Head Start Promotes Child Readiness through Comprehensive Interprofessional Collaborative Services

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Objectives

- To assess the effectiveness of Cooking Matters for parents through pre- and post-assessments
- To provide various health screenings for early detection
- To understand and evaluate the inter-professional roles involved in caring for Head Start children

Population of Focus

- Four locations: Mill Swan A & B, Millbury St. and Greendale
- 822 children enrolled during the 2012-2013 academic year
- 51.5% Hispanic/Latino children
- Main health conditions: anemia, asthma, vision problems, low and high BMIs, and dental caries that can lead to speech delay and malnutrition

Head Start Program

- Federally funded program that promotes school readiness for 3-4 year olds whose family income falls below the national poverty line
- Children who are in foster care, families who receive public assistance, and children with a documented disability may be eligible regardless of family income
- Services are available for children and their parents to help address medical, dental, social and emotional needs
- Emphasis is placed on parental involvement

Table 1. Health Screening Results of Head Start Children at Worcester Centers Mill Swan A & B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Test</th>
<th># Tested</th>
<th>Notable Results</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mill Swan A</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>5 (3%) require re-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>10 (6%) require re-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BMI</td>
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<td>Majority in 50th-75th percentile; 3 (2%) below 5th percentile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Swan B</td>
<td>Hearing</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>14 (15%) require re-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vision</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>16 (17%) require re-test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>BMI</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>Majority in 50th-75th percentile; 2 (2%) below 5th percentile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Figure 1. Percentage of Student Enrollment by Ethnicity from 2012-2013 (822 students total)

Figure 2. Pre- and Post-Assessments of Parents in Cooking Matters Class

Figure 3. Schematic diagram depicting the various interdisciplinary roles that care for children at Head Start

Results from health screenings performed on 2 of the 4 Worcester sites. Children who did not pass require re-testing; continuous re-tests necessitate follow-up with provider.

Table 2. Health Screening Results of Head Start Children at Worcester Centers Mill Swan A & B

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Conclusions and Recommendations

- Pre- and post-assessments during Cooking Matters improve parental learning and evaluate effectiveness.
- There should be nutritional services for more families including monthly newsletters with recipes, shopping recommendations, and food safety information.
- As the subject of continuous federal budget debates, Head Start can benefit from the advocacy of healthcare providers by raising awareness at both the community and national levels.