

Nutrition Friendly Schools and CommunitiesSM environmental model to prevent overweight in children

Significance: Rates of overweight children and adolescents have steadily risen over the past 30 years. Several school environmental factors such as student access to unhealthy foods and lack of physical education and activity contribute to the epidemic of overweight children. **Purpose:** The Nutrition Friendly Schools and Communities (NFSC) program is an ecological model, which impacts the entire school environment including students, staff, and families to promote good nutrition and physical activity. Using a community – based participatory research model, school community stakeholders and the UCLA Nutrition Friendly group collaborated to develop the 15 Steps to a Nutrition Friendly School criteria and self-evaluation tool, which were modeled around the eight components of the Coordinated School Health Model. **Methods:** Involvement of stakeholders through participatory research, selection of the criteria, use of the self – evaluation tool, school action plans and application of NFSC to other settings will be discussed. Presenters will highlight the progress of a community based participatory research pilot study of the NFSC model in a large, urban school district. To demonstrate the participatory research process, participants will work through the NFSC self-evaluation in small teams. **Outcomes:** By the end of the session, participants will be able to: describe the NFSC environmental model; identify the process and steps through which a school can take to meet the Nutrition Friendly criteria; and apply the NFSC model to their environments. **Implications:** The NFSC program has the potential to impact nutrition and physical activity by enlisting school and community stakeholders to improve their environment.