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ACTIVE 6 AFTER-SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM: A PROCESS EVALUATION

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ACTIVE 6 AFTER-SCHOOL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAM: A PROCESS
EVALUATION

By

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Thesis

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

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Active 6 After-School Physical Activity Program: A Process Evaluation

Chairperson: Dr. Laura Dybdal

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to participation in the Active 6 After-School Physical Activity (A6) program in Missoula, MT. Barriers were explored by identifying factors that influence participation in after-school programs. Those barriers identified in the literature were compared with current needs and existing resources of the target population. To evaluate the barriers to the A6 program, primary qualitative data was collected from two sets of three focus groups; one high socio-economic status (SES) and one low. The results of this assessment identified barriers to participation in the A6 program from both parents/guardians and kids. Barriers to participation among parents included a general lack of information about the program, a desire to include educational components about nutrition and social emotional health, and safety/supervision concerns. The kids identified barriers including a desire to have more new and interesting activities, and time conflicts with prior engagements. The high SES parents identified a general lack of information and other engagements as barriers while the low SES parents identified a desire to have educational components included in the program, as well as a lack of information about the program, and a lack of parent and sibling involvement/inclusion. In addition to barriers to participation in the A6 program, the participants also identified components of the program that they liked. The parent/guardian groups identified improvements including social and emotional benefits. This was true for both the high SES and the low SES groups. The kids mentioned positive aspects including enjoyment of the competitive sports as well as the non-competitive activities such as climbing and swimming. The data also pointed to an overarching barrier that was more inductive than deductive. That barrier was a general ambiguity to the program. When the parents were speaking to many of the barriers, it was apparent to the researchers that they were confused, misinformed, and generally left out. The Socio-Ecological model was used as a guide to identify specific recommendations for each of the five levels identified in the model. The findings from this study will be used by the Missoula, MT YMCA to help enhance and grow the A6 program.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study

Despite the plethora of research regarding the prevention of childhood obesity in the United States, obesity rates continue to grow (Ogden et al., 2010). In addition, it has been demonstrated that activity levels in youth tend to drop from grades 1 through 12 (Troost et al., 2001). It has been suggested that the school and after-school environment have the potential to address these issues by providing a safe and consistent environment to address physical activity and obesity (Pate & O'Neill, 2009). In an effort to combat these obesity and activity trends, the Missoula YMCA started the Active 6 After-School Program.

The Active 6 Program was implemented in November of 2010 and targets 6th grade students from the Missoula, MT valley area. Approximately 800 students qualify for the Missoula program which includes a free one year pass to the Missoula YMCA, a free one year pass to the Currents Aquatic and Recreation Center, and a free one year pass to Mountain Lion public transportation services. The program is run through the Missoula YMCA in conjunction with Missoula Parks and Recreation, Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS), Missoula County Public Health Department (MCPHD), and the Missoula Flagship Program. The Active 6 program is offered four days per week at four separate locations. The program allows students to take part in organized physical activities that are facilitated and supervised by The University of Montana undergraduate students from the Health and Human Performance Department (HHP). Of the 800+

students that are eligible, approximately 160 have signed up. Of those 160 who signed up, less than 50% attended more than two sessions over the Fall 2011 programming period. In order to address the decreasing activity levels and increasing obesity trends, the Active 6 steering committee felt it was critical to increase attendance and attract students from the lower socioeconomic status (SES) population in Missoula.

The Active 6 steering committee decided that in order to increase attendance of those signed up, and draw more participants from the lower SES population, it was necessary to evaluate why individuals from those groups were not attending. In order to accomplish this task, the committee identified a model to guide the evaluation process.

The PRECEDE-PROCEED programming planning logic model will be utilized for the evaluation and enhancement portion of this research project. Specifically, the PROCEED portion of the model, which deals largely with evaluation, will be utilized. The Active 6 program is currently in phase seven of the model, which focuses on process evaluation in order to address current barriers to participation.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to participation in the Active 6 program.

Statement of Problem

Low attendance rates at the Active 6 after-school program have affected the program's success.

Research Questions

1. What are the barriers to participation in the Active 6 program for students and parents/guardians who are from the low socioeconomic status population in Missoula?
2. What are the barriers to participation in the Active 6 program for students and parents/guardians who signed up, but are not attending the program?
3. What are the barriers to participation in the Active 6 program for students and parents/guardians in the Missoula area that are not signed up and not attending the program?

Significance of the Study

This study will supplement the field of research on after-school physical activity programs. Specifically, it will provide information about barriers to such programs at the critical ages of 10-12 years when activity levels are decreasing most rapidly (Matthews et al., 2008). The findings of this study also have the potential to set the stage for analyzing program services, activities, lessons, and strategies that may help to reduce barriers. Study results will provide relevant, applicable information to ongoing after-school programs that are also experiencing attendance issues as well as information for those in the planning stages of such programs. Lastly, the findings from this study will greatly enhance the understanding of the thoughts and perceptions, as well as barriers to participation in the Active 6 program here in Missoula. This information has potential to enhance the services that the Active 6 program offers which will result in greater

satisfaction and ultimately enhance the impacts of the program on the Missoula community.

Limitations

The limitations to the study are:

1. Data collected will be limited to the experiences of the participants
2. Data collected will be limited to self-report from participants and may include socially desirable responses in place of their true thoughts and perceptions.
3. Data analysis will be limited to the researchers' bias and ability to carry out the study methodologies.

Delimitations

The delimitations of the study are:

1. The study is delimited to students and parents of students who are in the 6th grade and live in the greater Missoula valley area.
2. Data will be collected via focus groups administered to students who are in the 6th grade, and their parents.
3. All data collected from the study participants will be self-report.
4. Study participants will be volunteers and may withdraw from the study at any point for any reason.

Definition of Terms

Child obesity: Child obesity is defined as having a body mass index (BMI) at or above the 95th percentile of the sex-specific BMI growth charts. These charts and criteria are based on the 2000 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) BMI-for-age-growth charts for the United States (Ogden et al., 2010).

Body Mass Index (BMI): BMI is a person's weight in kilograms and divided by their height in meters squared (Kg/m^2) (Garrouste-Orgeas, 2004 p. 438).

Overweight: Overweight is defined as having a BMI at or above the 85th percentile of the sex-specific BMI growth charts. These charts and criteria are based on the 2000 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) BMI-for-age-growth charts for the United States (Ogden et al., 2010).

Moderate activity: Moderate activity can be defined as activity where the heart rate is at or between 50% and 70% of the maximum heart rate. It can also be defined as an activity where the heart and respiration rates are elevated but conversation can be maintained (CDC, 2011).

Vigorous activity: Vigorous activity is activity where the heart rate is at or between 70% and 85% of the maximum heart rate. It can also be defined as activity where the heart and respiration rates are elevated to a point where conversation can no longer be maintained (CDC, 2011).

Maximum heart rate: Maximum heart rate is the maximum number of times one's heart can beat in one minute. A common way to estimate this number for exercise purposes is to subtract one's age from 220 (CDC, 2011).

Adolescent: Adolescents can loosely be defined as the years of transition from childhood to adulthood. Generally, these years are from age 13 to age 19 and sometimes include ages 9 to 12 as well (CDC, 2011).

After-school program: After-school programs are programs for youth that take place during the after school hours on school days. (Dubois & Karcher, 2005, p. 364).

Socioeconomic status: "Socioeconomic status is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income and occupation" (American Physiological Association, Socioeconomic Status section, 2012, Para. 1).

High socioeconomic status: For the purposes of this study, high socioeconomic status is any family that self-reported that they did not qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system.

Low socioeconomic status: For the purposes of this study, low socioeconomic status is any family that self-reported that they did qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system.

Health program: A health program is defined as “a set of planned and organized activities carried out over time to accomplish specific health-related goals and objectives” (Green and Kreuter, 2005, p.1).

Process evaluation: Process evaluations in health programming involve an ... “evaluation of matters of implementation of the program, that is, how it is being carried out” (Green and Kreuter, 2010, p. 141).

Impact evaluation: Impact evaluation “assesses the immediate effect the program (or some aspect of it) has on target behaviors and their predisposing, enabling, and reinforcing antecedents or on influential environmental factors” (Green and Kreuter, 2010, p. 139).

Outcome evaluation: Outcome evaluation is the process of evaluating the health status and quality-of-life indicators that the health program was designed to target (Green and Kreuter, 2010, p.139).

Incentive: An incentive can be defined as “an anticipated positive or desirable reward designed to influence the performance of an individual or group” (Chapman, 2005, p.6).

Prevalence: “[p]revalence of a disease is a measure of that portion of the population that represents cases at a particular point in time” (Green and Kreuter, 2010 p. 91).

Incidence: “Incidence measures new cases of a given disease within a certain period of time” (Green and Kreuter, 2010, p. 89).

Accelerometer: “An accelerometer is an electromechanical device that will measure acceleration forces. These forces may be static, like the constant force of gravity pulling at your feet, or they could be dynamic - caused by moving or vibrating the accelerometer” (Dimension Engineering, Accelerometer section, Para. 1, 2011).

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS): The YRBS is a survey administered by the CDC as well as state and tribal agencies. The survey is administered to youth in grades 9 through 12 and collects information in six different areas including dietary and physical activity practices (CDC, YRBSS in Brief section, Para. 1, 2011).

Centers for Disease Control (CDC): The CDC is a government agency that seeks to “[c]reate the expertise, information, and tools that people and communities need to protect their health” (CDC, 2010, Para. 1).

Protective factor: Protective factors are genetic, behavioral, environmental and sociocultural conditions that reduce the risk of death or disease when compared to population relative risk ratios (Green and Krueter, 2005).

Risk factor: Risk factors are genetic, behavioral, environmental exposures, and sociocultural living conditions that increase the possibility that an individual will experience death or illness when compared to population relative risk ratios (Green and Kreuter, 2005).

Meta-analysis: “Meta-analysis is defined here as the statistical analysis of a collection of analytical results for the purpose of integrating the findings” (DerSimonian & Laird, 1986, p. 177).

Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy is defined as “the belief in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations” (Bandura, 1995, p. 2).

Moderator’s guide: A moderator’s guide is a list of questions that “...outlines the topics to be covered in the session and the timing that will be associated with each” (Greenbaum, 2000, p. 25).

Focus group: A focus group is a group interview. “A moderator guides the interview while a small group discusses the topics that the interviewer raises. What the participants say during their discussions are the essential data in focus groups” (Morgan, 1998, p.1).

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

Past research on childhood obesity and prevention has been extensive. In addition, past research on obesity prevention has been centered on physical activity levels. Specifically, research has addressed frequency and intensity of physical activity. The research that followed the frequency and intensity recommendations revolved around how to get youth to meet these recommendations. It has been suggested in research that the after-school environment has potential to assist youth in meeting these standards. This review of literature will follow the research from obesity through after-school programs that target activity and obesity prevention in order to set the framework for this study.

Childhood Obesity

It has been documented that childhood obesity prevalence rates in the United States are rising rapidly (Ogden & Carroll, 2010). Ogden and Carroll (2010) state that according to the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES), obesity prevalence rates have risen from 6.5% (1976-1980) to 19.6% (1999-2000) among children aged 6-11. In addition, the prevalence of obesity among those 12-19 years of age rose from 5% to 18.1% over the same period (Ogden & Carroll, 2010). According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), 12% of surveyed youth in grades 9 through 12 were obese and 15.8% were overweight (CDC YRBSS, 2011). Obesity rates were higher in males (15.3%) than in females (8.3%) with no difference between genders for overweight (CDC YRBSS, 2011). In contrast to these facts, when asked via self-report, 27% of students rated themselves as overweight (CDC YRBSS, 2011). This personal perception of being

overweight was higher among females (33.1%) than among males (22.7%). Though the numbers are somewhat better here, Montana is not exempt from these patterns.

Montana data from the YRBS shows obesity at 10.4% with males at 13.1% and females at 7.5%. The overweight data shows the same pattern with 11.9% of students overweight, 14.3% male and 9.4% female (CDC YRBSS, 2011). In Missoula Montana, the city/county health department (MCCHD) gathered data on a sample of 801 third graders and found that 27% were obese or overweight and 12% were obese (McCourt, Mary, 2009). Unfortunately, this small data set is the only data available that is specific to Missoula youth.

It is clear from the data that obesity is an issue at the national, state, and local level. This is an important issue to address because obesity in childhood can lead to health problems both in childhood and later in life (CDC, 2010).

One study found that obesity has been known to increase the incidence of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, and hypertension (Bray, 2004). Another study found that “[c]hildhood obesity can adversely affect nearly every organ system and often cause serious consequences, including hypertension, dyslipidemia, insulin resistance/diabetes, fatty liver disease and psychosocial complications” (Han et al., 2010, p. 3). The CDC also recognizes many of these same risks associated with obesity in childhood (CDC, 2011). Because these are serious lifetime illnesses, anything that can be done to reduce risk factors has great potential to increase quality of life.

Youth and Physical Activity

Regular bouts of moderate to vigorous physical activity have been associated with weight loss and maintenance (Doucet et al., 2011). This was supported elsewhere when it was demonstrated that regular bouts of moderate to vigorous physical activity can have an effect on the body composition of adolescents (Kimm et al., 2005). When looking specifically at cardiovascular disease risk factors, activity levels, and obesity, it was found that physical activity needs to be increased more in order to reduce and maintain body fatness than to simply reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease (Erlichman et al., 2002). This finding suggests that the current recommendations for physical activity by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) may be insufficient to reduce obesity. Also, it was found that there is a significant inverse relationship between grade in school and physical activity levels (Matthews et al., 2008). Matthews et al. (2008) used data from 6,329 participants 6 years of age or older who wore accelerometers to track activity levels. The greatest reductions in physical activity levels were found to be in grades 1-3 and 4-6, both of which showed reductions of 40%. Combine this with adolescents who spend 50% to 60% of their waking time engaging in sedentary behaviors (Matthews et al., 2008), and this could pose serious health problems. This issue is even more concerning when one considers that in 2009, 81.6% of high school students were not meeting the 60-minute per day recommendations for physical activity according to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) results (CDC YRBS, 2011). In addition, there is suggestive evidence that childhood activity can be a protective factor against later fatness (Parsons et al., 1999).

This lack of physical activity and prevalence of sedentary activities has been attributed to many different factors including more access to motorized transportation, increases in screen time activities such as television, and reductions in physical education time in the school system (Luepker, 1999). Though Luepker (1999) concluded that children, as well as adults, are less active today than they were a generation ago and are continuing to become less active, more recent data from the YRBS show that “[d]uring 2007–2009, no significant changes occurred in any of the physical activity behaviors” (CDC YRBS, 2011 p. 34). These recent YRBS findings suggest that although many students are not meeting their daily recommendations of physical activity, they are no longer showing the previous trend of consistently decreasing activity time.

Interventions that increase physical activity have been suggested as effective and feasible ways to decrease and/or prevent childhood obesity (CDC, Childhood Obesity Facts, 2011; Koplan et al., 2005). The after-school environment has been identified as one that has great potential to impact student activity levels (Pate & O’Neill, 2008).

After-School Programs

After-school programs exist that target a variety of objectives ranging from decreasing risky behavior to improving social skills and academic performance (Weisman & Gottfredson, 2001). It is estimated that “6.6 million children are involved in after-school programs and another 22 million families would desire programming if it were available” (Smith, 2007 p. 219). Many of the existing programs are at least in part designed to

provide a safe and healthy place for youth who would otherwise go unsupervised. However, many of these programs end up serving students who would already be under direct parental supervision (Walker & Arbretton, 2005). In addition, Roth et al. (2010) found that in their review of other meta-analyses, students that participate in after-school programs show better outcomes in regards to academic and social measures. This was supported elsewhere when Durlak et al. (2010) found in their meta-analysis that “[c]ompared to controls, participants [in after-school programs] demonstrated significant increases in their self-perceptions and bonding to school, positive social behaviors, school grades and levels of academic achievement, and significant reductions in problem behaviors” (Durlak et al., 2010 p. 294). In their discussion, they also note that “[a]lthough some ASPs [after-school programs] achieve positive results, many others do not, indicating that there is much room for improvement among current programs” (Durlak et al., 2010, p. 302). This is also supported elsewhere where it was found that the success of programs varies and “the majority of studies in each review do not find that program participants show higher academic performance than non-participants” (Roth et al., 2010, p. 310). This conflicting information regarding the success of after-school programs demonstrates that special attention must be paid to develop and assess these programs in order to ensure success. These findings beg the question of what commonalities exist among those programs that are considered successful.

Effective After-School Programs

Not until recently has the question regarding components to successful after-school programs been addressed in the research. However, some very important articles do address the issue.

From a review of meta-analyses done by Granger (2008), the results were mixed depending on program type. However, on average, Granger concludes that those programs that include Sequenced, Active, Focused, and Explicit (SAFE) components had positive outcomes in most or all measured areas (p. 9). When studying the evaluation methods of several studies addressing after-school program success, Scott-Little (2002) concludes that there is insufficient evidence to identify specific factors that contribute to the success of after-school programs. Scott-Little (2002) also suggests that evaluation be targeted at each type of program such as academic, social, health, etc. Perhaps this is the reason that current research about effective after-school programs in general is lacking.

Barriers to Successful After-School Programs

There is very limited research about the barriers to after-school programs. The little that is out there is often anecdotal. Fashola (2002), in his book *Building Effective After-School Programs*, identifies three common barriers. Those barriers were transportation, cost, and siblings.

A review of after-school programming by Lockwood (2003) found more systemic barriers to after-school programming. “The following barriers were among those identified among some districts:

- A significant lack of coordination between the afterschool director (if one exists),

site coordinators and principals. In programs without an afterschool director, site coordinators and principals can experience tense relationships.

- A perception that afterschool programs are too much work for an already burdened principal, particularly in high-needs schools.
- The view there's little connection between the instructional program of the school and the afterschool program's goals.
- The lack of clear reporting lines between site coordinators, district management and building principals.
- Perceived lack of district support and adversarial feelings about the central office”
(Lockwood, 2003 p. 34)

In their evaluation of attendance of after-school programs for youth, Weisman & Gottfredson (2001) found that participants with the highest dropout rates and/or poorest attendance were more often those most vulnerable for at-risk behavior as well as those from lower income families. This suggests that attendance and attrition may also be a barrier to after-school program success.

This limited amount of data about barriers to after-school programs may also be attributed to the earlier suggestion that after-school programs are too broad in nature to identify common barriers. When looking at studies involving after-school physical activity programs, the larger amount of data agrees that there is more being done for specific areas of programming.

After-School Physical Activity Programs

The school environment has played a key role in the activity levels through physical education and sports from the early 1800's (Pate et al., 2006). In recent years, it has been suggested by researchers, that schools need to expand their efforts to promote physical activity. The belief that schools need to expand their role is largely due to the increases in obesity and decreases in physical activity that are associated with health problems later in life (Pate et al., 2006). Beets et al (2009) point out that schools play an important role in after-school physical activity promotion due to the facts that most American children attend schools, which have existing facilities, and which have trained personnel who can effectively run the programs.

It has been shown that one of the most important components to successful outcomes for after-school fitness and health programs is attendance. Specifically, those who attended 40% of the time or greater had the best outcomes (Beets, et al., 2009). It is then important to be reminded about attrition rates and participation issues that occur in after-school activity programs. In their evaluation of attendance of after-school programs for youth, Weisman & Gottfredson (2001) found that participants with the highest dropout rates and/or poorest attendance were more often those most vulnerable to at-risk behavior as well as those from lower income families. Because there is a strong correlation between socio-economic status and health (Adler et al., 1994), this is a potential area of focus when addressing attendance rates and target populations. There are examples of programs that have been shown to work when they are controlled and closely monitored for attendance and activity levels (Vizcaino, 2008).

It is important to note that in the field of physiological research, it is very clear that physical activity programs for youth can increase the overall health and leanness of participants (Vizcaino, 2008). However, research of the physiological variety failed to address issues of recruitment and retention of after-school programs or the feasibility of creating a lasting and effective program. Lastly, there are many after-school programs that target obesity prevention. However, it is unclear in the literature whether or not these programs are effective at decreasing and/or maintaining body fat percentages in adolescents (Beets et al., 2009).

These conflicting data about the success and failure of after-school obesity prevention programs point to the need for more research about what components are common among after-school physical activity programs that are successful at increasing activity levels.

Components to Successful After-School Physical Activity Programs

One of the available meta-analyses on after-school physical activity and health programs was by Beets et al. (2009) and concludes, like Granger and Durlak, that results and outcomes of these programs vary widely. However, Beets et al., (2009) do identify that there appears to be a dose-response effect where students whose attendance rates were 40% or higher showed greater improvements in cardiovascular health when compared to controls (Beets et. al, 2009).

All three of the above analyses conclude that more research and better methodologies are needed in order to identify more information about the implications of age, frequency, and duration on program outcomes (Beets, et. al 2008; Granger, 2008; Durlak, 2010).

Barriers to After-School Physical Activity Programs

Outcome measures of success vary widely in regards to after-school physical activity programs (Beets et al., 2008). This may be due to the possibility that many of the programs included in the meta-analysis appeared to have failed to address barriers appropriately. One of the studies that do address barriers speaks mainly to two. The first barrier was that training of classroom teachers as leaders and facilitators took more work and energy than had originally been planned. The second barrier was the desire to attract more overweight and obese children to the program, as they were not well represented (Lamberg & McKenna, 2011). For the teacher training issue, recruiting the physical education teachers to assist in the training was helpful. However, in regards to increasing participation from obese and overweight children, they simply hoped that the popularity of the program would bring them in (Lamberg & McKenna, 2011).

Beets et al. (2009), concluded that the evidence suggested that those programs who tailor activities to be enjoyable and culturally specific to the participants generally do not improve fitness and therefore may need to address other aspects (Beets et al., 2008, p. 10).

Wilson et al. (2011) also identified some barriers when evaluating a similar after-school program that targeted low-income minorities. Wilson et al. (2011) also discussed the

barriers as competing after-school activities for participation but like others, did not implement anything in an attempt to address the issue. Other barriers they identified were dealing with maintenance of activity levels after the program ended. It was found that home issues, mainly lack of parental support as well as weather and facilities were largely responsible for the lack of behavior maintenance (Wilson et al., 2011). Again, like others, the authors failed to address the issues or make suggestions for program modifications. Strunin et al. (2010) found similar barriers to participation and recruitment when looking at a similar program for females living in public housing projects in Boston, MA. However, Strunin et al. (2010) simply listed these barriers in the conclusions and stated that they should be addressed in future programs. The researchers stated: “The major barriers to participation were safety concerns, interpersonal conflicts, reluctance to participate in physical activity, lack of community support, lack of continuity in staffing, and conflicts with other activities” (Strunin et al., 2010, p. 5).

It appears that the most common barriers to after-school physical activity programs vary widely but in general include competing programs, safety concerns and attracting the target population. The question then becomes how are those barriers identified for a specific program in a way that allows for program modification and enhancement that addresses these issues. A high quality process evaluation as described in detail by Green and Kreuter (2005), provides a framework that guides this process.

Missoula Active 6 Program

The Missoula Active 6 program is an after-school physical activity program that is run cooperatively by the Missoula YMCA, Missoula County Public Schools, Missoula City/County Health Department, Missoula Parks and Recreation, and the Missoula Flagship Program. The program provides after-school physical activities that are offered four days per week at four separate locations. The activities are organized and run by trained undergraduate mentors from the University of Montana Health and Human Performance department and Missoula YMCA or Missoula Parks and Recreation staff. Along with physical activities, the program covers themes ranging from hydration and diet, to social skills and how to use the public transportation system. The program is opened to any sixth grade student from the greater Missoula valley. Of the available 800+ students, between 150 and 160 students are currently signed up for the program. When participants sign up for the program, they receive a free one-year pass to the YMCA, a free one-year pass to the Currents Aquatic and Recreation Center, and a free one-year bus pass to Mountain Line Transportation. The goal of this study is to evaluate what is working well, and what can be improved in order to increase participation among low socioeconomic status families. The PRECEDE-PROCEED program-planning model will be utilized for this process.

PRECEDE-PROCEED Program Planning Model

The PRECEDE-PROCEED model is a health program-planning model that provides a framework that guides the health program planning process from conception to outcome measures (Green & Kreuter, 2005). The model is an eight-step process that involves two main stages to assess the needs of the target population and then plan and develop a

program based on those needs. In the first stage (PRECEDE) the goal is to work through the first four phases of assessment in order to identify the needs (perceived and actual) of the target population. Those phases include: 1) Social assessment 2) Epidemiological assessment 3) Educational and ecological assessment and 4) Administrative and policy assessment and intervention alignment. After working through these first four phases in close cooperation and involvement of the target population, the model moves into the second phase (PROCEED). In this phase, the community and planners work with implementation and evaluation processes in order to address health behaviors that were identified in the first phase. The four steps in phase four are: 1) Implementation 2) Process evaluation 3) Impact evaluation and 4) Outcome evaluation. This study targets the process evaluation found in phase two (PROCEED) (Green & Kreuter, 2005).

Process evaluation is an ongoing method of evaluation that focuses on the implementation of the program and how that process is being implemented. Specifically, process evaluation looks at whether or not the methods are working as planned, if the target population is being reached, if time is adequate, if supporting entities are having the desired impact, etc. (Green and Kreuter, 2005).

Process evaluation will be used to assess the Active 6 program. The focus of the process evaluation will be to conduct focus groups to help the program leadership better understand the participants and their families' thoughts and perceptions about the program and barriers to their participation. Specifically, the study is designed to address issues of low attendance among low socioeconomic groups.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to conduct a process evaluation to assess the barriers to 6th grader participation in the Active 6 program in Missoula, MT. This information will ultimately be utilized to develop potential solutions to these barriers and increase attendance for the 2012/2013 academic year.

Description of Target Population

The target populations in this study are 6th grade children and their parents/guardians from the greater Missoula valley area. Student's ages range from 10-12 and include both male and female participants. There is no designated age range for parents or guardians. The participants were from low socioeconomic (SES) and medium/ high SES groups. These SES classifications were based on a self-report of receiving and/or qualifying for free and reduced lunches from the child's school.

Protection of Human Subjects

The human subject application material, consent, permission and ascent forms were completed in accordance with the University of Montana Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Research Design

This study uses a descriptive research design and is entirely qualitative in nature. This descriptive design focuses on self-report data from the participants in regards to what they identified as their strengths as well as areas of need. In other words, the researchers observed the participants responses and then described them. All data was collected via focus groups and consists entirely of self-report data from the participants. The focus groups were used as a means of process evaluation in order to identify barriers to participation in the Active 6 after-school physical activity program.

Data Collection

Sample Selection:

All children and their parents/guardians were recruited through a mass mailing carried out by the Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS) or a phone call to households on a list of current program participants obtained from the YMCA. The researchers created post cards with a brief study summary, incentive information, a phone number to call, and an e-mail address to respond to (appendix B). Scripts were written and approved by the University of Montana IRB for the phone and e-mail contacts (appendix C). In addition, two posters were placed in each of the MCPS middle schools. All potential participants who were contacted were pre-screened through a series of questions identifying age, number of people interested in participation, free and reduced lunch status, and school that the child attends (appendix C). Additionally, All students who were currently signed up for the program received a call home.

Focus Groups

Subjects were recruited for a total of six separate focus groups. Those groups were:

1. Two groups of parents and guardians of 6th grade students that self-reported that their children qualified for, or received, free or reduced meals from the school. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 4 or more Active 6 sessions (1a).
 - b. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 0-3 Active 6 sessions (1b).
2. Two groups of parents and guardians of 6th grade students that self-reported that they **did not** qualify for, or receive, free and reduced lunches from the school. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 4 or more Active 6 sessions (2a).
 - b. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 0-3 Active 6 sessions (2b).
3. Two groups of 6th grade children from the greater Missoula valley. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those, whose parents self-reported that their children qualified for, or received, free or reduced meals from the school (3a).
 - b. Those, whose parents self-reported that they **did not** qualify for, or receive, free and reduced lunches from the school (3b).

Individuals were recruited until each of the four parental focus groups was at 10-12 participants. The recruitment contacts were fielded by one of the researchers via telephone and e-mail. The phone and e-mail contacts were semi scripted (appendix C).

Instrument Development:

The first source of primary data was focus groups. These structured focus group questions were created by the research team based upon their knowledge of the program as well as information from the review of literature. The questions were then compiled into a moderator's guide (appendix A) to be used by the focus group leaders. There were two separate moderator's guides, one for the kids, and one for the parents/guardians.

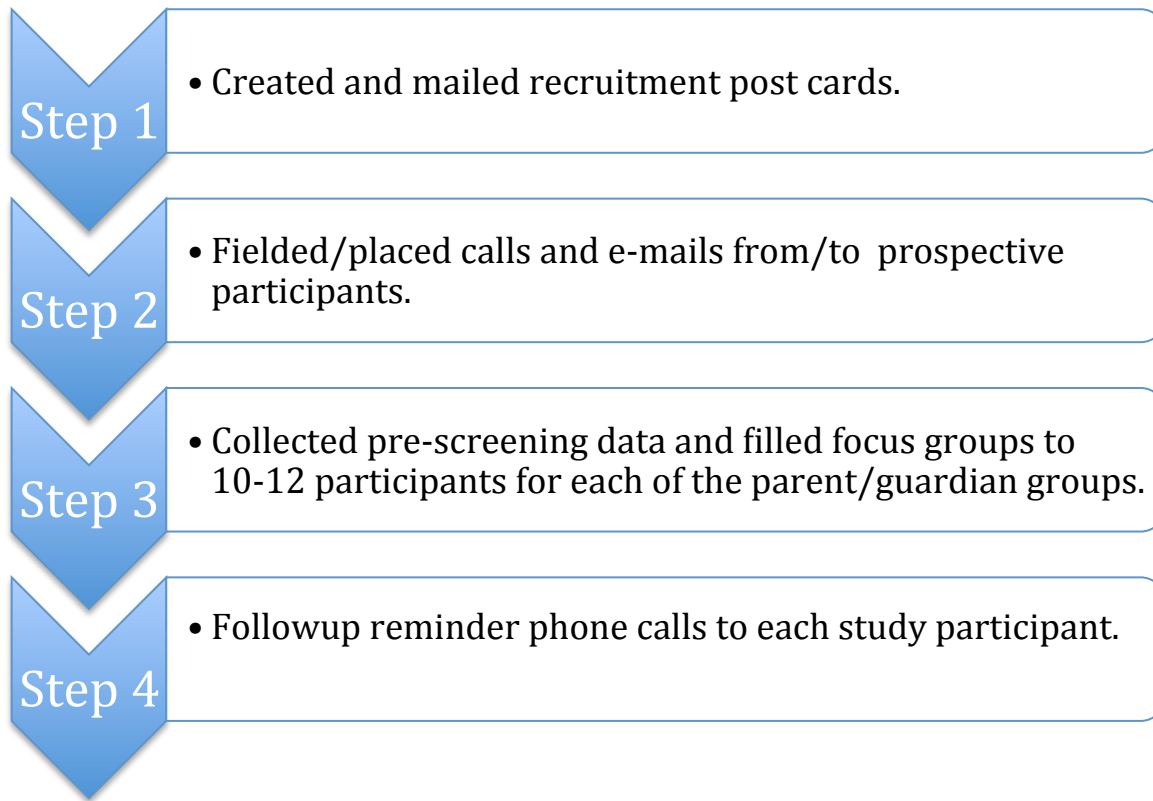


Figure 1: Subject Recruitment Process

Data Collection:

Participants that were recruited as described above attended a focus group session. The focus group sessions took place at Washington and C.S. Porter Middle Schools on the 12th and 14th of April, 2012 respectively. Upon arrival, the parents and participating children were asked to read and sign the appropriate child assent, informed consent, and parental permission forms as outlined by the IRB. Following this process, each participant was given a previously made and numbered nametag that corresponded to a focus group (the associated groups were only known by the researchers). At that time, all participants and family members were invited to enjoy dinner provided by the research team. When most participants finished dinner, non-participating children were checked in for child care/supervision provided on site by the Missoula YMCA while the focus

groups took place. When everyone finished eating, socializing, and checking children in for childcare, participants were told which researcher to go with for the focus groups based upon the number on their nametag.

These groups were held on two separate nights for participant comfort and data collection purposes. The first night was for those who self-reported that their kids did receive, or qualify for, free and reduced meals from the school. The second night consisted of those who self-reported that their kids did not receive, or qualify for, free and reduced lunches from the school. On each night there were two parent focus groups and one student focus group. Each parent group was led through a 70 minute to 90 minute discussion utilizing the same moderator's guide. Each kids group utilized the same guide as well though it was different than that of the parents and guardians.

During the focus groups, the researcher solicited information about barriers to participation in the Active 6 program as well as some information regarding their beliefs and perceptions about their family and personal activity levels. All subjects were given their incentive at the conclusion of the focus group (\$40 gift card to Shopko© for each participating adult, and their choice of a water bottle, flying disc or jump rope for each participating child).

Data Analysis

A content analysis was used to analyze the data collected from the focus groups.

“Content analysis is a research method used to make replicable and valid inferences from

written, verbal or visual data” (Cole, 1988, p. 53). Stemler (2001) summarizes content analysis as a systemic technique based on precise rules for coding to condense a large amount of data into themes and sub-themes (as cited in Baxter, 2011, p. 26).

For this study, each of the six focus groups were recorded and transcribed with no identifying information by a researcher or research assistant. The recordings were immediately deleted. Researchers then independently analyzed the transcribed focus group data in order to identify common themes to create a coding scheme. This was a two-part process. The principal investigator read each of the transcriptions thoroughly at least three times in order to become intimately familiar with the overall content of each focus group. Following this process, the researchers identified themes and coded them independently. Agreeing on a common coding scheme followed this process. Each researcher brought their suggestions to a group meeting where a modified nominal group process was implemented in order to create consensus on a coding scheme. Once a coding scheme was identified, data was entered into, coded, and analyzed by NVivo software. The researchers worked to identify common themes from the descriptive statistics of the reports generated by the NVivo software. This data was then evaluated using source triangulation. That is, the information obtained from the children, parents, and literature, was evaluated in order to identify common issues that were identified by each of the four sub groups [1) low SES families signed up for, but not participating in the A6 program, 2) low SES families not signed up for, or participating, in the A6 Program, 3) high SES signed up for, but not participating in the A6 program, and 4) high SES not signed up for or participating in the A6 program].

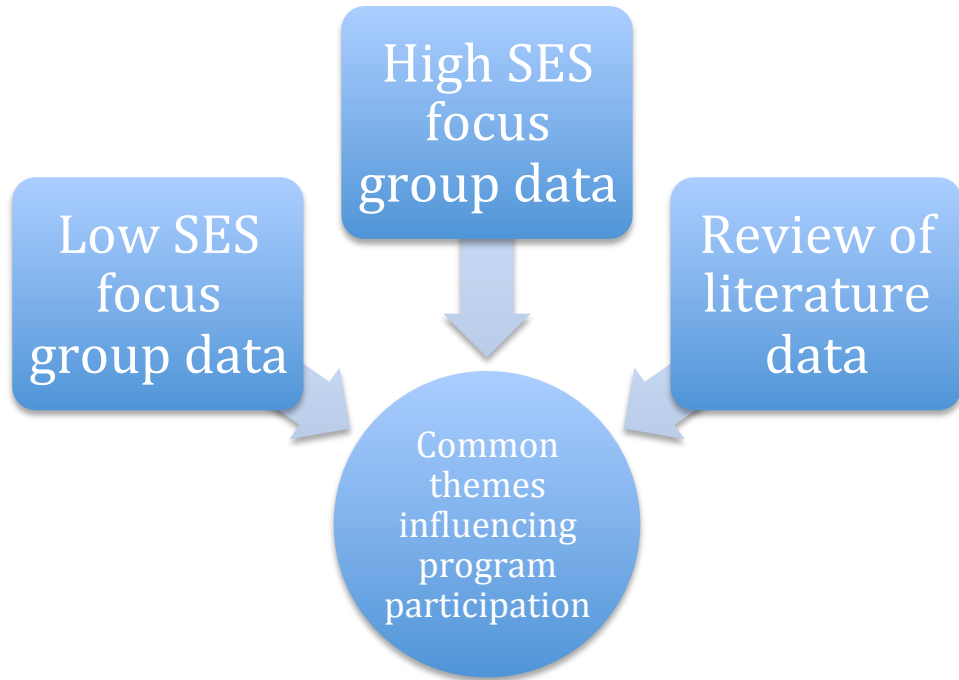


Figure 2: Source Triangulation Model Used for Each Group

Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to participation in the Active 6 program in Missoula Montana. The summative assessment consisted of six separate focus groups covering the topics of: family activity, the Active 6 program, and after-school programs in general. The results of this assessment will be discussed below.

Included in this analysis are the thoughts and opinions of 31 adult guardians and 21 6th grade students from the greater Missoula valley. All of the participants participated in one of six focus groups guided by a researcher using the appropriate moderator's guide (Appendix A). Students and accompanying guardians provided representation from four separate Missoula Middle schools. All child participants were from the 6th grade and the guardians ranged in age from 29 to 47 years old. Of the 31 adult participants, 16 of them and the accompanying 12 children, self-reported that they did not qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system. These families were categorized as high socioeconomic status (SES) for the purposes of this study. The remaining 15 adults and 9 accompanying children self reported that they did qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system. These families were categorized as low SES for the purposes of this study.

Focus groups

Between March 2012 and April 2012 six focus groups took place in Missoula County Public Schools (MCPS). The focus groups were as follows:

1. Two groups of parents and guardians of 6th grade students that self-reported that their children qualified for, or received, free or reduced meals from the school. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 4 or more Active 6 sessions.
 - b. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 0-3 Active 6 sessions.
2. Two groups of parents and guardians of 6th grade students that self-reported that they **did not** qualify for, or receive, free and reduced lunches from the school. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 4 or more Active 6 sessions.
 - b. Those whose 6th grade children had attended 0-3 Active 6 sessions.
3. Two groups of 6th grade children from the greater Missoula valley. Those two groups were:
 - a. Those whose parents self-reported their children qualified for, or received, free or reduced meals from the school.
 - b. Those whose parents self-reported that they **did not** qualify for, or receive, free and reduced lunches from the school.

Data was collected via audio recording of the focus group sessions and transcription of those recordings. The principal investigator listened to, and read, each of the recordings and transcriptions at least three times in order to become intimately familiar with the data. Each transcribed focus group was then analyzed for potential coding themes. This process took place independently by three researchers. The researchers then compared coding schemes and, through a modified nominal group process, reached consensus on a common coding scheme prior to coding the transcribed interviews. After hand-coding the interviews, the principle investigator (PI) coded the transcriptions using NVivo software. Upon completion of this coding process, NVivo was used to run analysis and query results in order to assist in identifying common themes among the nodes.

Additionally, due to the qualitative nature of the study, it was decided that each moderator from the six focus groups would provide a brief description of their thoughts and perceptions about each group they facilitated regarding what they felt were the most prevalent and important themes. In addition to this written report, each researcher was

consulted on a regular basis throughout the process of identifying themes. This was done in order to ensure that information that was not intuitive or recognizable in the transcriptions represented in the results of this study.

Individual Focus Group Results

From the data analysis, several themes relating to Active 6 participation arose in each group. The themes are organized first by each of the six focus groups followed by synthesized data that identifies those themes that emerged from: all the adults, all the kids, the high SES families, the low SES families, and lastly, those themes that were most relevant from all the data sources in conjunction with the literature and researcher input and analysis.

Adult Focus Group Results

Low SES Focus Group Themes

Low SES: children attended four or more sessions

Theme 1

Lack of information

A general lack of information was mentioned as a barrier to child participation multiple times in all of the adult focus groups. It was clearly articulated that information about the program was difficult to find, as well as difficult to understand. The moderator of this group also felt it was clear the participants felt this was an issue that needed to be addressed.

“...Just ‘cause I found out half way through the year about it, so I would say that there are probably a lot of parents out there who don’t know about it”.

“We just absolutely need more information readily available”.

“I guess we just weren’t clear exactly what the program is about”.

“See, and I didn’t hear of it from the school. We were mid-year through the program and I had no idea it existed”.

Theme 2

Non-competitive outdoor activities as a favorite activity

In response to questions and probes about family time activities, the participants regularly identified non-competitive outdoor activities as their favorite. Family outdoors time, such as hiking, biking, hunting, and skiing, were identified in all of the focus groups. This theme appeared to be due to the ability of all family members to participate, as well as the general accessibility of such activities in the Missoula area.

“Boating”

“Yeah, the trail system’s great, it goes right by our house basically, so we can ride all the way from our house to the University and basically never be on a street, pretty awesome”.

“Outside, yeah anything outside, our family’s happy”.

“Fishing and Biking”

“Outside, yeah, anything outside”

“We go biking around the neighborhood and down to Caras Park”

Theme 3

Increased access to information through easily identifiable sources as a desired improvement to the program

Suggestions for how to increase knowledge, and access to information, about the Active 6 program were plentiful in all four of the adult focus groups. Throughout the focus group process, the participants were prompted to give suggestions for the apparent barrier of lacking, and difficult to find, information about the program.

“Text Messages”

“E-mails, those automated alerts we get on our phones, just a ‘hey have you heard of this program? If not ask at your school.’ Or something like that”

“How about in a newsletter like quarterly or monthly sent to those kids parents?”

“I would say you need to pin them as 5th graders and have them go home with that information at the end of the year during their 5th grade year so that parents are starting to get an idea of ‘oh this is what comes up in 6th grade’ so you send it out to those schools. And you hit all the schools, even private schools. Even if they did hit some of the public schools, maybe the private schools didn’t receive some of the information”.

The moderator for this group provided the following insight, in addition to continual discussions with the PI throughout the research process, about the focus group and themes that arose:

“As the facilitator of two separate focus groups involving parents of children affiliated with the Active 6 program, I feel that certain non-audio recorded conditions and social patterns that took place throughout the sessions are relevant to include in the analysis and results of the focus group content.

Both groups of parents were well balanced, with representation of single parents and married parents.

The initial focus group included one single-mother who was outspoken, so concerns regarding transportation and time management were well voiced throughout that group. The most memorable reaction from the first focus group was the change in reaction from asking parents about the children’s

exercise habits (parents were emphatic that children needed to exercise more and be more engaged in active behaviors), and their own exercise behaviors (there was an extended pause and very little reply). To me, this represented a disparity between expectations for children and themselves as parents, and a lack of acknowledgement of social modeling importance for active behaviors.”

Low SES: children attended fewer than four sessions

Theme 1

A lack of parent and sibling inclusion

The low SES group whose children attended fewer than four sessions expressed a concern with a general lack of family inclusion in the program. This issue appeared to be entwined with a general frustration with a lack of opportunity to engage with their children in many extracurricular venues. In addition, there was some concern with intra-familial conflict arising from one child getting benefits that the others did not.

“I think part of when I seen the flier for Active 6, you know I drop my kids off at enough places and leave them. Like Flagship and the school and therapy. It kind of, I want to be something that I’m involved in”

“I like to be involved and I like to be with my kids”

“Yeah, the apart from the family, that’s true, yeah I agree”.

“Because then you want them to be active, but you want them to know that you are there too.”

Theme 2

The addition of educational components including nutrition and mental and emotional health as desired improvements to the Active 6 program

Several suggestions were given for improvements. A desire to include some skills, training and education were expressed repeatedly in this group. This appeared to be in association with a desire to have their kids be more self-sufficient regarding times when they (parents) are not available to help, such as after school or on early out days.

“Helping them to make good nutritional choices...For my kids snack foods tend to be a big thing...educating them that it’s not the proper way to fuel their body would probably help them make better choices”

“...helping them to make good nutrition choices”

“Talking with them about how important it is to be active for their emotional health would be great”

“Perhaps, because of poor mental health or all low self-esteem, so I think you need to offer some component that would also teach them. Weather it’s teaching them to be independent or being, you know, how to deal with conflicts in life”.

“...to teach them how to make their own good food choices, prepare their own that they can... Because often what will happen, is they want these snacks and they want them now. So, you get something that is not so healthy because they want that immediate, fast food”.

Theme 3

Non-competitive outdoor activities as favorite family activities

Many of the participants spoke of their love of engaging in outdoor family activities when asked about favorite family activities.

“We do a lot of skiing”

“I love to ride bikes with my kids”

“Me and my husband like to go to the park and I love the swings and I love to watch the kids play in the water in the summer”.

“We like to take our dogs and go walk down by the river...the path that is down by the river down there. Um, other than that, we live pretty far out... Um, so my kids go and ride the bikes and chase the cows in the pasture next to our house, so... Jump on the trampoline, play on the swing set, you know they’re pretty active”.

“...I like to do crafts, play with the kids at the park, swim”.

The moderator for this group provided the following insight:

“As the moderator for two of the focus groups, I would like to share the following information.

The first group was a very diverse group and though there were some strong themes such as a lack of knowledge and understanding about the program, there were some underlying issues that may not appear in transcribed data. The strongest of these underlying issues was that these lower income families have very diverse and individual needs. It was clear that even if we were to address some of the information availability for this group, it would not likely solve any attendance issues. From my perspective, the best thing that could be done would be to connect personally with these high needs groups and work with them in order to address their concerns and needs. In other words there is no single systemic change that could be made that would help this entire group aside from a policy that The Y spend quality time with each family in order to demonstrate empathy with their situation.”

High SES Focus Group Results

High SES: children attended 4 or more of the sessions

Theme 1

A lack of information about the Active 6 program was mentioned as a barrier to child participation in the program

When asked about barriers to their children participating in the program the adults from this group identified a general lack of knowledge and limited availability of information about the program:

“They [other parents] don’t know about it”

“I would say lack of knowledge”

“Yeah, and we didn’t know that, because when you get that pamphlet, that you have like, Tuesday’s are this and Wednesdays are this. So, we didn’t know that, so we were like, ‘so that’s the only time that she can come?’ and they were like ‘no, she can come anytime’ and we didn’t know that either until like recently, so I don’t know about like, maybe like the communication or something”?

“So they can, I didn’t even realize that. So they can get in [to Currents Aquatic Center] free?”

Theme 2

Safety concerns as a barrier to child participation

Many parents from this group were concerned with safety and supervision. Specifically, they were concerned with what they had heard from others regarding supervision currently taking place in the program.

“And I wonder how safe that [city bus] really is anyway in this town”

“I mean maybe that’s something that I’ve been concerned about is what are they doing at the Y? Maybe we’ll get into that later, but to me it became a dating opportunity for a lot of the kids. They would go and hangout with their boy/girlfriends and they weren’t very active at all”.

“The one thing that concerns me is that in this group there’s one parent, possibly two, that have a question mark about that [supervision], so I mean it’s definitely something that needs to be looked into...”

Theme 3

Other engagements as barriers to child participation in the program

Other commitments and engagements were identified by this group as a significant barrier to their children participating in the program.

“...A lot of kids already have their other activities that they have to go to.”

“...Committed to something else like baseball practice, he’s not going to be able to do it.”

“If they’re already in like a after-school program baseball practice or whatever, I wouldn’t expect them to go to active 6 because they are already being active and then that’s overworking them to me. So I can see how that would influence not going to active 6”.

“I’d say homework.”

The moderator for this group provided the following insight:

“As the facilitator of two separate focus groups involving parents of children affiliated with the Active 6 program, I feel that certain non-audio recorded conditions and social patterns that took place throughout the sessions are relevant to include in the analysis and results of the focus group content.

Both groups of parents were well balanced, with representation of single parents and married parents.

The second focus group included parents from a variety of schools, and therefore much of the conversation focused on differences in regulations and opportunities from school-to-school. Parents were much more conversational in this group, discussion amongst themselves included topics such as: tendencies of 6th graders to be interested in social activities such as dating, dancing, partaking in social media such as Facebook, and listening to hip hop music. My impression was that parents felt uncomfortable and concerned with their children’s habits in popular culture activities that parents did not understand. Another note was that a few parents mentioned time management as an issue due the activity levels of their children (i.e., being involved in city-league sports which included after-school practice, travel, etc.)”.

High SES: children attended fewer than 4 sessions

Theme 1

Improvements to social and emotional health were identified as benefits to the Active 6 program

Parents in this group mentioned that social and emotional health improvements were a major benefit to their children participating in the program.

“He’s less emotional when he is more active.”

“Happier, more social”

“Not beating up on his brother, not getting into mischief”

“It’s funny ‘cause I realize even just me personally emotional health benefits of exercising. But yeah I notice it in my children too and I never would have thought of that until this conversation and I think that absolutely it is very good for your emotional health.”

Theme 2

A lack of information was identified as a barrier to child participation in the Active 6 program

Many parents in this group also discussed a lack of information as a barrier.

“It is confusing on which days the kids are actually supposed to be there because I never really got a schedule that, um, said where everybody is going to be”

“Oh, there’s a free bus pass”

“It makes it confusing on which day you are supposed to be where. Are you supposed to be at the Y or are you supposed to be at school”?

“Is there an Active 6 web site where we can get this information?”

Theme 3

Non-competitive outdoor activities as favorite family activities

When parents were asked about their favorite family activities, they identified outdoor activities that are non-competitive in nature.

“Hiking, biking and uh, going to the lake”

“Anything outside, hiking, biking, snowshoeing, backpacking all that stuff.”

“Snowmobiling, dirt biking, hunting, fishing all that good stuff”

The moderator for this group provided the following insight:

“As the moderator for two of the focus groups, I would like to share the following information.

The second group was a very different group than the second one in that it was clear that their kids had far more enriched lives than those of the first group. That is to say that the parents in this group were very aware and involved in their children’s lives. It appeared that the more common themes of not knowing about the program or what it was, a perceived need to increase the attractiveness of the program, and a plethora of time conflicts were largely real and did not have near as many underlying causes or reasons. There was however, an underlying nervousness about what the program looked like in terms of supervision and familiarity with the spaces the program was taking place. I felt that if the specific issues are addressed in addition to familiarizing the parents with the space, there would be a positive impact on attendance and participation.”

Kids Focus Group Results

Low SES Kids Results

It is relevant to note that the moderator, as well as the PI, felt there was a tendency for the kids in this group to give socially desirable answers in an effort to fit in with, or impress, other kids in the group. It is also important to note that there was only one group of kids from the low SES group. All of the findings from this one group are found here.

Theme 1

More new and interesting activities

An increase in the number of new and interesting activities was identified as a desired improvement to the Active 6 program. Many kids spoke of specific extreme sports or rare activities they would like to try. In conjunction with the insight of the moderator, it was concluded that this was an effort to share a desire to try new and interesting activities that are not regularly available to them.

“Um, probably more extreme sports”

“Going out of state or something for an activity”

“I would go if they had wakeboarding”

“I would go more if they had surfing”.

Theme 2

Competitive sports as favorite activities

When asked about their favorite activities, many kids listed competitive sports as their favorite.

“My favorite thing to do is play soccer”

“I like to play football”

“My favorite thing I like to do with my free time is play with my brothers and sisters basketball”.

Theme 3

Non-competitive outdoor activities as favorite activities

Many kids identified that in addition to, or instead of, competitive sports, they enjoy non-competitive outdoor activities. This was in alignment with what their parents identified as favorite family activities.

“I like to go swimming”

“I like to ride my bike, like downhill”

The moderator for this group provided the following insight:

“As the moderator for this group of kids, I found that although some of the kids really liked the current activities, many became bored and desired to have more new and different activities. It was also clear to me that this group of kids had a very difficult time sitting and focusing and perhaps a bit more structure in the programming would help them enjoy it more. The attrition that they implied was taking place was largely due to becoming bored in conjunction with their friends not continuing to attend. It is also important to note that I feel the kids were answering questions in line with what they felt the other kids wanted them to say. In other words, it was clear to me that they were giving socially desirable answers to many of the questions”.

High SES Kids Results

It is important to note that the moderator, as well as the PI, felt that there was a tendency for the kids in this group to give socially desirable answers in an effort to fit in with, or impress, other kids in the group. It is also important to note that there was only one group of kids from the high SES group. All results from that group are represented here.

Theme 1

Competitive sports were identified as favorite physical activities

This group of kids identified competitive sports when speaking about their favorite activities. Interestingly, the kids also identified many non-competitive activities as well, which are identified in theme 2 below.

“My favorite thing to do during my free time is play basketball”

“Um, I do a lot; like play basketball and baseball so.”

“I like to play soccer or frolf.”

Theme 2

Non-competitive outdoor activities were also identified as favorite physical activities

“My favorite thing to do is probably bike”

“My favorite thing to do is jump on my trampoline and go for a walk”

“I like to ride my bike”

Theme 3

Time conflicts with other engagements were identified as barriers to participation in the Active 6 program

The kids from this group spoke at length about how busy they are and how frequently they have other activities they engage in that make it difficult for them to attend the program.

“I always have a lot of homework”

“On Tuesday I have piano and on Thursday my parents are busy, so.”

“Well, it’s track season so I just, I do track and then I get home, do homework, and just basically, go to school, get home, homework, eat dinner, go to bed.”

Data Synthesis

The following is a discussion of more comprehensive findings of the researchers and moderators. These discussions address what themes emerged as a result of looking at all the available data, including cross-group themes and underlying issues. Available data for this synthesis included the focus group transcriptions, the thoughts and insights of the moderators, the thoughts and perceptions of the researchers, and the literature.

Adults' Combined Results

A lack of information about the Active 6 program was the most common theme across the parent focus groups. Improvements to social and emotional health were identified as a theme regarding benefits of the program. A non-competitive outdoor activity was the most common theme when referring to favorite family activities. A desire to have more educational components incorporated in the Active 6 Program was a fourth theme. Safety concerns were another identified theme in reference to barriers to child participation. The last theme addressed how parents had heard of the program. Most of the parents identified an agency in Missoula as a venue through which they had heard of the program.

Kids' Combined Results

The most commonly occurring theme among the kids' focus groups was that a competitive sport was identified as their favorite physical activity. The second theme was that the kids wanted more opportunities to experience new and interesting activities. The third theme among the kids' focus groups was that their favorite activity was a non-competitive outdoor activity. A fourth was that time conflicts with other engagements was a barrier to participation. The final common theme was that the kids liked the attractive and fun activities the program offers. A reminder that the reason for not including high SES kids results and low SES kids results in this section is because there was only one focus group for each of those groups. Therefore, that information has already been fully reported above.

High SES Parent Results

One aspect of the research the agencies were interested in were the specific results of the High SES groups and the low SES groups. Those themes are listed below and followed by a discussion identifying the overall combined results.

The most identified themes among the high SES parents were:

1. A Lack of information about the Active 6 program.
2. Improvements to social and emotional health of their kids.
3. Non-competitive outdoor activities were identified as a favorite family activity.
4. Other engagements were identified as barriers to children participating in the Active 6 program

Low SES Parent Results

The most commonly occurring themes among the low SES parents were:

1. A desire to have more educational components including nutrition and social and emotional health.
2. A lack of information was identified as a barrier to child participation.
3. Non-competitive outdoor activities were identified as being a favorite family activity.
4. Improvements to social and emotional health were identified as a benefit of the Active 6 program.
5. No parent/sibling inclusion was identified as a barrier to child participation in the program.

Major Themes

It is relevant to recognize that the literature and the data collected in this study did not align as clearly as one may expect when discussing barriers to participation. For this reason, it may be apparent that the barriers identified in the literature are not referenced as frequently as the findings from this study.

Theme 1: Non-Competitive Outdoor Activities

When analyzing the data collected through this study it became apparent that when comparing the parent responses with the 6th grader responses, there was only one area where all groups overlapped. The overlap occurred in response to a question regarding what their favorite activities were. Answers including a non-competitive outdoor activity such as biking, hiking, walking, skiing and river activities were the overwhelming majority of the responses. This suggests that the Active 6 program may wish to include more of these activities in the future in order to increase interest among both parents and 6th graders. Assuming that this increases interest and attendance, this suggestion is supported in the research as well when Beets et. al (2009) identified that regular attendance (40% or higher) is one of the most telling components of a successful after-school physical activity program.

Theme 2: Lack of Information About the Active 6 Program

Another common theme that can be addressed was a general lack of information about the program. Even those who knew about The Y and the Active 6 program had a very difficult time locating any information about the program and desired to have that information more easily accessible. The lack of information topic was brought up 37

times among the parents. Though this was not found in the literature to be a barrier to afterschool programs of any kind, clearly it is a real issue for this program in this community and should be addressed. It is important in qualitative research like this to look critically into the rich data that was collected and make sure that deeper causes are identified whenever possible.

Though the above-mentioned themes are important and efforts should be made to address them individually, it is important to take into account the thoughts of the moderators, as they were the ones who were in the rooms with the subjects and have insight that should not be overlooked. In addition to their thoughts and perceptions, it is also important to analyze the data with a broad lens to see if this view can lead to the induction of many barriers and themes into any common overarching issues that may be addressed.

Theme 3: Ambiguity of the Active 6 Program

When looking at the perceptions of the moderators in conjunction with the theme data there seems to be an overlying reason playing into multiple themes. This broad issue is best described as overarching ambiguity of the program. When the parent groups were speaking about transportation, supervision, lack of knowledge, etc. as barriers, the common theme was that they were simply uncomfortable with the program because they felt out of the loop. That is to say that many of the identified barriers may be absolved by addressing a multi-level intervention that aims to make a personal connection and establish open two-way communication between the program leaders at the Y and families in order to meet the needs of the families that participate.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify barriers to participation in the Active 6 program. Included in this analysis were the thoughts and opinions of 31 adult guardians and 21 6th grade students from the greater Missoula valley. All of the participants participated in one of six focus groups guided by a researcher using the appropriate moderators guide (Appendix A). Students and accompanying guardians provided representation from four separate Missoula Middle schools. All child participants were from the 6th grade and the guardians ranged in age from 29 to 47 years old. Of the 31 adult participants, 16 of them and the accompanying 12 children, self-reported that they did not qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system. These families were categorized as high socioeconomic status (SES) for the purposes of this study. The remaining 15 adults and 9 accompanying children self reported that they did qualify for, or receive, free or reduced meals from the public school system. These families were categorized as low SES for the purposes of this study.

The following discussion consists of recommended strategies based on the synthesis of data in chapter 4 and the review of literature in chapter 2. The Socio-Ecological model is used to identify recommendations for future programming that target each level of the model in an effort to increase the total number of participants in the Active 6 program.

The Socio-Ecological model is multi-level model that systematically incorporates an effort to engage the overarching issues as well as the individual issues and everything in between. It can be a complex model due to its comprehensive nature. However, the model is used to develop specific recommendations at each level and the model will make sense as it is presented one level at a time along with context specific recommendations.

The Socio-Ecological Model

The Socio-Ecological model contains five interconnected levels starting at the intrapersonal level and moving all the way to the public policy level. The model is appropriate because it makes sure that the suggested changes/interventions to a health program are as comprehensive as possible by addressing as many of the levels as possible. In many cases, interventions are most effective when they are highly ecological. That is to say that those that address multiple levels of the model including both individual and environmental are most effective (Robinson, 2008). A summary of each level can be found below:

- Intrapersonal: individual characteristics that influence behavior such as knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and motivation.
- Interpersonal: interpersonal processes, and primary groups including family, friends, peers, that provide social identity, support and role definition.
- Organizational: rules, regulation, policies, and informal structures, which may constrain or promote recommended behaviors.

- Community: social networks and norms or standards which exist as formal or informal among individuals, groups, and organizations.
- Public policy: local, state, federal policies and laws that regulate or support healthy actions and practices for disease prevention, early detection, control, and management (Robinson, 2008).

The subsequent section will make recommendations for the 2013 school year Active 6 Program taking into account this multi-level model for the most commonly identified barriers to program participation.

Recommended Strategies

The following are suggested strategies for decreasing the barriers to participation in the Active 6 program. The strategies are guided by both the findings from this study as well as the Socio-Ecological model. Some previous research is also utilized to guide the development of these strategies. It is pertinent to note however, that aside from transportation (which was not a major theme identified in this study), the findings in this study are very individualized to the Missoula population and the Active 6 program.

Strategies to Address the Lack of Information

The guardians identified the largest barrier to participation as a lack of information about the program. Though there was nothing found specific to parents lacking information in the literature, Lockwood (2003) did identify a lack of coordination

between the program director, site coordinators, and administrators as a barrier to program success. This may be in part due to a breakdown in communication and therefore some confusion about the program and how information was being disseminated. In order to address this lack of information on multiple levels, the researchers suggest the following strategies:

1. Have a physical presence in the community that engages the families and makes clear information available to both the guardians and the parents. Tabling with pamphlets about the program as well as scheduled activities may prove beneficial. School open houses, kids fairs, and community events are all appropriate places for these tablings. This method addresses the intrapersonal, interpersonal and community levels of the model
2. Another strategy is to increase awareness about what the program is about for both the guardians and the students. This addresses the intrapersonal level of the model. Holding an annual open house for parents and families with food may prove a useful method to draw in the families that are new to the program and increase personal knowledge about what the program is and what it hopes to accomplish. In addition to this, the researchers also suggest making informational sheets or magnets available for people to take home so that they are reminded what the program strives to accomplish.
 - a. As another aspect of this event, it is important for the YMCA to have a policy that makes sure that each of the activities are tied to at least one specific goal of the program. For this reason, an organizational level suggestion to the YMCA is to create a curriculum for the program and

ensure that each and every goal is being addressed within the program.

This policy will make the above suggestion far easier and make certain that the goals and objectives of the program are clearly articulated to the families in a manner that makes logical sense.

3. Another community, and organizational level strategy is to make the information available through multiple venues that are easily accessible by the target population. It is important to understand that these methods must be fluid and evaluated annually at a minimum. That is to say, that although text messaging and a Facebook page may work now based upon community input from this study, next year the parents may prefer a new venue such as print, web pages or other that we are not yet aware.

These strategies strive to increase awareness of, and participation in, the Active 6 program. This strategy has the potential to impact attendance. This is significant because Beets et al. (2009), identified program impacts to be greatest for those who attended 40% or more of the time.

Strategies to Increase Educational Components

The second most frequently mentioned barrier was a lack of educational components in the program. This was the most concerning to the low SES guardians and due to program goals should be a point of focus for the program. Although a lack of educational components was not identified in the literature as a barrier, it is still relevant. This is because Weisman & Gottfredson (2001) found that program dropout rates were highest among those most vulnerable to at-risk behavior as well

as those from lower income families. Because the lack of educational components was the number one barrier to the low-SES families, anything that can be done to address that barrier has potential to directly impact attendance among that population. In order to address this concern, the following strategies are suggested:

1. One desire that was made clear by the low SES guardians was to have their children come away with the knowledge and tools to be more independent and responsible about their food and snack choices. Specifically, the guardians expressed a desire to have their children be capable of preparing their own healthy food. A strategy that was mentioned by the guardians was to have a cooking class that included a food-shopping component so the kids could pick out healthy food at the store and know how to prepare it at home. This strategy addresses the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels of the SEM.
2. Create a list of educational topics and outline them clearly for the kids and guardians. Use this curriculum to guide the educational activities that are part of the program. Suggested topics included nutritional education as well as conflict resolution and teamwork. It may be worthwhile to research existing curriculums that integrate academic content with physical activity, such as Focused Fitness® as the program strives for both. This strategy addresses the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational levels of the SEM.
3. A third strategy is to make sure that the program is assessing the kid's knowledge about the chosen topics in order to measure the programs effectiveness. As part of this assessment, the YMCA may have a policy that surveys the kids and

- guardians about what they would like to learn more about through these academic components. This strategy addresses the organizational level of the SEM.
4. A community strategy is to engage in a social norming campaign with adults in Missoula to increase the frequency which conversations about nutrition and physical activity between kids and adults occur. Perhaps the best way to accomplish this is through collaboration amongst other community groups with similar interests. Those groups in Missoula may include both current and potential partners such as the Active Kids coalition, Eat Smart Missoula, The Food Bank, and the city and county public schools.

Strategies to Address A Perceived Lack of Parent and Sibling Inclusion

Another barrier to participation that was more of a concern for the low SES families was that there was a lack of parent and sibling inclusion. In general, the families felt it was difficult to constantly send their kids to events, clubs, and programs where they as parents were not involved. Along with this concern came the topic of sibling inclusion. The parents felt that it was unfair to send one child to a free program that siblings wanted to engage in when they could not afford to send other kids or they were not allowed to participate.

Fashola (2002) also identified sibling exclusion as a very real barrier. The context of this finding surrounded a loss of older siblings if younger siblings were not included in the program due to supervisory duties. Though this finding is not identical to the findings in this study, it is relevant in that it speaks to a similar contextual issue of

family dynamics and the importance of addressing them. The following strategies may help to address this barrier:

1. The parents felt that an open house or a family activity event may make them feel more involved and increase the likelihood of them sending their kids to the program. This strategy addresses the community and organizational levels of the SEM.
2. The parents also suggested that providing a punch card or some free passes for siblings would help to alleviate some of the family tension from kids feeling left out. This strategy also addresses both the community and organizational levels of the SEM.
3. An organizational strategy that may help would be to advertise and hold regular open houses for families to come and learn about the program and the YMCA.
4. It may also help to engage parents and families in the programming process through providing opportunities where they can make suggestions and comment on concerns as well as things they like about the program. This strategy addresses the interpersonal, community, and organizational levels of the SEM.
5. Another organizational level strategy that may be effective is one that regularly incorporates parents into the actual programming. One suggestion for this would be to have a monthly family night or some other kids of activity where parents and siblings are active alongside the regular program participant. This has the potential to benefit many aspects of health behavior through modeling as well as both intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects if executed well.

Strategies to Address Kid's Barriers

Two barriers were evident from the data collected from the kids. Those were a lack of new and interesting activities offered at the program and time conflicts with other commitments.

Because time conflicts are likely to occur for any after-school program, the only real strategy to address this barrier is to survey the participants and accommodate their schedules to the best of the YMCA's ability given facilities, staffing, volunteers, etc. This could be as simple as being mindful of the school districts calendars while scheduling and planning events.

Strategies for Introducing New and Interesting Activities

Though the barrier of new and interesting activities may seem fairly ambiguous, it is still significant. Lamberg & McKenna (2011) found that one major issue with after-school physical activity programs was a lack of participation among overweight and obese children. When addressing this issue, the researchers simply hoped that the popularity of the program would draw the target population into the program.

The below strategies for addressing this issue should keep a focus of specifically addressing activities that are appealing, new, and exciting to overweight and obese children. Identifying these activities may require further needs assessment.

In order to address the barrier of offering new and interesting activities, the YMCA may choose to implement the following:

1. Partner with Missoula Parks and Recreation to access resources such as facilities and trained staff that can teach and engage the kids with new and interesting activities such as the ropes course and the water parks. This strategy addresses the community level of the SEM.
2. The Active 6 coordinator could research new and interesting activities that are being implemented elsewhere and then present those options to the kids and have them select some of the activities that they would like to try. This model addresses the organizational level of the SEM.
3. Provide opportunities for the kids to provide feedback and suggestions for activities they would like to try and research ways to bring those opportunities to the kids. This strategy also addresses the organizational level and has the potential to address the community level as well if community partnerships or resources are used in the process.

Strategies that Address Policy Level Changes

The above listed strategies are those that address the first four of the five levels of the socio-ecological model and are in no way meant to be exhaustive. In order to address the public policy level of the model, the YMCA would have to work with leaders in the community to create policy level change that impacts the Active 6 program and its mission. One strategy for this is to collect good data on the effectiveness of the program and work to ensure that it is impacting children's

activity levels. Once this has been established and the program is demonstrating results, the YMCA could work with elected officials to expand the program and possibly fund a community wide program through public funding sources such as mill levy dollars. They may also choose to work with schools and elected officials to increase use by expanding the program to a school setting where participation becomes mandated.

Conclusion

The results of this research demonstrate clearly that there are barriers to participation in the Active 6 program that are universally recognized by the participants in this study. Many of these barriers are fairly straightforward to address and some of them are more complex. Through careful analysis of the data, the research provided insight into these barriers. Through the application of the socio-ecological model many strategies have been identified and outlined. These strategies are meant to be helpful suggestions with the hope that, when used together, they provide a comprehensive multilevel approach to reducing barriers for kids and families. There may be other strategies not outlined here that will reduce barriers and the Active 6 team may wish to discuss the results in an effort to identify additional strategies that work for them.

One note that is worth repeating from above is the kids identifying both competitive and non-competitive sports. It is relevant to mention again because it is important to think about when reviewing the program. The researchers feel that though many

kids do enjoy competitive sports as the data suggests, there are also many kids that do not enjoy these activities. For this reason, it may be true that less active kids and those with fewer skills may be those from the target population and could be scared off with mandatory, or even popular, competitive or aggressive activities. Therefore it is important that this population is identified and offered activities where they can be successful as well as those that are acceptable, fun, and comfortable for them to choose.

The barriers in this research are specific to the participants in this study and may not be the same every year. For this reason, it is important for ongoing evaluation of the program barriers to take place.

Lastly, as suggested above, the next step is to properly assess the impact and outcome measures of the program's effectiveness. It is critical to understand the importance of increasing attendance among the desired population before engaging in this step. For obvious reasons, evaluating the impact of a program on individuals outside the target population is misleading and may lead to more complex issues in the future.

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APPENDICES:

APPENDIX A: Focus Group Moderator's Guides

Moderator's Guide For Parents

Introduction:

Hello and thank you for coming this evening. My name is _____ and I am helping with this study on the Active 6 program. I hoped you enjoyed the dinner. We are here this evening to learn more about you thoughts, perceptions, experiences, and feelings about the Active 6 program. It is okay if you do not know much about this program. There will still be lots of opportunity for you to share your thoughts and opinions. The most important thing for you is to be open and honest with your responses. In addition, we encourage all of you to contribute as much as you can, but please remember that your participation is totally voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions you are not comfortable with.

We will be using this device to record our conversation tonight. We do this for two main reasons. First, it allows us to capture everything that is said. Second, it helps us to ensure your identity remains confidential. That is because we will take this recording and type every word and only identify you by a number. Once we have typed out the recording, we will delete this recording.

We do need to practice a first question to make sure the device is working properly so let's just go around and share your first name.

Great! It works. So let's get started.

These first questions are general intro questions to get to know each other and find out what you all know about the program.

General/introductions

1. Please introduce yourself, tell us what school your child or children attend, and your favorite leisure activity.
2. What can you tell me about the Active 6 program?
 - a. Tell me about how you first learned of the program.
 - b. Have you heard others talk about the program?
 - i. If so, what have you heard them say, good or bad, about the program?
3. When thinking about your family, what are some of the activities that you enjoy when you are together on a weekend or day off of work and school?
 - a. How about a typical school week, what kinds of family activities do you enjoy?

After-School Programs:

1. There are many families in Missoula that have not signed up for the Active 6 program, what do you feel are some of the reasons for this?
 - a. What could be done to address these issues?

2. In the research, transportation is a major issue for after-school programs. In what ways does transportation play a role in your decision regarding participation in after-school programs
3. In addition to transportation, competing after-school programs and prior family engagements made regular participation in after-school health programs difficult. Please share with me how other activities influence your child's participation in the Active 6 program?
4. In what ways do you think an after-school program could help your kids be healthy?
5. If the Active 6 program could change, add, or modify its activities, what types of things would make your kids more likely to attend?
6. Please share anything else you feel may be relevant to our discussion today that I left out or you would just like to add.

Physical activity

1. To what extent is physical activity important to your family?
 - a. How many minutes/ hours per day would you guess your child is active enough to elevate their breathing and heart rate to the point where it is difficult for them to carry on conversation while exercising?
2. What are some of the things that you think are benefits for your child when they are physically active?
 - a. What are some of the ways that you are successful at getting your child to be physically active
3. We know that for many adults, regular physical activity can be very hard, is this something you struggle with?
 - a. What are some of the things that help you engage in physical activity?
 - b. What are some of the things that make difficult for you to get enough physical activity time?
4. On a typical weekday, how many minutes/hours do you engage in physical activity to the point of elevated heart rate and breathing when conversation becomes difficult?
5. When thinking about your children and a typical school day, how many minutes or hours do you think they engage in screen time activities not for school including television, computer, video games, hand held video or game devices and cell phone activities?
6. When thinking about a typical non-school day, how many minutes or hours do you think your child engages in screen time activities including television, computer, video games, hand held video or game devices, and cell phone activities?
7. When thinking about your child, what are some of the physical activities you have heard them talk about that they enjoy?
 - a. What are some activities that you know that they enjoy?
 - b. Please share some activities that you know your child does not enjoy?
8. Please share some activities that you and your family like to participate in together.

I would like to thank you again for your participation in this event. We know that you are very busy and we appreciate your willingness to share you family knowledge with us. If you have any questions or comments about the evening, please let me know before you leave. You can also reach me via e-mail or phone.

Thanks again and I have your gift cards here for you on your way out. Your kids are either in the gym area or will return shortly.

Have a great evening!

Moderators Guide For Kids

Introduction:

Hello and thank you for coming tonight. I hope you liked the dinner. My name is _____ and I am helping with this evening of information gathering about the Active 6 after school program. It is okay if you don't know much about the program because we will talk about it as a group and your input is still important to us. What we are doing here is called a focus group. A focus group is a meeting with participants like you where researchers like me get to ask you some questions about your thoughts, opinions, feelings and experiences. We are hopeful that you will share your real opinions and thoughts. Remember that we want you to contribute as much as you can, but this is totally voluntary and you do not have to answer any questions that make you uncomfortable. It is also important to be respectful of each other during and after this process. Some of you may have different opinions, which does not mean that one opinion is right or wrong. Lastly, it is important to remember that we do not want you to talk to other students about what we discuss here until the end of the week because we don't want you to influence other kids that are participating later this week. It is okay to talk about anything we cover today with your parents/guardians.

This device is an audio recorder and we will use it to record our conversation today. We do this for two main reasons. First, it allows us to make sure that we can remember everything that was said. Second, after the focus group we will type out everything that is said today and give each of you a code so that anything said today can't be tracked back to you. In other words, as long as you don't share what happens here today, no one will know who said what.

Let's practice a short conversation with the recorder to make sure it is working.

Great! It works. Do you have any questions before we get started?

These first questions are just general questions to get to know each other and find out what you know about the Active 6 program.

Questions:

General/introduction:

1. Please introduce yourself, tell me what school you go to, and your favorite thing to do with your free time.
2. What can you tell me about the Active 6 program?
3. Have you heard other kids talk about the program?
 - a. What are some of the things they say about it?
4. Have you heard adults like teachers or parents talk about the Active 6 program?

- a. What are some of the things that you have heard them say?
5. What are some of the good things about the program that make you curious about it or maybe want to try it?
6. What are some of the negative things about the program that make you want to stay away from it?
7. Did you know that you get some free stuff if you sign up for the program?
 - a. Can you tell me what those things are?
8. I know that there are some things that make it hard or impossible for you to participate in after-school programs like the Active 6 program, please tell me what some of those things are.

After-school programs:

9. Please tell me about what you normally do after school.
10. In a normal school week, how many days do you have after-school plans for some kind of program like sports, music, youth group, etc.
11. What would your dream after-school program be?
12. Tell me about how interested in an active after-school program like Active 6 you are.
 - a. What are some things that would make an activity program more interesting for you?
 - b. What are some things that you think other kids would like?
13. When thinking about kids at your school that are not very healthy or active, what do you think it would take to get them to come to a program like active 6?
 - a. What types of activities do you think these kids would like?
14. What are some of the things that would make it so you would not want to come to the Active 6 program?
15. Some kids do not like sports or running, what do you think would be fun activities for these kids?
16. How often (days per week) would you like to go to a program like Active 6?
17. Tell me about things that make it hard to participate in afterschool programs like Active 6?

Physical activity:

1. Tell me a little bit about your own physical activity levels.
 - a. Do you think that you are active enough?
 - b. How many minutes per day do you think kids your age should be active in order to stay healthy?
 - c. There is actually a specific amount of time that you are supposed to be active, can you tell me what that is?
 - i. If so, where did you learn that?
2. When thinking about other kids at school, tell me about their activity levels.
 - a. How many kids in your grade at school would you think are active enough?
 - i. Some? Most? Half? None?
3. Why do you think some kids are active enough and others are not?

- a. What are some things that you think make it hard for other kids to get enough activity?
- b. What are some things that make it hard for you to get enough activity?
4. Please share some things that you do to stay active?
5. What are some things that other kids do to stay active?
6. What are some of your favorite activities that you have done that were active?
7. What are some of your least favorite activities you have done that were active?
8. Tell me about some activities that you want to do but don't get to or haven't gotten to try yet.
9. If you could add one physically active activity to the Active 6 program, what would it be?
10. Do you like to be physically active with a couple of friends, a group of kids, or by yourself?

Sedentary time:

1. Tell me about your favorite things to do that are not active
2. Tell me about how you and or your parents try to make sure you don't spend too much time doing these activities.
3. On a typical school day, how many minutes or hours do you spend doing screen time activities not for school like television, computers, video games, and handheld devices like cell phones or games like DS or PSP?
4. How much time do you think other kids spend doing these screen time activities on school days?
5. On a typical non-school day how many minutes or hours per day do you spend doing these types of activities?
6. How many minutes or hours per day do you think it is appropriate to engage in these types of screen time activities?
7. How many minutes per day do your parents/guardians spend doing these types of activities?

Please share with me anything that you think is important to add to this conversation that we have not yet covered.

Thank you for your time, you can choose an item from the box on our way out to meet your parents/guardians.

APPENDIX B: Recruitment Post Card



**FREE DINNER FOR THE FAMILY
\$40 GIFT CARD FOR EVERY PARENT!**

**NEEDED: 6TH GRADERS &
THEIR PARENTS**

WE NEED 6TH GRADERS AND THEIR
PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN
EVENING OF INFORMATION GATHERING



ACTIVE 6

To Participate
Call or E-mail:
BILLY REAMER
406-214-6149

WHAT: 1.5 HOUR COMMITMENT / DINNER PROVIDED / CHILDCARE PROVIDED

APPENDIX C: Pre-Screening Scripts

Outgoing Phone Call Prescreening Script

Hello, this is _____ with the University of Montana Missoula Active 6 research team.

IF Child: Is your mom or dad home? [To Parent] Hello, this is Billy Reamer with the University of Montana Missoula Active 6 research team.

We are conducting a research study for the Active 6 after-school program and would like to have you participate. If you qualify, the evening will include a free dinner for you and your family, as well as a \$40 gift card for each participating adult.

Does this sound like something you would be interested in hearing more about?

If NO:

Okay, well we thank you for your time, and if you change your mind, please call us back [provide phone number].

If YES:

Great. I will need to gather some basic information from you to see if you meet the criteria.

1. Are you one of the heads of the household?
2. What is your age
3. How many 6th grade children reside in your home?
4. How many other children reside in the home?
5. How many adults reside in the home that would be participating in the evening?
6. Do your children qualify and/or receive free or reduced meals from the MCPS district?

If the demographic is full:

Unfortunately we do not have space available in your category. Would you like us to take a phone number and call you if space opens up?

If qualified position open on the sign-up chats:

Great, we do have a position open for the ___ of April at 6pm at ___ middle school. Would that date work for you and your family?

If NO:

Well we thank you for your time anyway. Please keep our number and let us know if anything changes and you are able to make it.

If Yes:

The study would require you and your family to attend an information gathering evening on the ___ of April at ___ middle school at 6pm. That session will provide you and

your family with a free meal and childcare for any kids that do not participate for the duration of the 2-3 hour session.

What we are really interested in is the information-gathering portion. This is a process where you are with a group of fellow parents and your 6th grade child/children is/are also in a group with fellow 6th graders and a researcher asks each group a series of questions about what you know, and how you feel about the Active 6 after-school program and physical activity. These groups are known as focus groups and are a common method of research that is used to gather information from people like you in order to improve services.

This process is totally voluntary and you will be given the gift card on the night of the focus group for your participation.

The group will take place at _____ middle school on the _____ of April.

Can I take a phone number in order to give a reminder call a day or two before the focus group?

Would you like an e-mail confirmation?

Do you have any questions or can I help you with anything else right now?

Thank you for your time, your input will be very important and I look forward to meeting you.

Goodbye.

Incoming Phone Call Prescreening Script:

Hello, this is Billy Reamer with the Missoula Active 6 research team.

Thank you for calling, we are interested in having you and/or your family attend an evening of information gathering. The evening will include a free dinner for you and your family, as well as a \$40 gift card for each participating adult.

Does this sound like something you would be interested in hearing more about?

If NO:

Okay, well we thank you for your time, and if you change your mind, please call us back.

If YES:

Great. I will need to gather some basic information from you to see if you meet the criteria.

7. Are you one of the heads of the household?
8. What is your age
9. How many 6th grade children reside in your home?
10. How many other children reside in the home?
11. How many adults reside in the home that would be participating in the evening?
12. Do your children qualify and/or receive free or reduced meals from the MCPS district?

If the demographic is full:

Unfortunately we do not have space available in your category. Would you like us to take a phone number and call you if space opens up?

If qualified position open on the sign-up chats:

Great, we do have a position open for the ___ of April at 6pm at ___ middle school. Would that date work for you and your family?

If NO:

Well we thank you for your time anyway. Please keep our number and let us know if anything changes and you are able to make it.

If Yes:

The study would require you and your family to attend an information gathering evening on the ___ of April at ___ middle school at 6pm. That session will provide you and your family with a free meal and childcare for any kids that do not participate for the duration of the 2-3 hour session.

What we are really interested in is the information-gathering portion. This is a process where you are with a group of fellow parents and your 6th grade child/children is/are also in a group with fellow 6th graders and a researcher asks each group a series of questions

about what you know, and how you feel about the Active 6 after-school program and physical activity. These groups are known as focus groups and are a common method of research that is used to gather information from people like you in order to improve services.

This process is totally voluntary and you will be given the gift card immediately after the focus group is finished.

The group will take place at _____ middle school on the _____ of April.

Can I take a phone number in order to give a reminder call a day or two before the focus group?

Would you like an e-mail confirmation?

Do you have any questions or can I help you with anything else right now?

Thank you for your call, your input will be very important and I look forward to meeting you.

Goodbye.

APPENDIX D: IRB Forms

Minor's Assent for Being in a Research Study

University of Montana

Title: **Active 6 program: A process evaluation**

Why am I here?

We are asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about what you know and think about the Active 6 program. We are inviting you to be in the study because we think that your opinions are important for us to understand in order to make the program better.

Why are they doing this study?

This study is being done so we can learn about what you and other 6th graders know about the Active 6 program. We also want to know why you are not participating in the program.

What will happen to me?

You will be asked to sit in a room with 5-12 other 6th graders and talk about what you know about the Active 6 program. You will also be asked to share your thoughts and feelings about the program as well as what might make you want, or not want, to go to the activities. In your return will get to choose from a water bottle, jump rope, or flying disc an incentive and a thank you for your participation.

Will the study hurt?

The study will not hurt. You may not be comfortable answering some questions and that is okay. You can choose to answer, or not answer, any question and nobody will be upset if you do not answer some questions. If you get uncomfortable during the questions, you are free to leave at any time.

Will the study help me?

The study may not help you directly, but you will be helping us make the Active 6 program better for future 6th graders.

What if I have any questions?

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me, Billy Reamer at (406) 243 6440, or ask me next time.

Do my parents [guardians] know about this?

This study was explained to your parents [guardians] and they said that you could be in it. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

Do I have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell me. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

Writing your name on this page means that that you agree to be in the study, and know what will happen to you. If you decide to quit the study all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

Name of Minor (printed)

Date

Signature of Minor

Date

Signature of Researcher

Date

Parental Permission

Title: Active 6 program: A process evaluation

Project Director(s):

William Reamer, University of Montana
McGill Hall 119
(406) 243-2440
billy.reamer@mso.umt.edu

Under the supervision of:

Dr. Laura Dybdal, University of Montana
McGill Hall 134
(406) 243-6988

Special instructions:

This permission form may contain words that are new to you. If you read any words that are not clear to you, please ask the person who gave you this form to explain them to you or contact the project director.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research study is to identify the knowledge and perceptions that sixth grade students and their parents/guardians have in regards to participation in the Active 6 program.

Procedures:

If you agree, your child will be a part of a focus group with his or her peers. They will be in a group of 5 to 12 other 6th graders and a researcher will ask them questions about their thoughts and perceptions regarding the Active 6 after school program. This process will include a free dinner for your child and participating parents/guardians as well as any siblings that are present. Following dinner and a sign in process, your child will go to their focus group with a researcher and after 60 to 90 minutes, they will return to a supervised environment until their parents/guardians are finished with their focus groups.

Payment for Participation:

Your child will receive their choice of a free water bottle, a jump rope, or a flying disc when they complete the focus group.

Risks/Discomforts:

Your child may be uncomfortable providing their true opinions in the focus group. Your child will be encouraged to participate, but their choice to answer any of the questions is completely voluntary. If your child becomes uncomfortable for any reason, they will be free to not answer any or all questions or may choose to leave at any time and still receive their payment.

Benefits: Although your child may not benefit from taking part in this study, they will be providing information that will help to improve future programs for kids.

Confidentiality:

Both your and your child’s identity will be kept confidential.

If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, neither you nor your child’s name will be used.

Your child’s signed assent form, as well as this parental permission form will be stored in a cabinet separate from the data.

The audio recording of the interview will be transcribed without any information that could identify your child. The recording will then be erased.

Compensation for Injury:

Although we do not foresee any risk in taking part in this study, the following liability statement is required in all University of Montana consent forms:

In the event that your child is injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, your child may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University’s Claims representative or University Legal Counsel.

(Reviewed by University Legal Counsel, July 6, 1993)

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

You may refuse to allow your child to take part in or you may withdraw your child from the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are normally entitled.

Your child may be asked to leave the study for any of the following reasons:

1. Failure to follow the Project Director’s instructions;
2. A serious adverse reaction which may require evaluation;
3. The Project Director thinks it is in the best interest of your child’s health and welfare; or
4. The study is terminated.

Questions:

If you have any questions about the research now or during the study contact: William D. Reamer, University of Montana McGill Hall 119. (406) 243-2440

If you have any questions regarding your child’s rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the IRB through The University of Montana Research Office at 243-6670.

Parent’s Statement of Permission:

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that a member of the research team will also answer any future questions I may have. I voluntarily agree to have my child take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this permission form.

Printed Name of Subject

Signature of Parent or Legally Authorized Representative _____
Date

Statement of Permission to be Audio Recorded

I understand that audio recordings may be taken during the study.
I give permission to having my child audio recorded.
I understand that audio recordings will be destroyed following transcription, and that no identifying information will be included in the transcription.

Signature of Parent or Legally Authorized Representative _____
Date

Subject Information and Informed Consent

Title: Active 6 program: A process evaluation

Sponsor: Missoula County Public Health Department

Project Directors:

William Reamer, University of Montana
McGill Hall 119
(406) 243-2440
billy.reamer@mso.umt.edu

Under the supervision of:
Dr. Laura Dybdal, University of Montana
McGill Hall 134
(406) 243-6988

Special instructions:

This permission form may contain words that are new to you. If you read any words that are not clear to you, please ask the person who gave you this form to explain them to you or contact the project director.

Purpose:

The purpose of this research study is to identify the knowledge and perceptions that sixth grade students and their parents/guardians have in regards to participation in the Active 6 program.

Procedures:

If you agree, you will be a part of a focus group with fellow parents/guardians. You will be in a group of other 6th grader parents, and a researcher will ask you questions about your thoughts and perceptions regarding the Active 6 after school program. This process will include a free dinner for you and participating children as well as any siblings that are present. Following dinner and a sign in process, you will go to your focus group with a researcher. Upon completion of the 60 to 90 minute focus group, you will be given your gift card and will be free to leave.

Payment for Participation:

You will receive a \$40 gift card from Shopko® for your participation.

Risks/Discomforts:

You may be uncomfortable providing your true opinions in the focus group. Although you will be encouraged to participate and answer the questions, you do not have to answer any questions you do not want to and are free to leave at any time without loss of benefits.

Benefits:

Although you may not benefit from taking part in this study, you will be providing valuable information that will improve future programs for kids.

Confidentiality:

Your records will be kept private and will not be released without your consent except as required by law. If the results of this study are written in a scientific journal or presented at a scientific meeting, your name will not be used. This consent form will be stored in a cabinet separate from the data.

Compensation for Injury:

Although we believe that the risk of taking part in this study is minimal, the following liability statement is required in all University of Montana consent forms:

In the event that you are injured as a result of this research you should individually seek appropriate medical treatment. If the injury is caused by the negligence of the University or any of its employees, you may be entitled to reimbursement or compensation pursuant to the Comprehensive State Insurance Plan established by the Department of Administration under the authority of M.C.A., Title 2, Chapter 9. In the event of a claim for such injury, further information may be obtained from the University's Claims representative or University Legal Counsel. (Reviewed by University Legal Counsel, July 6, 1993)

Voluntary Participation/Withdrawal:

Your decision to take part in this research study is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to take part in, or you may withdraw from, the study at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are normally entitled.

Questions:

If you have any questions about the research now or during the study contact: William D. Reamer, University of Montana McGill Hall 119. (406) 243-2440

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the Chair of the IRB through The University of Montana Research Office at 243-6670.

Statement of Consent:

I have read the above description of this research study. I have been informed of the risks and benefits involved, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. Furthermore, I have been assured that any future questions I may have will also be answered by a member of the research team. I voluntarily agree to take part in this study. I understand I will receive a copy of this consent form.

Printed (Typed) Name of Subject

Subject's Signature

Date

APPENDIX E: Coding Scheme

Coding Guide: Parents

1 Favorite Family Activities Reported by Parents

1a Activities

- 1aa Competitive Sports
- 1ab Non-Competitive Outdoor Activities
- 1ad Screen-Time Activities
- 1ae Non-active family time

2 Active 6 Program Participation as Seen by Parents

2a Initial Source of Information

- 2aa Community Agency
- 2ac Word of Mouth

2b Barriers

- 2ba Lack of information
- 2bb Transportation
- 2bc Other Engagements
- 2bd Safety Concerns
- 2bh No parent/sibling inclusion

2c Desired Improvements That May Affect Participation

- 2ca Educational Component including Nutrition, Mental and Emotional Health
- 2cb Summer programming
- 2cc Increase Access to Information Through Easily Identifiable Sources
- 2cd Extend Programming to Other Age Groups
- 2ch Increase Desire Among Youth to Participate

3 Kid's Physical Activity as Presented by Parents

3a Barriers to Physical Activity

- 3aa Lack of Desire in Adverse Weather
- 3ab Screen-time
- 3ac Existing health Problems
- 3ad Lack of Motivation

3b Benefits

- 3ba Improves Physical health
- 3bb Improves Social and Emotional Health

4 Parent's Physical Activity as Presented by Parents

- Conditions
 - 4a Barriers
 - 4aa Lack of Desire to be Physically Active in Adverse Weather
 - 4ab Lack of Time
 - 4ad existing health conditions
 - 4b Motivators
 - 4ba Scheduling Activities
 - 4bb Activities With Kids and Family
 - 4bc Outdoor Activities

Coding Guide: Kids

5 Afterschool Programs

5a Barriers to Participation as Presented By Kids

- 5aa Time Conflict With Other Commitments
- 5ad Lack of Information on A6 Program Activities
- 5ae Lack of Interest

5b Improvements to A6 Program as Presented By Kids

- 5ba Increase Number of New and Interesting Activities
- 5bd Friends would be there
- 5bh Provide Snacks

5c Things Kids Like About the Program

- 5ca Attractive and Fun Activities
- 5cd Competitive sport
- 5cf Freedom to Choose Activities

5d Bad things about A6

- 5da Becomes Boring
- 5db Presence of Bullying

6 Physical Activity

6a Favorite Activities as Presented by Kids

- 6aa Competitive sports
- 6ab Outdoor activities
- 6ac Hanging out with friends

6b Least Favorite Activities

- 6ba Non-Sport Strength and Endurance Exercises
- 6bd biking
- 6be Competitive Sports