

Supporting the Whole Child: How Parents Can Ensure a Healthy and Active Summer

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Background

- With schools closed throughout the summer, students' eating patterns and access to nutritious meals and structured physical activities can *decrease during this time*.
- Parent involvement is critical during these out-of-school time months.

Objective

- To develop a communications campaign that highlights evidence-based actions parents can take to keep their children healthy and active in the summer and to prepare them for the upcoming school year.

Process

- The Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child framework informs this project. (see Figure 1).
- We reviewed peer-reviewed and gray literature to identify interventions and parent concerns about keeping children healthy, challenged, supported, and engaged during summer.
- We developed a tip sheet and promotional kit to help parents navigate summer activities and identify resources.

Literature Search Findings

Fifteen articles were found pertaining to out-of-school time. Nine of these included interventions or practices that made children feel challenged, supported, engaged, and healthy.

	Study	Year	Premise
Healthy	Brazendale et al.	2015	Met 60 min/day PA requirement
Challenged	Hermans et al.	2018	Expanding nutrition awareness
	Christison & Khan	2012	Advancing PA by Activity Tracking via Exergaming
Supported	Touyz et al.	2018	Parents/caregivers engaged in nutrition activity with child
	Benson et al.	2021	Higher inclusion in cooking yields higher intake of F&Vs.
	Horst et al.	2014	
Engaged	Riesch et al	2019	Reduced screen time → reduced sleep disturbance
	Boushey et al.	2009	Dietary assessment via technology
	Trude et al.	2018	Utilizing social media to increase fruit intake

Table 1 Studies from literature review that show children being healthy, challenged, supported and engaged in maintaining positive nutrition and activity practices.



Figure 1 The WSCC model is CDC's school health framework which includes families actively supporting their child's learning and development needs.

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- Beach day – 42%**
- Pool day - 35%**
- Play water games (water balloons, sprinklers, etc.) – 26%**
- Eat watermelon - 19%**
- Play in the yard (hopscotch) – 16%**
- Go on a hike – 15%**

Figure 2: Example gray literature findings Top summer activities for families in order of popularity, 2021 OnePoll survey conducted among 2,000 parents

References

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Tip Sheet Dissemination

- The tip sheet was made widely accessible via social media apps of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
- As of August 10th, 2021, there were 977 likes, 409 comments, and 324 shares on Facebook. Twitter engagement showed 162 likes and 61 retweets, and Instagram displayed 3,114 likes and 136 comments.



Figure 3 A digital app promoted on the tip sheet that engages children to make healthy food choices at home or on the go.

Key Takeaways

1. Many strategies and programs were identified through the lit review (e.g., summer meal programs).
2. There are concerns about equitable access to these opportunities.
3. Researchers and practitioners should identify and evaluate strategies to address barriers to participation.