materials to facilitate program implementation. Schools receive STAR-IN-YOU awards posters, wall charts, merit badges and merit award certificates as well as a 35 week lesson plan that resembles the outcome-based curriculum followed in South Africa. Making personal contact with the schools was important to ensuring schools joined the program initially.



The STAR-IN-YOU road show is a hit with kids.

A high energy professionally scripted and choreographed "Edutainment" road show featuring four of kid's favourite Kellogg characters brings the STAR-IN-YOU message to children at targeted schools. Star sign language is used as a powerful way to convey the message "You're a Star!" The simple message works and the road show is very popular with both educators and kids.

Partnership activities have been key to success.

Partnerships have enabled the program to grow to reach a total of more than 19 million people with the STAR-IN-YOU message. In 2002, Kellogg's joined forces with Rand Water to expand the program's focus beyond a healthy body and mind to include a healthy world. A partnership with the Sunday Times has enabled the program to publish its weekly lessons and posters in the ReadRight education supplement to the Sunday newspaper. In recognition of this initiative, Kellogg's STAR-IN-YOU program won the 2002 World Newspaper Association Young Reader Award.

Kids Choice Awards give children a voice.

The Kids Choice Awards televised on national television in partnership with KTV give elementary school children the opportunity to recognize the "star" qualities in others. Children vote for their favourites in 25 categories including their most admired sports star, sports team, actor, actress, movie, band, politician and TV show. The awards empower children by giving them a voice, allowing them a vote and have their opinions heard through a kid's "Oscar Awards" like event.

Key learnings from Kellogg's STAR-IN-YOU program

The program requires a large infrastructure and extensive resources. While the creation of strong partnerships places additional demands on time and resources, this approach has enabled the program to grow and increase its reach tremendously. Teacher support through workshops and teacher training is critical for program implementation. It is important to keep the school materials simple. Schools prefer the theme and ideas rather than prescriptive lessons. Providing schools with materials and a schedule at the beginning of the year also facilitates implementation.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Making sure all elements of the program carry the essence of the STAR-IN-YOU message ensures children receive the important messages even if their school does not implement the whole program. Media exposure achieved through partnerships contributed greatly to the extensive reach and success of the program. Evaluation results show that children who have participated in Kellogg's STAR-IN-YOU program believe that they are "stars."

To learn more about the STAR-IN-YOU program visit:
www.starinyou.co.za

THE MAASTRICHT COMMUNITY HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

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Dr. Steenhuis addressed worksite cafeteria and supermarket-based strategies to reduce barriers or increase opportunities for healthy eating choices.

Point of choice settings are ideal for dietary interventions.

Worksite cafeterias and supermarkets are well suited for educational and environmental interventions aimed at changing dietary behaviour. Health education methods can be used to increase awareness, change attitudes, teach people how to deal with social pressure and develop skills to adopt healthy behaviours. However, many argue that educational interventions are not sufficient to achieve population-wide behaviour change and that these should be supplemented by environmental interventions.

Environmental interventions can influence unplanned choices.

Environmental interventions can reduce barriers and increase opportunities for healthy choices by creating healthy options, making healthy choices more accessible (i.e. easy to find and not too expensive) and establishing policies that require the availability of healthy options. Worksite cafeterias provide a daily eating setting with opportunities for follow-up, monitoring and reinforcement of messages. Supermarket interventions have the potential to reach large target audiences to influence point of purchase decisions.

Educational and environmental interventions put to the test.

Several educational and environmental interventions have been implemented in worksites and supermarkets in an effort to reduce fat intake through the Maastricht Community Health Promotion Program in the Netherlands. The strategies tested include

computer tailored health information, self-help manuals, worksite cafeteria and supermarket labelling programs. Dr. Steenhuis' evaluation research provides insight on the effectiveness of these types of interventions.

Computer tailored health information gets greater attention.

Computer tailoring is an educational strategy that makes it possible to provide large groups of people with individually tailored health information. Computer generated feedback is attuned to individual characteristics based on responses to a questionnaire designed to assess consumption behaviour, opinions about that behaviour and motivation to change. Evaluation indicates that tailored nutrition information is processed more intensively, contains less redundant information and is appreciated more than general nutrition information. Research has demonstrated a significant positive effect on fat reduction.¹

Self-help manuals increase awareness about fat consumption.

Self-help nutrition manuals are another example of an educational intervention. Manuals distributed through worksites and supermarkets included dietary guidelines, self-tests to measure and raise awareness about fat intake. Practical tips on how to read nutrient information, cook low-fat meals and sustain new dietary behaviours were provided. Evaluation showed that 71% completed the test to measure their fat consumption, 66% did the fat knowledge test and 15% prepared one of the recipes in the manual. Self-reported data indicate an increased awareness of fat intake as well as the advantages of healthy eating.²



Labelling in cafeterias works in combination with awareness.

An intervention study involving 13 large worksite cafeterias examined the impact of adding an environmental component to a standard educational program. Education was aimed at reducing fat intake through awareness, attitude, social influence, self-efficacy and skill development. Low-fat products were identified with shelf labels. While there was no effect on the fat intake of the total study population, labelling did have a significant short-term effect on people who were aware of their own fat intake. Those who acknowledged that they ate too much fat reduced their fat consumption by 7.5%. Positive trends in sales were also observed for some products with the labelling intervention. The most significant sales trend was a 15% increase in the proportion of low-fat desserts sold.³

Capturing consumer attention proves difficult in supermarkets.

An experiment involving 13 supermarkets was conducted to determine the effect of a nutrition labelling program in conjunction with education material. Although respondents had a positive opinion about the programs, evaluation results showed no effect on the key outcome measures for fat intake. The key challenge in the supermarket is that it is very difficult to capture consumer attention in such a competitive environment. Only 23% of customers noticed the nutrition labelling, much lower awareness than in the worksite cafeterias.⁴

Understanding implementation requirements is key.

Qualitative research with 21 worksite cafeteria and supermarket managers highlights requirements critical for implementation. Health promotion efforts should not be too obtrusive and must not consume too much of their personnel's time. Managers want programs that focus on the positive nutrition aspects, not labelling of unhealthy products. They would agree to an extension of their food offerings with healthy products, but are not willing to replace unhealthy products with healthy products. Interventions must be adjustable to their individual stores or cafeterias. There must be very clear criteria for labelling products.²

THE BOTTOM LINE

An awareness of one's own consumption levels is an important first step that must be addressed in interventions aimed at changing dietary behaviour. Environmental changes may add to the effectiveness of educational strategies. Interventions such as labelling or changes in the food supply in cafeterias should be present long enough or implemented on a permanent basis to facilitate behaviour change. Further research is needed to assess the potential effectiveness of various interventions, particularly environmental interventions.

References:

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2. Steenhuis I, et al. Health Promot Int, 2001; 16(1):21-31.
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Findings presented at the 2004 Kellogg Nutrition Symposium illustrate that a wide variety of local initiatives can motivate people to adopt healthy lifestyle changes. Learnings shared by Symposium speakers provide insight into key factors that contribute to the successful planning and implementation of health promotion programs. The following "Top 10 list" highlights specific actions that dietitians and other health professionals can put into practice to maximize the effectiveness of local initiatives to support healthier lifestyles.

1. People will implement simple lifestyle changes.

Encourage people to make small changes in eating and activity habits that are simple and realistic for them to adopt. Even two small changes may help prevent weight gain and promote weight loss.

2. Family-centred approaches may be most effective.

Involve the entire family in making behaviour changes whenever possible. Family-centred efforts increase the odds of changing eating and activity behaviours in both children and their parents.

3. Incentives can help people make healthy choices.

Work with community partners to give people a reason to change. Incentives for healthier lifestyle choices, such as discounts offered by local retail outlets, can be effective.

4. Awareness of nutrient intake motivates change.

Find a way to provide people with personal feedback on their nutrient intake. Raising awareness about the need for personal change appears to be an important first step to motivating change.

5. Environmental initiatives can make a difference.

Enhance the benefit of educational efforts by creating environments that support lifestyle choices. Offering and identifying healthy food choices in point of purchase settings may influence decisions.

6. Cafeterias and supermarkets will get involved.

Be aware of and work with the practical needs of cafeteria and supermarket managers. Most are open to running programs provided they are easy to implement and focus on healthy food choices.

7. Labels that identify healthier choices may work.

Labelling healthier choices in cafeteria settings can help influence food choices among those who are aware of their personal nutrient intake when offered in conjunction with nutrition education.

8. Supermarkets are highly competitive environments.

Consider how to best capture public attention. Although most people read food labels, competing for consumer attention to influence purchase decisions in supermarkets may prove to be a challenge.

9. Educators appreciate simple school materials.

Focus on simple messages that can be carried throughout educational programs and make initiatives easy for educators to implement.

10. Media exposure can increase reach exponentially.

Partner with the media to extend the reach and influence of program messages.

