



Promoting health and preventing childhood obesity through policy change: How Parks and Recreation partnered with a local children's hospital to implement a wellness policy

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BACKGROUND

Parks and Recreation represent an untapped opportunity for health promotion and childhood obesity prevention. They have the capacity to implement strategies that increase opportunities for physical activity, encourage healthy eating, and much more.

Focusing on policy change within the Parks and Recreation system is sustainable and has the potential to reach a large number of families. Although best practices encourage health and wellness promotion, most departments do not have a comprehensive wellness policy.

Community partnerships can support healthy policy changes. Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation partnered with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta to develop a wellness policy. The wellness policy outlines strategies for providing safe opportunities for physical activity, offering healthy foods and beverages, ensuring access to smoke-free play areas, and providing a healthy summer camp and work environment.

Through this innovative partnership, registered dietitian/nutritionists at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta have supported the wellness policy through:

- Expertise with wellness policy development and implementation
- Assistance developing nutrition guidelines for catering and vending contracts
- Educational opportunities for coaches, parents and volunteers in youth sports
- Training programs to support a healthy camp environment
- A connection to pediatricians to encourage participation in park services



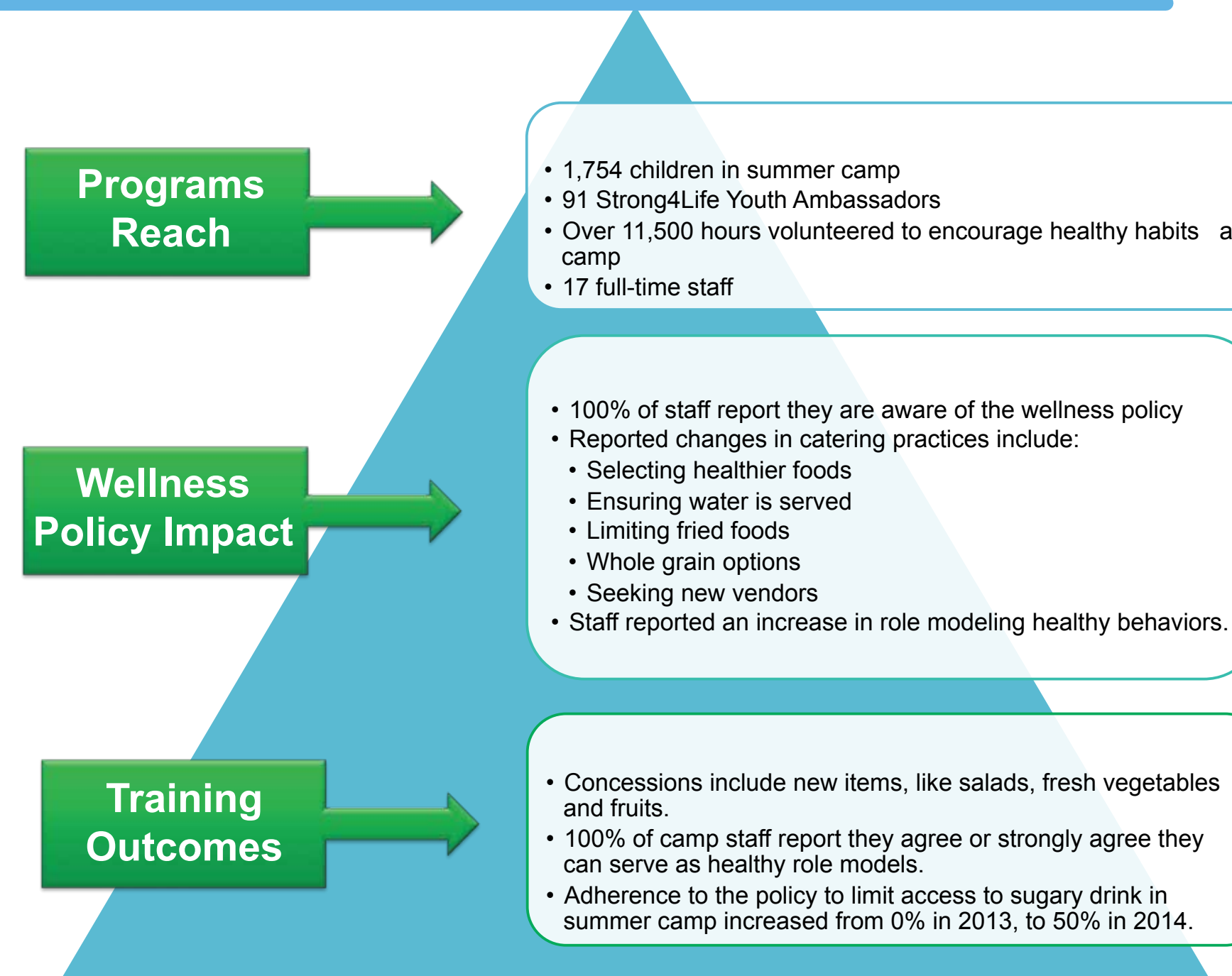
PROGRAMS

Children's Healthcare of Atlanta's Strong4Life wellness movement helps families adopt healthy habits through programs, public policy and media channels. Strong4Life programs implemented with Gwinnett Parks and Recreation staff and volunteers include:

- Camp Training Program- included training for camp staff, support implementing a camp wellness policy, and a resource kit including posters, games, activity ideas, and parent handouts to promote healthy habits.
- Youth Ambassador Program- included training for volunteer camp aides on healthy habits, leadership and role modeling, and provided an opportunity to implement community projects that promote healthy habits for campers and their families.



IMPACT AND OUTCOMES



PROGRAM MATERIALS



WELLNESS POLICY

1. Offer a variety of planned physical activities for persons of all ages and abilities.
2. Give all park and facility users access to healthy food and beverage options.*
3. Partner with local community members, organizations and businesses to promote healthy habits and programs to residents and staff of Gwinnett County.
4. Provide day camps with healthy and safe environments for participants.*
5. Deliver safe and healthy environments for all park and facility users to exercise, socialize and play in.
6. Ensure that staff operates in safe and healthy workplace environments.
7. Designate smoke-free areas of play to keep all park and facility users and staff safe and healthy.

*See more information below

NUTRITION FOCUSED POLICIES

2. Public Access to Healthy Foods and Beverages:

- At least 50% of products offered in food and beverage machines are to be healthy options. All vending contracts will abide by this percentage and be audited regularly.
- Bottled water is available in all beverage vending machines.
- Concession stand managers are encouraged to provide healthy choices at sporting facilities.
- Clean drinking water is available at all facilities and events.
- Healthy food choices are available at 85% of Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation sponsored events.



4. Healthy and Safe Environments for Summer Camps:

- Parents are encouraged to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children.
- Campers are provided with drinking water, and do not have access to sugary drinks like soda, sports drinks, sweet tea, lemonade, juice drinks or fruit juice.
- Personal electronics are discouraged to limit screen time.
- Camps include healthy habits messaging.
- Camps provide more than 60 minutes of physical activity daily.
- Campers are educated on the benefits of healthy eating.

