

Health Promotion in the Community

Childhood Obesity Prevention Interventions in the Community:

Children's Hospital Los Angeles (CHLA), in partnership with the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, is working on a grant called Choose Health LA Kids, sponsored by First 5 LA. The Choose Health LA Kids initiative provides activities around nutrition and physical activity, advocacy work and environmental change in underserved communities, to help prevent early childhood obesity. Preschool-aged children who are obese run four times the risk of becoming obese as adults compared to their normal weight counterparts^{1,2}. Research also shows a strong relationship between obesity and the development of chronic health issues including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer and early mortality^{1,3}. To help combat this significant public health concern, nutrition and public health experts from the Division of General Pediatrics/USC University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) at CHLA under the leadership of Larry Yin, MD, MSPH have developed community-based nutrition interventions to help improve healthy habits in the underserved communities they serve.

CHLA has developed partnerships with community centers and community leaders throughout Los Angeles County to help expand their influence on healthy lifestyle changes. By developing this network of partners, CHLA has been successful in reaching more community members by meeting them where they are; eliminating barriers such as lack of transportation, lack of time, and fear of new settings. The hospital delivers nutrition interventions through healthy parenting workshops, food demonstrations and grocery store tours, all free of cost. The healthy parenting workshops provide nutrition and parenting education and allow parents to connect and share their experiences. The food demonstrations show parents how healthy cooking can be easy and affordable. Each food demonstration is an opportunity for parents to win a set of ingredients to replicate the meals at home. This approach eliminates the cost factor to facilitate learning while prepare a new meal. Families have been successful in recreating the meals at home and were likely to make them a second time. The adult-oriented grocery store tours and child-oriented grocery store tours expose participants to healthy choices as they explore the store. Adult-focused tours teach parents how to choose healthier options in the store by reading food labels, comparing products and understanding how food and beverage marketing works. The child-focused tours expose preschoolers to fruits, vegetables and dairy items by making them the consumers, equipped with a grocery list and shopping bag. These tours have shown in an increase in preschoolers' identification of snacks that are not good for them. In addition to nutrition education, CHLA is also working with underserved communities to encourage behavior change through a parent collaborative by working with parents to advocate for healthier food and beverage marketing in grocery stores and healthy menu options in restaurants.

1. U.S. Center for Disease Control National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion Division of Nutrition Physical Activity and Obesity (CDC). Obesity among low-income preschool children. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/PedNSSFactSheet.pdf>. Accessed May 18, 2016.
2. Freedman DS, Kettel LK, Serdula MK, Dietz WH, Srinivasan SR, Berenson GS. The relation of childhood BMI to adult adiposity: The Bogalusa Heart Study. *Pediatrics*. 2005; 115(1): 22-27. PMID: 15629977.
3. Kelsey MM, Zaepfel A, Bjornstad P, Nadeau KJ. Age-related consequences of childhood obesity. *Gerontology*. 2014; 60(3): 222-228. doi: 10.1159/000356023.

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Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Health Promotion:

Founded in 1968, Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organization dedicated to providing opportunities for people with intellectual disabilities. With more than 4.7 million athletes from 169 countries, Special Olympics brings together people from around the world to join together and demonstrate their strength.¹ In providing Olympic-like sports events and health education and exams, Special Olympics works to raise awareness and change the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. The Special Olympics Healthy Athletes program was developed to ensure these athletes receive health screenings and wellness education to support healthier lifestyle choices. In providing these services, Special Olympics has become the world's largest public health organization with the largest database for individuals with intellectual disabilities.²

Professionals at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, within the Division of General Pediatrics/USC University Center of Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) volunteer their time and expertise as Clinical Directors for the Healthy Athletes Health Promotions Division for Southern California. They provide screenings and education for all Special Olympics athletes during the Southern California summer and winter games. These professionals were also the driving force behind the successful 2015 Special Olympics World Games Health Promotion assessments in Los Angeles, serving over 5,000 athletes from around the world. Their mission is to improve the quality of life and long term health of Special Olympics athletes through healthy behaviors, screenings and medical referrals, when appropriate.³ Through health education and free screenings, the Health Promotions Division provides athletes with increased knowledge and awareness regarding health related behaviors. Through interactive educational tools and displays, athletes learn about the importance of nutrition, sun safety, bone density, tobacco cessation and physical activity. With free screenings for bone density, blood pressure and body mass index (BMI), athletes are given an overview of their health status. While 200,000,000 people with intellectual disabilities are denied access to quality health services, Special Olympics, Healthy Athletes Health Promotions is working to change the lives of athletes, who might not otherwise receive care.³

1. Special Olympics. What We Do. http://www.specialolympics.org/Sections/What_We_Do/What_We_Do.aspx.
2. Special Olympics. Healthy Athletes. Providing Health Services Worldwide for the Most Underserved. http://www.specialolympics.org/healthy_athletes.aspx.
3. Special Olympics. Health Promotion. Clinical Director Manual. <http://media.specialolympics.org/resources/health/disciplines/health-promotion/manual/Clinical-Director-Manual.pdf>.