

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Community Action Model
Topic: Healthy Schools and Daycares

Before starting the model, identify: who is/should be at the table?

- Kids
- Parents
- School administrators
- Community development corporations
- Neighbors
- Foster homes
- Churches
- Community centers
- Nonprofits
- Etc.

Step 1: What are the issues in the community (or communities)?

- Healthy food
- Indoor air quality (in schools)
- Means of transportation
- Safer sidewalks/walks home from school
- Police response time in the neighborhood
- Children “playing hooky”
- Other issues that have an effect on schools and daycares; such as lack of grocery stores, access to health clinics, and neighborhood watch.

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Step 2: What solutions can address these issues?

- Introduce a major grocery store chain with healthier food options.
 - May have to work up to this through community gardens, school gardens, smaller grocery chains, and other ways to develop/demonstrate a need for grocery stores in the community.
 - Facilitator mentioned a project where 8th graders mapped the food options in their community. This project was inexpensive, got kids involved in the issues facing their community, and provided useful information to the community and others.
- Truancy officers to address school skipping. Must consistently call in those you see skipping to demonstrate a need to the police department. Important to document skipping.
- Police response times
 - Previously, in one of the communities represented, there was a neighborhood block captain program. One community member felt like it didn’t help because the police never showed up on time. Program was discontinued.

Community Forum Session: Initiating Action

Facilitated by: Leann Bing

- Again, it is important to keep consistency with these types of programs. As the group becomes more consistent and steady, they will be seen as more of a legitimate player in the community.
- Walk home from school. Similar to the neighborhood block captain program, a walk home from school program was established and discontinued in the same community. There must have systems in place to offer the program at regular schedules.
- Install school and community gardens.

Step 3: What are the health benefits of above mentioned solutions?

- Less risk of accidents involving pedestrians -> due to existence/availability of sidewalks.
- Lower obesity rate and increased exercise rate in children -> due to increased walking to and from school, healthy food access, etc.
- Safer streets -> due to police response, availability of sidewalks, increased school participation, etc.
- Less crime -> due to safer neighborhoods.

Step 4: How will it be measured?

- Car accident rate during school hours.
- Obesity rates among school aged children.
- Average exercise/week for children.
- Crime rate.

Forum Discussions and Issues

- Grants (such as Michelle Obama's SaladBars2Schools) exist that could help establish healthy food options in schools.
- How to get more involvement in the community?
 - Community meetings – regularly scheduled, active organization.
 - Widening the definition of “community” to include a greater number of people.
 - Invite the police to relevant community meetings. Find common ground and work with them to produce results.

Action Steps Proposed

- Start recruiting people to help walk children home from buses again
- Set up Dance 411 in the community, maybe get some martial arts classes as well.
- Get speakers to community to educate community members.
- Answer how the environment influences children's health; prioritize goals.
- Preserve pollinators (important for gardens).
- Help facilitate follow-up for 555 or other community groups.