



# Text for Grant Writers

## SPARK: Countering Childhood Obesity Since 1989

SPARK is a research-based, public health organization of San Diego State University Research Foundation (disseminated by School Specialty, Inc.) dedicated to creating, implementing, and evaluating programs that promote lifelong wellness.

SPARK strives to improve the health of children, adolescents, and adults by disseminating evidence-based Physical Education, After School, Early Childhood, and Coordinated School Health programs to teachers and recreation leaders serving Pre-K through 12th grade students.

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The SPARK Programs  
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## I. SPARK Programs and Components:

### The SPARK Programs include:

- \* Early Childhood (physical activity for ages 3-5)
- \* Elementary Physical Education (grades K-2 and grades 3-6)
- \* Middle School Physical Education (grades 6-8)
- \* High School Physical Education (grades 9-12)
- \* After School (ages 5-18)
- \* Coordinated School Health Initiative (grades K-8)
  - Healthy School Environment: Ignite a Healthy Environment
  - Wellness for Staff
  - Nutrition Services
  - Health Education

### Each SPARK Program provides:

- \* Project coordination
- \* Evaluation and assessment services (including needs assessments, teaching assessment, workshop evaluation, and program evaluation tools)
- \* Curricula for teachers
- \* On-site workshops – and/or annual Institute opportunities in San Diego
- \* Follow-up support via SPARK Stars training, 800 number consultation, e-mail, and monthly newsletter for all workshop participants
- \* A Train the Trainers model (optional program – not included in Standard or Premium packages)

### There are 2 Levels of SPARK Program Implementation:

1. Standard: All the above plus 6 hours of on-site training for staff and a SPARK Stars meeting (up to 1 hour) afterwards (if applicable) – including materials and web support. (Transportation, curricula, and equipment costs extra.)
2. Premium: 12 hours of on-site training, SPARK Certification Awards, unit of credit (eligible), colorful SPARK banner. (Transportation, curricula, and equipment costs extra.)

### Note: SPARK research strongly recommends the Premium training program.

Implementing any SPARK program helps schools and districts align to state and/or national standards (see your state's standards alignment <http://www.sparkpe.org/resources/standards-alignment/> and the SPARK Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade scope and sequence <http://www.sparkpe.org/resources/scope-sequence/> on the SPARK website).

## II. SPARK Research and Dissemination:

### SPARK Background Information:

SPARK began studying elementary school physical education in 1989, and today, the name “SPARK” represents a collection of exemplary, research-based programs that promote lifelong wellness.

The original SPARK study was supported by the Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute of the National Institutes of Health as a counter to heart disease, which can begin in childhood. The health benefits of physical activity (PA) are similar in children and adults. Regularly active children tend to be leaner, have lower blood pressures, higher levels of beneficial HDL-cholesterol, and improved mental health status. Many children are very inactive, and it is believed this is a major reason why children are rapidly becoming more obese.

Studies of elementary physical education (PE) classes have shown that many children receive insufficient activity during a typical class. Additionally, the frequency and duration of PE classes has been on the decline for years. Thus, the opportunity for promoting physical activity for all children is not being effectively used to reduce health risks.

Healthy People Goals 2010 for the nation suggests 50% or higher moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) during physical education classes. Numerous studies have documented the capability of the SPARK program to significantly increase the percentage of students engaged in MVPA during PE classes. With proper staff development, schools that have implemented the program engaged in 40.2 minutes of MVPA each week while students in schools not utilizing SPARK only engaged in an average of 17.8 minutes of MVPA each week. SPARK achieved these results with both classroom teachers and physical education specialists implementing the program.

### SPARK Results:

Numerous refereed publications (over 45 to date) have reported SPARK PE program effects, including papers showing evidence of achievement in the following variables (the number refers to the citation listed on the end of this document):

- ✧ **Physical activity (1, 4, 5, 6)**
- ✧ **Physical fitness (5)**
- ✧ **Lesson context and teacher behavior (4)**
- ✧ **Academic achievement (7)**
- ✧ **Motor skill development (2)**
- ✧ **Student enjoyment of the program (3)**
- ✧ **Adiposity (6)**
- ✧ **Long term effects/institutionalization (4, 8)**
- ✧ **Process measures (parent behavior, teacher acceptance of the program) (1)**

### SPARK Expansion to Become Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> Grade, In and Out of School:

Following the research phase, the elementary PE program was expanded to focus on dissemination. Over the years, additional research has led to the creation and development of a complete menu of programs (see section I) and SPARK evolved to become a public health organization tasked with moving research to practice. Since 1989, SPARK has trained teachers representing more than 15,000 schools in all 50 states, several U.S. Commonwealths, and a number of foreign countries.

## SPARK Talking Points:

- **SPARK WORKS.** Over 45 publications demonstrate significant outcomes on students and teachers- including academic achievement and increased moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) ([Visit www.sparkpe.org for a list of publications](http://www.sparkpe.org))
- **SPARK LASTS.** A 2005 paper in Research Quarterly proved SPARK sustainability and institutionalization ([Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 2005](http://www.researchquarterly.org))
- SPARK is the **ONLY National Institute of Health (NIH) researched program** available providing coordinated curriculum, training, follow up support, and equipment for Pre-K through 12th grade teachers. (See SPARK alignment to national and state standards - and - SPARK scope and sequence at [http://www.sparkpe.org/.](http://www.sparkpe.org/))
- Each SPARK program provides a coordinated package of curriculum (the “what to teach”), teacher training (the “how to teach it”), content-matched equipment (the “tools you need to teach”), and extensive follow up support (because programs must institutionalize to be successful).
- The SPARK staff of researchers and educators have 20 years of successful experience working at state, community, and district levels in both urban and rural areas; and with a variety of cultures and demographics (including state-wide adoption and city-wide Department of Health initiatives).
- SPARK students did as well or better on standardized achievement tests than non-SPARK PE kids that spent almost 300% more time in the classroom!
- SPARK’s exclusive nutrition services partner, Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC) has earned impressive accolades for their work including:
  - American Dietetic Association’s “Award of Excellence for Community Dietetics”
  - National Advertising Council “CAN (Community Action Network) Award”
  - Cooking Light named HKC one of the “Top 12 Change Makers in Nutrition” over the past 25 years
  - Cooper Clinic study “Silver” ranking for programming
  - National Dairy Council honored HKC as “Most Sustainable Grant Project”
- **SPARK is the partner you need to implement your policy change!** If you pass a policy to increase MVPA time in PE to over 50%– SPARK is proven to implement this strategy. If you pass a policy for more physical education time, your teachers will need staff development in working with obese children, and SPARK is cited as a proven obesity prevention strategy. If policy is passed to mandate a curriculum, SPARK offer research and standards based curriculum that has proven to work and last.

## SPARK Honors:

- SPARK PE was cited in the Surgeon General's Report as a "school based solution to our nation's health care crisis."
- SPARK was validated by the National Diffusion Network of the U.S. Department of Education in 1993 and earned "Exemplary Program" status.
- SPARK received the "Governor's Commendation" from California Governor Pete Wilson and the Chair of the Governor's Council On Physical Fitness and Sports, Arnold Schwarzenegger for our work in "helping improve the health of California's youth."
- In 2005, the Cooper Institute awarded SPARK Gold status (highest possible ranking) in an extensive national study of effective physical activity and health programs. SPARK is the ONLY national program to receive Gold status for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade physical education.
- SPARK was recently identified as a successful model for combating childhood obesity in the report, "*Fighting Obesity: What Works, What's Promising*" by the HSC Foundation. The report speaks of SPARK's history, practice, and methods. **SPARK was the ONLY program recommended for physical education AND physical activity.**
- SPARK was identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as a national model for programs designed to increase physical activity and combat childhood obesity in their report [School-Based Physical Education: An Action Guide](#).
- SPARK was chosen as a "Selected School-Based Intervention" in the report [Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance](#) by the National Academy of Sciences
- Many SPARK elementary schools and several middle and high schools have earned awards for their outstanding PE programs. SPARK is especially proud to have been selected by many leading universities as their physical education/activity program on research grants and projects including: PEACH (Parents and Educators Advancing Children's Health) N.I.H. study, Stanford; OPprA (Obesity Prevention in pre-Adolescents) N.I.H., Stanford; PATHWAYS, the largest study ever on Native American children and physical education; Power Play, a study of after school programs in urban Memphis, U.T. Memphis; and other projects from UCLA, the University of Houston, San Diego State University, and the University of Alabama, Birmingham, just to name a few.

### III. SPARK Curricula by Program:

#### Early Childhood Manual:

Finally, a research-based guidebook on how to instruct physical activity for children ages 3-5. Designed specifically for the preschool teacher; this is a practical document presented in a simple and easy to use format. The goals are to increase gross motor development, physical activity levels, and social skills, while incorporating effective school readiness strategies. Over 400 pages of reference and resource chapters full of engaging, age appropriate activities including 13 dynamic instructional units: Fancy Feet, Movin' Magic, Up, Up and Away, and 10 more. The book features clear visuals and diagrams with an emphasis on integrating literacy and wellness concepts during physical activity.

#### Elementary Physical Education Manuals:

##### **(Received prestigious Gold Ranking from Cooper Institute Study in 2005)**

SPARK has created two curricula-based programs for teachers of elementary school children:

1. PE for children in grades K-2, and
2. PE for children in grades 3-5/6.

Both began in research, and have benefited from years of field-testing and implementation in a variety of locations nationwide. SPARK K-2 and 3-6 are designed to be implemented in a variety of schedules and calendars, and have been written so they are easy to team-teach.

**K-2 Manual + music CD:** The SPARK K-2 manual includes 10 dynamic instructional units: Building a Foundation, Parachute, Manipulatives, Stunts and Tumbling, Throwing and Catching, Jumping, Dribbling and Trapping, Dance, Volleying and Striking and Games. Each curricular component is presented in scope and sequence via daily lesson plans that are aligned to NASPE National Standards. ASAP's (Active Soon As Possible), provide an enjoyable warm-up before the main lesson. The SPARK K-2 curriculum also contains academic integration tips (with a special emphasis on literacy) social skills themes by grade levels, challenging extensions for each activity, and separate recess and classroom sections. Each K-2 manual comes with an "Instructional Media Disc" that provides approximately 300 supplemental skill and task cards, assessment tools, pedometer activities, "SPARK Home Plays," and much more. Everything students and their parents might read is English on one side and Spanish on the other!

All the music you need to teach SPARK PE Grades K-2 on two CD's! SPARK staff teamed with Christy Lane to bring you 30 songs and more than 100 minutes of music - perfectly matched to SPARK activities. The CD's include warm-up music, long and short music intervals for skill/fitness circuits, and songs (cultural, current, country, and more!) to instruct SPARK Dances. "SPARK-Up" YOUR dance and rhythms program by purchasing this CD!

**3-6 Manual + music CD:** Over 500 different activities presented in more than 20 themed, instructional units. Each unit is written in scope and sequence and includes activities aligned to NASPE National Standards. Red pages "Focus on Fitness" and include: ASAP's (Active Soon As Possible), Chasing and Fleeing, Map Challenges, (plus 7 others). Blue pages shine the "Spotlight on Skills" and include: Flying Disc, Hockey, Football (and 7 more). Combining an activity from "Fitness" with one from "Skills," then adding a cool-down, creates a complete SPARK experience. Personalized fitness monitoring, social skills themes, recess and classroom activity sections, and a variety of academic, home, and wellness integration tips complete this comprehensive curriculum. And – each 3-6 manual comes with a CD that provides an additional 450 skill and task cards, assessment tools, pedometer activities, SPARK Home Plays, and more. Everything students and their parents might read is English on one side and Spanish on the other!

All the music you need to teach SPARK PE Grades 3-6 on one CD! SPARK staff teamed with Christy Lane to bring you 17 songs and 75 minutes of music—perfectly matched to SPARK activities. The CD includes warm-up music, long and short music intervals (with 10 second breaks) for skill/fitness circuits, and 14 songs (cultural, current, country, and more!) to instruct SPARK Dances. “SPARK-Up” YOUR dance and rhythms program by purchasing this CD!

### **K-2 and 3-6 SPARKfolios:**

A SPARKfolio is filled with printed versions of the teaching aids from the Instructional Media Disc and includes the following:

- ✧ **Skill Cards:** Over 250 Skill Cards that graphically and/or verbally depict various skills throughout the curricula. Use them as visuals for students to make stations or help students create routines. Brightly colored cardstock and laminated. (English and Spanish)
- ✧ **Task Cards:** Over 50 Task Cards include instructions for individual, partner, and group *PACE (Physically Active Choices to Enjoy) Activities*. Use them to increase student-directed learning, gather assessment data, or for an instructional change of “PACE.” White cardstock for easy copying (English and Spanish).
- ✧ **Assessment Samples:** For each unit include *Performance Rubrics* and Student Self-Checks to document and guide learning. White cardstock for easy copying. (English and Spanish Student Self-Checks)
- ✧ **Home Play Activities:** A take home page to reinforce instruction and increase physical activity levels away from school. Enjoyable physically active challenges are on 1 side, and interesting facts are on the other. White cardstock for easy copying. (English and Spanish)
- ✧ **Expectation Cards:** Use as visuals when instructing/reinforcing PE and/or Recess behavioral expectations. Brightly colored cardstock and laminated. (English and Spanish)
- ✧ **Teacher Prompt Pages:** “Cheat Sheets” for teachers to provide cues for dances, walk/jog/running games, and various *Group Fitness* activities in grades 3-6 (e.g., stability balls, dynabands, bench steps, medicine balls, etc.). White cardstock and laminated.

### **Access to SPARKfamily.org**

SPARKfamily.org is a special, password-protected website where you can access a library of digital tools to support your elementary PE program. SPARKfamily members can:

- View video clips of SPARK activities
- Use interactive alignment and assessment tools
- Access hundreds of skill and task cards
- Receive helpful tips from SPARK’s Master trainers
- Watch innovative new ideas being done with students

A full year of access is *free* to anyone who purchases SPARK curriculum, participates in training, or orders a SPARK equipment set.

### **Middle School Manual:**

#### **(Received Prestigious Gold Ranking in Cooper Institute Study in 2005)**

The same team that brought the country SPARK PE also conducted a four-year NIH funded grant from 1996-2000 called M-SPAN (Middle School Physical Activity and Nutrition). M-SPAN showed that the SPARK curriculum and training programs for middle school PE specialists increased moderate to vigorous physical activity in middle school PE classes by almost 20%, and physical educators evaluated the workshop program extremely valuable. These findings are in the paper, “Student Activity Levels In Middle School Physical Education” which received the prestigious “Paper of the Year Award for 2000.”

Middle school physical educators say the SPARK 6-8 manual gives them new ideas and effective teaching tips on dealing with limited space and equipment, and large class sizes. This teachers' manual also provides a pathway towards instructional alignment (teaching to standards) and tools to help our site evolve our program in both content and instruction. More than 20 chapters and 400 pages provide scope and sequence for a variety of instructional units such as Golf, Frisbee and Softball. However, as with all SPARK PE programs, traditional activities and skill progressions have been highly modified to achieve greater participation, enjoyment, and increase in student activity levels. The easy to use 3-ring binder also provides a wide array of authentic sample assessment tools, a chapter on promoting activity away from PE class, even monthly "Action Alerts" that provide research-based tips to parents and the community.

### **High School Guidebook:**

The SPARK High School Guidebook is designed to enhance the professional development experience for workshop attendees and provide the curricular tools necessary to instruct health promoting PE classes. The Guidebook is not a comprehensive program or large binder like other SPARK manuals, rather it is a spiral-bound document of approximately 150 pages including: Sample standards-based lesson samples, a variety of authentic assessment tools, unit plans for lifelong activities (yoga, pilates, body shop, golf, etc.), and much more in an easy to understand, easy to implement format.

Note: Staff development is necessary to implement the SPARK HS program. HS guidebooks are only sold to schools that participate in SPARK training.

### **After School Manual:**

SPARK After School (AS) has been developed for all out of school PE physical activity programs (e.g., after school, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, Recreation Center, Day Care Center, or camps). SPARK After School has been shown to be effective for children and adolescents ages 5-14.

The AS manual is a three-ring binder with over 400 pages of reference and resource chapters, cooperative, cultural and aerobic games, dances from around the world, and fun skill development and sport activities. There are also chapters on jump rope, parachute play, jogging games, fitness circuits, and beanbag activities. The manual includes an extensive focus group survey to identify youth activity interests, practices, and barriers as well as many other reference and resource chapters (e.g., how to raise money for your program, promoting activity at home, etc.). SPARK AS is a practical document presented in a simple and easy to use format.

### **SPARK Coordinated School Health Initiative Programs and Materials:**

1. **Ignite a Healthy Environment:** Whether a school has just started down the path to wellness, or has already organized a School Health Advisory Council and completed the School Health Index, SPARK & Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC) (for more information on HKC see #3.) will assess your progress and work with you to create a healthy school environment that changes the behavior of your students and staff. A full day workshop is designed to introduce a district or school(s) to CSH concepts and components, via an interactive, team-building presentation. The training addresses what SPARK has identified as the "3 P's" of CSH Development: 1) Paradigm shift towards a wellness environment 2) Policies to support you CSH effort 3) Programs to provide resources, strategies, consultation and tools. This workshop doesn't just talk about the why and what, it shows your staff how to facilitate positive, lasting, change via simple, manageable actions! Topics include: a. best practices for creating an environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity b. successful policies and protocols c. ways to increase awareness d. advocacy for health e. ways to utilize the environment to teach/reinforce health and wellness behaviors f. skill building for making healthy choices a part of daily life. Colorful posters are provided as well as targeted handouts, and this program does not require a specific curricula.

2. Wellness for Staff: This SPARK program is designed to address “teacher-specific” health issues and offer authentic and effective prevention strategies. Healthy children are better learners and teachers who maintain a work/life balance have more energy, sleep better, and become healthy lifestyle role models for their students. The full day workshop is divided into three, 2-hour modules: 1. Physical activity, 2. Healthy food choices, and 3. Stress Reduction. The program is accompanied by a thorough and engaging collection of tools and handouts. A Wellness for Staff set of equipment is also available and recommended.
3. Nutrition Services: SPARK has selected **Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC)** as their exclusive Nutrition Services (and Healthy School Environment: Ignite a Healthy Environment) partner. HKC is a nationally recognized non-profit led by an exemplary team of registered, licensed dietitians with many years of school, program, and community wellness experience.

#### **Workshops:**

Each workshop is taught by a registered, licensed dietitian with extensive school-community nutrition experience. In advance of the workshop, we interview you to determine your audience, nutrition topic, outcomes you want to achieve, and customize the workshop accordingly. Pick your audience and topic! Here is a list of possible nutrition topics/options-easily customized for your specific needs and audience:

- A. Nutrition Education Across the Curriculum...Recipe for Success
  - a. Mix a measure of science with a slice of geography, add a fraction of math and pour a bit of time, sprinkle with a dollop of creativity. Shake until active! Final product: Nutrition Education Across the Curriculum...A Recipe for Success. Serves: All kids needs. Serving size: Unlimited!!!!
- B. My Pyramid 101
  - a. Make teaching the Food Pyramid fun and simple!
- C. Awesome Change in 15 Minutes or Less
  - a. 15-minute nutrition education activities for implementing throughout the school day
- D. Create Your Own
  - a. A workshop customized to meet your needs!

#### **Materials:**

Health Works Basic Kit: For grades PreK-8. This toolkit provides a set of seven Health Works booklets (24 pages each) and is designed to help school and community program wellness teams create campaigns and opportunities for awareness, education, and practice changes throughout the school environment

Each Health Works booklet focuses on one of the six healthy practices: Breakfast GO Power, Drink Think, Smart Servings, Snack Attack, Active Play, and Fruits and Veggies, Every Day the Tasty Way. As a bonus, the seventh booklet provides great ideas for teaching lessons learned from the U.S.D.A. MyPryamid.

Each booklet contains nutrition facts, tips, trivia, bulletin board ideas, classroom activities, take home messaging, school food service ideas, and MORE!

Health Works Resources: This is a resources only package -- designed to be used with Health Works Basic Kit or with many other nutrition education activities. Resources create a teaching tools package for cafeteria, classroom, after school, events, and more:

- Oversized dice for active play games
- Individual scarves for active play fun
- 6 traffic cones in MyPyramid colors
- 6 large scarves for displays, MyPyramid colors
- Cardboard food models of over 200 foods
- Fruit and veggie bean bag seedies, set of 12 total
- Rubber food model margarine pats, set of 15
- Measuring cups, spoons and drinking cups for portion sizing

Health Works Premier Kit: For grades PreK-8. This special kit includes all 7 booklets in the Basic Kit PLUS a set of teaching and Health Works Resources.

Wellness Solutions Toolkit: For grades PreK-8.

Wellness in a box! A complete set of school/program resource solutions to help kids and adults eat, move, and enjoy a healthy balance.

Healthy solution awareness and action ideas focus on six healthy practices: Breakfast GO Power, Drink Think, Smart Servings, Snack Attack, Active Play, and Fruits and Veggies, Every Day the Tasty Way.

Comes in a Healthy Kids Challenge backpack for easy carrying.

Toolkit includes:

- Pre-K materials: Berry, Berry Good Lessons
- K-5<sup>th</sup> grade materials: School Activity Kit, A la Cart Snack, A la Cart Breakfast, Food Museum, Setting Up for Success, Acting Up. Also included is the Basic Kit which is a set of 7 booklets with ideas for grades pre K-8.
- Wellness Team Guides: Take Health Action, the Quick Guide for Health Eating and Physical Activity, Kids C.A.N. Success Stories
- Event guides for family/community: Walk Through the Pyramid, Ready, Set, Cook, and Eat, and Dairy Dazzling Calcium Carnival.

Wellness Solutions Toolkit and Resources: For grades pre K-8. Wellness in a box! A complete set of school/program resource solutions to help kids and adults eat, move, and enjoy a healthy balance.

Healthy solution awareness and action ideas focus on six healthy practices: Breakfast GO Power, Drink Think, Smart Servings, Snack Attack, Active Play, and Fruits and Veggies, Every Day the Tasty Way.

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Toolkit includes:

- Pre-K materials: Berry, Berry Good Lessons
- K-5<sup>th</sup> grade materials: School Activity Kit, A la Cart Snack, A la Cart Breakfast, Food Museum,

Setting Up for Success, Acting Up. Also included is the Premier Kit which is a set of 7 booklets with ideas for grades pre K-8 and Health Works Resources.

- Wellness Team Guides: Take Health Action, the Quick Guide for Health Eating and Physical Activity, Kids C.A.N. Success Stories
- Event guides for family/community: Walk Through the Pyramid, Ready, Set, Cook, and Eat, and Dairy Dazzling Calcium Carnival.

Plus, this kit includes a set of the Health Works resources listed above!

**Distance Assistance Program:** HKC has tried and true experience with many schools. With HKC's help there is no need to re-invent the wheel or settle for poor outcomes for your time invested with wellness!

Audience: School wellness teams and/or coordinators, Grades K-12. Individual school teams recommended but we can work with district teams as well.

What you can expect:

- One complete school year of distance assistance to help guide and assist your school wellness team in creating a sustainable culture of health in your school.
- Your team will be assigned your own personal wellness resource coach, a Healthy Kids Challenge registered licensed dietitian, with expertise and years of working with schools and community groups in the area of school food service, child nutrition, school wellness policies, health and wellness in schools, and creating sustainable healthy change.
- Up to 10 hours of accessibility to your dietitian wellness resource coach by phone and E-mail
- An easy to use assessment for your wellness team and your dietitian resource coach to help guide assistance and action plans for creating healthy changes in your school.
- Web access to school wellness E-modules and resources, assessment and tracking logs to help guide your team meetings and wellness action plans for EFFECTIVE results. You are welcome to use as little or many of these as you wish, depending on your need for resources and actions you take! Topics:
  - Wellness Team Development
  - Wellness in Academics (classroom and after school)
  - Staff Wellness
  - Cafeteria and Beyond
  - Minutes of Motion through the Day
  - Parent and Community Connections
  - Awareness (Promoting Wellness)

For each of the above topics, there are six 2-4 page guides/resources. Your dietitian wellness resource will provide additional resources according to your needs and requests.

- Hard Copy Materials Provided: Wellness Solutions Toolkit and Resource Kit
- 9 Healthy Solution webinars optional use but included to attend live or archives may be used

*\*For more information on HKC, see Supplemental Healthy Kids Challenge information at the end of this document.*

4. **Health Education:** SPARK has selected **Health Lifestyle Choices (HLC)** as their exclusive Health Education partner. HLC is a cross-curricular program with a behavioral focus that provides a variety of scheduling/implementation program options for busy elementary teachers. HLC lessons can have their own “stand alone” time, or be integrated into other core subjects including the PE class. HLC meets all of the National Health Education Standards, is easy to use, requires few supplies, and every lesson includes an after school/summer camp activity. The comprehensive curriculum (one 3-ring binder per grade level) addresses goal setting and decision making as it relates to fitness, nutrition, conflict resolution, safety, and substance-abuse prevention.

HLC K-6 Grade: HLC’s behavioral health curriculum (grades K-6) empowers youth with the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices in six critical areas: Decision-making/goal setting, nutrition, fitness, violence prevention, safety, and substance abuse prevention.

Each grade-specific curriculum binder covers six units that include twenty-four 45 minutes lessons. The binders also include additional lesson boosting activities that can be used to strengthen and reinforce each lesson’s key message, as well as teacher assessment tools and student self-assessment and reflection exercises.

**Camp Boost:** Using ART, MUSIC, SKITS and GAMES, CAMP BOOST can have a positive impact on youth health prevention. The activities of CAMP BOOST are designed to give youth the opportunity to play, socialize, be active and engage in enrichment activities all while learning and practicing vital health skills.

Youth enrolled in out-of-school time programs can benefit from positive prevention, social, and health gains. CAMP BOOST, can address the growing problems of inactivity and poor nutrition, introduce new skills such as conflict resolution and contribute to the decline of injuries and substance abuse. Activities are developmentally appropriate for two age categories: 5-8 and 9-12 year olds.

Camp Boost is aligned to National Health Education Standards as well as National Standards for Art Education.

**Turtle Tykes:** Turtle Tykes introduces healthy behaviors to children ages 3-4 and can easily be integrated into a traditional preschool setting. It meets all curriculum guidelines for developmentally appropriate practices established by NAEYC.

Turtle Tykes has six units with five lessons in each unit, covering a 9-month school year. Lessons begin with a circle group activity, and include small and large group activities that offer social/emotional, cognitive and physical learning experiences. Also, each unit includes suggestions to reinforce key concepts in learning centers.

*\*For more information on HLC, see Supplemental Healthy Lifestyle Choices information at the end of this document.*

#### IV. Staff Development for all SPARK Programs:

SPARK workshops are designed and implemented to meet the particular needs of a school/school district; or public/private agency. To execute this targeted approach, SPARK conducts extensive formative analysis via needs assessments and phone interviews with site administrators and/or teacher/youth liaisons. Once sufficient information is gathered on facilities, equipment, teacher receptivity, status of current program quantity and quality, attendees' previous experiences and staff development in their focus area, and student demographics, the SPARK team prescribes a "focused" intervention and begins their training program.

a. Two Choices of Workshop Formats: SPARK provides 6 or 12 hours of instruction (Standard and Premium respectively). Workshops are conducted on dates and at times convenient for participating schools/agencies. SPARK has a staff of over 35 Certified Trainers nationwide, who travel to all corners of the globe.

b. SPARK Training Is Enjoyable and Effective: Regardless of program focus, every SPARK workshop is FUN and "hands-on." Participants learn by doing, and become motivated by a dynamic staff of professional presenters. Research shows participants feel more comfortable teaching physical education/physical activity because they have a user-friendly curriculum, the pedagogical skills to instruct effectively, enough age-appropriate equipment to use with their students, and a new found confidence in their abilities.

c. SPARK Awards Teachers and Offers a Unit of Credit: Participants receive handouts that are specially created to match the SPARK workshop design and focus, motivational prizes earned during the workshops, and Certificates of Completion. The school/agency receives a colorful SPARK Banner once the workshop series finishes (Premium) and participating teachers are eligible for a unit of credit (Premium) from San Diego State University.

## V. Follow-Up Support/Institutionalization for all SPARK Programs:

- a. SPARK Stars and Coordinated School Health: All SPARK trainers in every program are specially trained consultants who facilitate environmental change. Each SPARK workshop, Standard or Premium, is followed by a “SPARK Stars” meeting. These facilitators include the site PE teacher (or after school leader) the principal (or program director) a school nurse, a classroom teacher, a food service person, a concerned and involved parent (e.g. PTA President). SPARK leads a meeting of this “Coordinated School Health Committee” and discusses the “Three I’s”:
  1. **Infrastructure** needed to support quality activity and nutrition programs
  2. **Implementation** barriers -- and how to overcome them
  3. **Institutionalization** -- making SPARK work at each site and ensuring its sustainability
- b. SPARK Provides the Tools and Support to Succeed: SPARK Stars receive SPARK support materials at the training (web-based), a folder of important documents to help them achieve their goals, and the SPARK 800 number and e-mail for lifetime support and consultation. Additionally, SPARK clusters participants e-mails and sends monthly updates via an eNewsletter. This is SPARK’s effort to stay in touch, assist with problem solving, and remind attendees to stay on task implementing program concepts and methods. The SPARK website also has a “What’s New?” page encouraging educators to check in for monthly updates and a number of other free value adds. SPARK also conducts a monthly webinar for all SPARK Stars to assist with site-specific barriers to implementation. These webinars are held on the third Wednesday of every month at 3pm PST.

## VI. SPARK Train the Trainers Model:

To support each program, and to truly empower sites to institutionalize SPARK concepts and methods, SPARK offers a Training of Trainers (TT) Model. Note: **The TT is only an option after the original dose of SPARK workshops have been provided by a SPARK sanctioned trainer.**

### A. Steps to SPARK Certification:

1. A sanctioned SPARK trainer must conduct a workshop for/with potential TT's.
2. The TT candidate must spend significant time teaching children SPARK lessons. (At least 6 months per program)
3. Only exemplary educators with strong presentation skills should be selected to participate in the TT model, a full day session per program. Additionally, it is best if the TT model is conducted in conjunction with a SPARK Institute.
4. The next step is for the novice trainer to conduct workshop segments under the direction and mentoring of a SPARK Master Trainer until he/she is ready to solo.
5. Newly Certified Trainers conduct SPARK workshops (in their area of focus only) for her/his district and teachers.

The SPARK Training of Trainers model consists of a full day TT workshop where the attendees receive workshop agendas, task lists, PowerPoint presentations on CD, workshop copy masters, and all other tools needed to conduct SPARK workshops in any program. Also included is two-day registration and materials at a SPARK Institute, lifetime follow up support for each trainer with evaluation tools and feedback, and copyright permission to be able to conduct SPARK workshops independently within a pre-determined geographical region.

Should the TT candidate not be able to attend a SPARK Institute, SPARK can send a trainer to any area to conduct the session(s) there. This is often done in conjunction with an already scheduled trip (e.g., SPARK workshop one day, SPARK TT the following day) to reduce transportation costs.

## VII. SPARK Institutes in All Programs:

SPARK hosts an extensive Institute (2-day, in-depth subject matter project) in each of its programs annually. These serve to train individuals nationwide who may have missed workshops at their site, train new individuals from sites already trained in SPARK, and to provide a more thorough dose of SPARK for our Train the Trainers candidates. These are conducted in San Diego and the dates vary from year to year.

## VIII. Selected Research Papers:

### Selected References:

1. Marcoux, M.F., Sallis, J. F., McKenzie, T. L., Marshall, S., Armstrong, C. A., & Goggin, K. (1999). Process evaluation of a physical activity self-management program for children: SPARK. Psychology and Health, 14, 659-677.
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## IX. Supplemental SPARK Grant Language

### 1. SPARK Professional Development

The professional (staff) development (i.e., inservice training) of physical educators and other providers of physical activity is important for many reasons. For example, PE has been identified as one of only five interventions strongly recommended for increasing physical activity by the National Task Force on Community Preventive Service (Kahn et al., 2002). While physical education is mandated in most countries, neither the quantity nor quality of current programs meets professional expectations (Puhse & Gerber, 2005). Over time, innovations are developed, but there is often no way to disseminate these efficiently. Meanwhile, there is a large turnover of teachers (about 14% annually in the USA), and in many locations classroom teachers have responsibility for physical education classes. With the growing concerns of sedentary living, it is critical that children and adolescents receive quality physical education programs and that instructors be properly trained. While staff development is one method for helping teachers remain current, there are few papers available that describe efforts to bring innovation to the physical activity field via staff development.

Staff development is a collaborative effort (Garet et al., 2001). Children are the main targets or recipients of innovations which are typically initiated by university researchers, but university personnel and children rarely meet face-to-face. Rather, successful staff development consist of a series of extended collaborations involving program innovators, program disseminators, school personnel (from school boards to district superintendents to teachers, the implementers of the program), and to the main recipients of programs, children (see Table 1).

Table 1. Categories of collaboration in SPARK staff development

Personnel	School Personnel	End Recipients
<u>1. Development</u>	District administrators	Children
University personnel	School principals	Parents
- interventionists	PE specialists	
- measurement	Classroom teachers	
- support	Food service personnel	
<u>2. Dissemination</u>	Support staff	
SPARK personnel		
- promotion		
- delivery and support		
- workshop trainers		
- business office		

Staff development has been defined, in a narrow sense, as efforts to improve teachers' knowledge, skills, and attitudes so that they perform their roles more effectively" (Gall & Vojtek, 1994, p. 1). It typically includes attempts to get instructors to reflect on their work, improve teaching skills and strategies, and implement specialized programs. On the other hand, professional development with innovative programs and instructional methods, is more complicated; it involves additional stages that take place after the program has been developed and tested. These stages, sometimes referred to as dissemination, adoption, implementation, and institutionalization, are integrated and often overlap. In general, dissemination involves efforts to make teachers aware of innovations and eventually to adopt them; adoption refers to teachers making a commitment to a new

program (e.g., planning and buying materials); implementation is the process of teachers actually incorporating the program into their classes; and institutionalization is the integration of the program into overall school policies and practice—which is important for sustainability. From a public health point of view, there is little sense in developing and researching solid health-related PE programs if they do not become disseminated. Stone et al. (1998) reviewed studies of physical activity interventions in schools and communities, and found that few focused on the efficacy of staff development related to health-related physical education. One of the most widely evaluated programs was SPARK (Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids), a program that continues to expand and be disseminated. The purpose of this presentation, then, is to describe professional development efforts to disseminate SPARK, a research-based, health-related, physical education curriculum and staff development program.

A goal of SPARK staff development is to consistently deliver a standardized implementation package (to teachers, schools, districts). This involves consistency with the curriculum, staff development and training, on-site support visits, educational materials, and physical activity supplies and equipment. Because schools are contextually different, it is important to accommodate some local variability in order to provide acceptability and promote the adoption of SPARK. As a result, the staff development process must be carefully monitored to ensure standardization and high quality. The strategies used in SPARK can provide a viable model for others wishing to do staff development and assess dissemination efforts.

## 2. Overview of the SPARK Programs

SPARK began as a research-based elementary physical education program, but it now includes middle and high school physical education, programs for after-school recreation, early childhood, and coordinated school health (e.g., staff wellness, nutrition, and health). Developed from a public health view point (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991), the SPARK programs were designed in response to a societal need to combat decreases in physical activity that are accompanied by increases in childhood obesity and diabetes. Existing PE programs had not been thoroughly evaluated to document their effects on health-related variables, so new approaches had to be designed (Sallis & McKenzie, 1991). SPARK was concerned with increasing physical activity during PE, and from for a public health viewpoint focused on promoting the generalization of physical activity beyond classes to become a component of an active lifestyle.

SPARK was initiated in 1989 with a large grant (7 years) to San Diego State University (Dr. Jim Sallis, PI) from the National Institutes of Health to develop and evaluate a health-related PE program for upper elementary students. The initial SPARK program consisted of a PE curriculum designed to provide ample amounts of physical activity in class, a behavioral self-management curriculum to promote physical activity outside of school, and extensive teacher training and support. The investigators later received another large grant (MSPAN: Middle School Physical Activity and Nutrition; 1996-2000) from NIH to further develop and assess physical activity and improved eating interventions on middle school campuses.

The promising results of these projects convinced the developers that the programs could contribute to improvements in the quality and quantity of physical activity in schools and recreation centers throughout the US. In 1993, an enterprise was established within San Diego State University to disseminate SPARK on a non-profit basis. Over time, the dissemination efforts began to exceed the capacity of an academic institution, and in October 2002, SDSU licensed the program to SPORTIME, a member of the School Specialty family of companies. School Specialty is an education company that is publicly traded on NASDAQ. Paul Rosengard, current SPARK Executive Director, who gained extensive experience writing SPARK curricula, teaching SPARK lessons, and conducting staff development sessions during the initial and subsequent interventions, continues to direct this effort.

### 3. Initial Research on the SPARK Programs

Initial SPARK studies involved randomizing schools to control and treatment conditions, and then comparing results from schools that implemented SPARK programs with those that did not. The results of numerous studies are presented in peer-reviewed publications, and there is evidence of success with the following variables:

- \* Physical activity (McKenzie et al. 1997, 2004; Sallis et al., 1997, 2003)
- \* Physical fitness (Sallis et al., 1997)
- \* Motor skill development (McKenzie et al., 1998)
- \* Academic achievement (Sallis et al., 1999)
- \* Adiposity (Sallis et al., 1993)
- \* Student enjoyment of SPARK (McKenzie et al., 1994)
- \* Lesson context and teacher behavior (McKenzie et al., 1997; 2004)
- \* Process measures (e.g., self-management, parent behavior) (Marcoux et al., 1999)
- \* Program maintenance and institutionalization (Dowda et al., 2005; McKenzie et al., 1997)

### 4. Current Dissemination Efforts

Under corporate sponsor SPORTIME, the SPARK Programs now operates under a business model with 25 full-time employees and nearly 70 staff total working on different teams related to specific tasks: development, dissemination, delivery, and special projects. In 2008, SPARK trainers conducted 750 workshops and made 55 conference presentations. These trainers are the ‘face’ of SPARK and are primarily responsible for conducting workshops. Trainers are experienced instructors (most with masters degrees, many are former state or national teachers of the year), who have implemented SPARK themselves, then participated in extensive training. They function under policies and procedures identified in the “SPARK Trainer Manual.” Part of becoming “certified” as a trainer includes participating in SPARK workshops, assisting master trainers conduct programs, and assessing their own instruction using videotape analysis. After conducting 20 workshops successfully (e.g., high evaluations from participants) and meeting other established criteria, certified trainers may advance in status to “Master Trainer” and subsequently to “Elite Trainer.” These levels bring about increased pay and responsibility. For example, elite trainers may be called upon to present at professional conferences, conduct awareness presentations to high level decision makers, lead media or special events, or respond to other public speaking needs.

The dissemination process is a comprehensive effort that involves providing curricula, staff development services, and coordinated equipment sets to schools, school districts, and other entities on a contractual basis. The development program includes consultation and a needs analysis, SPARK manuals and materials, initial staff development sessions, follow up services, and equipment. The purpose of a comprehensive approach is to establish a supportive infrastructure at a school or recreation site. After testing numerous delivery options, SPARK now provides two alternatives for in-service training: standard and premium.

The standard program includes 6 face-to-face hours with teachers (1 full-day or 2 half-day workshops) and the premium program includes 12 instructional hours (2 full days or 4 half-days). SPARK also provides additional training and materials for a facilitator (i.e., SPARK Star), who agrees to be an enthusiastic lead person at each school or recreation site. This on-site facilitator (often a PE specialist, assistant principal, or grade-level coordinator) helps the program succeed by overcoming infrastructure and implementation barriers and by institutionalizing SPARK. SPARK regularly provides follow-up services to schools, and the “SPARK Star” serves as the initial main contact.

Specific goals of inservice workshops are to: (a) improve instructors’ motivation to implement the curricula, (b) help them comprehend, use, and adapt the carefully planned lessons and units provided in the curricula, (c)

improve their instructional and class management skills so they can teach more effectively, and (d) function in an overall manner to increase children's moderate to vigorous physical activity levels before, during, and after school. The workshops are "hands-on," with participants engaging actively in the lesson segments, skills, and activities that they will eventually teach. Participants engage in activities from the curriculum so they become familiar and comfortable with the material, and simultaneously through structured modeling by the trainers, they develop pedagogical skills to teach more effectively.

## 5. Assessing the SPARK Staff Development Model

As identified earlier, a dissemination goal is to consistently deliver a high quality, standardized implementation package. The physical education that children eventually receive depends heavily on their own teachers' willingness and ability to incorporate SPARK into their programs, and these two factors are related to the quality of the SPARK staff development program. In addition to having a well-researched curriculum that is delivered by certified trainers under similar contractual conditions, SPARK includes numerous process evaluation strategies. The evaluation procedures provide important information concerning aspects of program delivery by identifying what works or does not and by pinpointing strengths and limitations (Marcoux et al, 1999; McKenzie et al, 1994).

SPARK includes both formal and informal strategies for assessing staff development. Formal strategies include participants completing a "Workshop Evaluation Form" and a "Presenter Evaluation Form" for each workshop. These forms are mailed to the SPARK office in San Diego for analysis, and the information is used to modify future workshop content and procedures and to provide feedback to individual trainers. Formal evaluations sometimes also include structured interviews with teachers after they have implemented the programs. Informal evaluations include follow-up conversations by SPARK full-time staff with workshop trainers and teachers and their administrators.

While process evaluations during dissemination are used most often for internal purposes, such as making immediate adjustments to workshop delivery and instructional procedures, two larger examples are provided here for illustrative purposes. These are formal evaluations that used data from workshops conducted during 1999-2001 (McKenzie et al., 2003). Numerous analytic techniques were used, including ANOVA, t-test, and Games-Howell methods. In study one, questionnaires completed after professional development sessions were analyzed to determine whether participants' (N=1500 teachers from 257 schools) perceptions of session components differed by: (a) program grade level (K-2 vs. 3-6); (b) teacher type (PE specialists vs. classroom teachers); (c) year of in-service; (d) which of 16 certified trainers delivered the workshop, and (e) level of in-service. Teachers rated sessions on 12 variables using a 1-5 Likert-type scale and responded to open-ended questions. Over the three years, mean responses on all 12 variables were high (ranging from 4.5 to 5.0) and standard deviations were low, indicating teachers were highly favorable toward session components. Low scores were generally related to uncontrollable environmental variables (e.g., space, temperature). Few statistical differences were evidenced among independent variables, however, classroom teachers reported receiving more new information than PE specialists ( $p=.001$ ). In study two, 421 teachers from 72 schools in nine states completed follow-up questionnaires after implementing SPARK with their children. They responded to 12 questions on a 1-7 Likert-type scale and to open-ended questions. Means for all 12 variables were high (ranging from 4.7 to 6.8), indicating teachers were positive toward the program and its implementation. There were few statistically significant differences by grade level, teacher type, and year. PE specialists, however, found it easier to implement the curriculum than classroom teachers (mean= 6.38 vs. 5.48,  $p=.002$ ). Overall, teachers were highly supportive of both staff development and the program they adopted. There were few differences on variables by year of implementation, teacher type, and grade level, suggesting the program was highly generalizable and continued to be found suitable and well liked by teachers.

Finding few differences in responses between classroom teachers and PE specialists was important. In 1989 SPARK developers were well aware that much of PE in elementary schools was delivered by classroom teachers

who often had little background in the subject matter. They began to make considerations in the (a) curricula and supporting materials (e.g., unit and lesson content and sequencing, provision of management and instructional strategies, provision of precise instructional cues), (b) the content and conduct of training workshops, and in (c) the 8 strategies needed for the program to be sustained in schools after SPARK personnel left. Some of classroom teachers' concerns and how they were met by SPARK have been described by Faucette and colleagues (Faucette, Nugent, Sallis, & McKenzie, 2002).

Another example of a formal assessment, this time by outside evaluators, was recently published (Dowda et al., 2005). In this study, the sustainability of SPARK was evaluated in 111 elementary schools in seven US states. Surveys, developed and compiled by an independent evaluator, were mailed to schools that had received SPARK curriculum materials, training, and follow-up (response rate=47%). Up to 80% of schools that had adopted SPARK PE reported sustained use of the program four years later. Schools using SPARK held more frequent PE classes. Sustained use of the program was related to support provided by the school principal, not previously having a standard PE program, having adequate equipment available, and the teachers themselves being physically active. Program sustainability was similar in advantaged and disadvantaged schools.

## 6. SPARK Awards & Honors

**When you provide a true, programmatic approach to environmental change and prove it works and lasts, opportunities, recognition and honors follow.**

Below is a brief sample of the awards that The SPARK Programs have received over the years:

- SPARK was cited in the U.S. Surgeon General's Report as a "School-based solution to our nation's health care crisis."
- SPARK has been validated by the U.S. Department of Education and earned "Exemplary Program" status.
- SPARK has received the "Governor's Commendation" award for improving the health of California's youth.
- SPARK earned "Gold" rankings from a Cooper Institute funded study examining effective U.S. activity and health interventions. SPARK was the **only** program to achieve the highest level for K-8 physical education.
- SPARK was identified by the HSC Foundation as a successful model for combating childhood obesity in their report [Fighting Obesity: What Works, What's Promising](#).
- SPARK was identified by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) as a national model for programs designed to increase physical activity and combat childhood obesity in their report [School-Based Physical Education: An Action Guide](#).
- SPARK was chosen as a "Selected School-Based Intervention" in the report [Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance](#) by the National Academy of Sciences

## 7. Summary

The SPARK programs were developed and tested in response to a public health need. Sedentary living is a global public concern and innovative programs are needed for schools and other entities concerned with physical activity promotion. Schools are in a position to be a cost-effective resource to combat inactivity, but innovations are needed and school personnel need support and retraining to implement them. Few models for the dissemination of research-based activity interventions are available. Results of follow-up studies in the field suggest the SPARK programs continue to be effective and that current staff development strategies are successful. The strategies used provide a viable model for others wishing to implement and evaluate dissemination efforts.

## Selected References

(these correspond to the papers cited on the first page)

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## X. Supplemental Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC) Information

### 1. Evaluation

Healthy Kids Challenge will recommend evaluation based on your customized needs and plans.

- Workshop participants will be surveyed for self-efficacy, attitude for change, and ask to identify actions they will take.
- For Wellness teams, the Healthy Kids Challenge assessment (titled Call to Action) will provide a measure of pre- and post- changes made in policies, practices, and environment.
- Other evaluation, based on your actions taken, may include: process, formal evaluation for self-efficacy and attitudes (surveys), informal evaluation (quotes).

### 2. Research & Background

HKC is a nationally recognized 501(c)3 nonprofit led by registered licensed dietitians with years of school, program and community wellness experience. For over 10 years, HKC has pioneered the path of onsite and distance assistance. Through workshops, distance assistance, materials, events, and Web site, Healthy Kids Challenge (HKC) helps school, community, business, and health leaders take action for kids to eat, move, and enjoy a healthy balance.

HKC's expertise and experience has led to the development of notable programs including:

- Collaborative development of a community dietetics experience and mentorship program at Kansas State University
- Collaborative development of a pharmacy student community experience at the University of Colorado.
- Work with prominent health foundations in at least 4 states; development of multi-year, grant funded wellness initiatives.
- Long-standing training and collaborative development for school health and community nutrition health promotion for the Platte County Health Department.
- Best practices and outcomes provided to state departments of health and CDC for creating a model for sustainable healthy change in schools, childcare facilities and community settings.
- A "wellness makeover" for a Wisconsin summer Girl Scout camp.
- Selected as most sustainable grant effort from National Dairy Council
- Selected by General Mills and American Dietetic Association as the template program for their General Mills Champion Grant Program.

The Healthy Kids Challenge program is based on the social cognitive theory. The application of social cognitive theory to health promotion and behavioral change is the model for HKC evaluation. Social cognitive theory seeks to affect health knowledge, self-regulatory skills (motivation and decision-making), and self-efficacy (confidence level) by offering programs that work through these components. The Healthy Kids Challenge "Hear-See-Do" focus emphasizes commitment to promote both passive and active learning within every aspect of the program. HKC recognizes the impact of social support on children's attainment of the desired immediate outcomes (health knowledge, self-regulatory skills, and self-efficacy) and eventually better health outcomes.

Social cognitive theory holds that social-environmental contingencies, personal cognitive capabilities, and behavioral skills are linked and interact (Bandura 1977,1986). Interventions based on this theory target each of these components to influence the adoption of a new health-enhancing behavior (Perry,

Story, & Lytle, 1997). Specifically, Bandura (1997) has recommended four components for programs to promote health behaviors: an informational component to increase knowledge, a component to teach self-regulatory skills, a component to increase self-efficacy (confidence level) in self-regulatory skills, and a component to increase social support for behavior change. HKC actively pursued this model when designing the program model and all four components are enacted through the HKC “Hear, See, Do” methodology.

Studies present evidence of success with the following variables which are components of HKC programs:

- Nutrition information. The type of information provided to participants in order to increase knowledge and facilitate motivation is critical. Information that is understandable, personally and culturally relevant, and that increases one’s knowledge about the particular behaviors associated with poor health outcome is more helpful than general health information (e.g., prevalence or etiology of a particular disease) (Fisher & Fisher, 2000).
- Self-regulatory. Teaching self-regulatory skills is an important component. Teaching self-regulatory skills can be accomplished by providing social models who themselves are successful at engaging in healthy behaviors. Increasing self-efficacy about the ability to apply these skills in everyday life can solidify these skills.
- Self-efficacy (confidence in being able to achieve wellness goals). Teaching self-efficacy involve having children understand realistic goal setting and rehearse or practice the behaviors that lead to the ability to practice health promoting behaviors.
- Social support. Components of the social cognitive theory have been widely applied and tested among community and school-based interventions designed to promote health behaviors in children and adolescents (Botvin, Eng, & Williams, 1980; Perry, Kelder, & Klepp, 1994; Perry, Killen, Telch, Slinkar, & Danaher, 1980). An extensive body of research has documented that self-efficacy is an important mediator of health behavior (e.g., Colletti, Supnick, & Payne, 1985; Condiotte & Lichtestein, 1981; Holman & Lorig, 1992; Strecher, DeVellis, Becker, & Rosenstock, 1986). Thus, although the model itself is difficult to test (Fisher & Fisher, 2000), empirical support for components of the model and the usefulness of the model in designing health promotion programs is well documented.

In addition, HKC incorporates the components of comprehensive, coordinated school health education advocated by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Association of State Boards of Education and others:

- Advocates for comprehensive school health education suggest that in addition to developing health curriculum, school-based health services, and health-enhancing environments, comprehensive programs also need to include the development of health policy, community partnerships, providing healthy food services, offering counseling, providing physical education, and offering health promotion for staff and faculty (Allensworth & Kolbe, 1987). In this light, HKC has positioned itself as a flexible and broad-based intervention that aims to give kids access to health information and healthy role models in all aspects of the community to encourage healthy living as a habit. HKC has worked to incorporate education and encouragement of teacher and staff health choices in order to truly alter the attitudes and behaviors of the community interacting with the children.

### 3. Results

#### Action-Based Workshops

Using a Likert-like scale, HKC's trainings and presentations are consistently rated "exceptional" or "better than expected".

Demonstrated Action: County health educators made follow-up visits to childcare participants in their facilities 1 week after a HKC training and found a high confidence level for making changes and actions taken, including healthier food options, policy enhancements, parent connections, and healthy messages. "We are so excited...." Platte County Health Department Educator.

Easy to Use Information: "I loved that activities were easy directions, things you could learn quickly." Teacher, Concordia Missouri

#### Year-long Distance Assistance and Support Program

Schools participate at their own level of readiness and needs. For example, some teams start with a well developed team and others have not been developed. Following are some results from Orlando, FL schools that opted to participate in yearlong distance assistance and support.

Of 20 Orlando Schools participating in HKC's year-long assistance and support program –

- **64%** Started or enhanced (or expanded) a KidLink team
- **71%** Started or expanded healthy eating options (classroom, vending, school store, etc.)
- **64%** Added minutes of physical activity to the day
- **57%** Started or expanded a staff wellness plan
- **86%** Started or expanded staff participation in wellness actions
- **64%** Started or expanded school food service actions (i.e., marketing to increase participation)
- **86%** Started or increased nutrition education

#### Materials

HKC resources have been tested by teachers for usability and perceived educator value. Resources are developed with teachers by Healthy Kids Challenge dietitians, with health promotion experience working with schools and communities dating by to the 1990's.

*"It is extremely important to build awareness for a healthy lifestyle. By making it interactive for the children I think it is easier for them to grasp. This is also easily maintained. This program has helped me a lot! It's given me so many tools in order to increase physical activity and healthy eating in my school. These changes are only the beginning; there is so much we can do! The changes will continue because of the success we have had with them as well, healthy change will continue to grow and improve."* PE Teacher, River Oaks Elementary, Virginia

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#### 5. Awards & Honors

Healthy Kids Challenge is a recipient of the American Dietetic Association's Anita Owen Award for Most Innovative Educational Program and the C.A.N. and the Advertising Council -Community Action Network (CAN) Community Action Networks Service Award Honoring the Media & Corporate Communities for Outstanding Solutions to Social Problems.

Cooking Light named HKC one of the "Top 12 Change Makers in Nutrition" over the past 25 years. A Cooper Clinic study awarded HKC a "Silver" ranking for programming.

## XI. Supplemental Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) Information

### 1. Results

The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) conducted a three-year evaluation of HLC programming and documented the following outcomes:

- A. Children exposed to HLC programming have significantly higher health knowledge than peers without HLC.** In fact, children with vastly different standardized test scores achieved comparable scores in the HLC Health Literacy Challenge after multi-year exposure.
- B. Children are putting their health knowledge into action.** Multiple qualitative assessments show students exhibiting fewer behavioral problems in the classroom, eating more nutritious foods at lunchtime and playing more safely on campus. An online survey of 99 teachers found that 72% had observed some profound changes in at least one student attributed to HLC, and 69% said HLC is impacting, in part or fully, the overall academic achievement of their students.
- C. HLC's Healthy School Culture Program increased school climate scores over a two-year period.** In a pilot with six public schools (3 urban/3 suburban), participants showed increases in 25 of 28 culture indicators including double-digit increases in 19 of 28 items.

The biggest gains in school climate included:

- **Clarity regarding acceptable behaviors (+ 29.2%)**
- **Teachers who do not have to yell to get students attention (+ 27.5%)**
- **Students who appear happy to be at school every day (+23.3%)**
- **Quality of student – staff relationships (+21.6%)**
- **Quality of parent – staff relationships (+20.3%)**

- D. Knowledge gains from HLC are translating to behavior change in the home.** In separate interviews with 77 parents and their children, parents indicated and children confirmed that 44% had advocated to help a family member quit smoking. Other significant behavior changes noted in the home include:

- **84% made positive changes in their eating habits**
- **71% were making safer choices in and around the home**
- **69% were exercising more**
- **51% had improved their relationships with friends and family**

### 2. Why implement HLC?

A comprehensive evaluation of six public school pilot sites (3 urban/3 suburban) produced incredible results in schools participating in HLC's curriculum and culture program. In pre and post culture surveys the program sustained, and in many cases, increased school climate scores within a two-year period. Participants showed increases in 25 of 28 culture indicators, including double-digit increases in 19 of 28 items, including:

- **Quality of staff to student relationships (+21.6%)**
- **Quality of staff to parent relationships (+20.3%)**
- **Clarity regarding acceptable behaviors (+29.2%)**
- **Teachers who did not have to yell to get students attention (+27.5%)**
- **Students who appear happy to be at school each day (+23.3%)**

Positive behaviors practiced at school are making their way into the home. Interviews with 77 parents documented the following significant behavior changes in their children:

- **84% made positive changes in their eating habits**
- **71% were making safer choices around the home**
- **69% were exercising more**
- **51% had improved their relationships with family and friends**
- **44% had advocated to help a family member quit smoking**

### 3. HLC Scope & Sequence

To see a sample of HLC Scope & Sequence go to:

<http://www.sparkpe.org/coordinated-school-health/health-education/>