Healthy Living Starts Now!

BOOST Conference - 2011

Melissa Hanson – Säjai® Foundation

Overview

- The latest on Childhood Obesity
- Resources to check out
- Why should you focus on young children?
- Why should efforts be hands on?
- Example activities – Audience participation time!
- Best practice themes
- Building a successful action plan
- Discussion

What is the Säjai® Foundation?

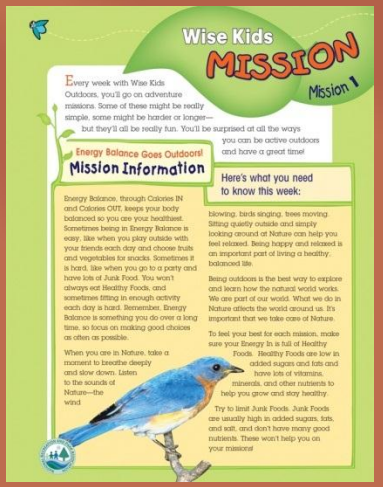
- National nonprofit organization working with community partners to teach children why to value and how to lead healthy lives by encouraging them to experience the outdoors, to be active and to make smart nutrition decisions

- Partners and experience:
  - National Recreation and Park Association
  - National Forum on Children and Nature
  - YMCA
  - Afterschool Alliance
  - Alliance for a Healthier Generation
  - Minnesota Children and Nature Connection
  - Minnesota SUTH

National Recreation and Park Association

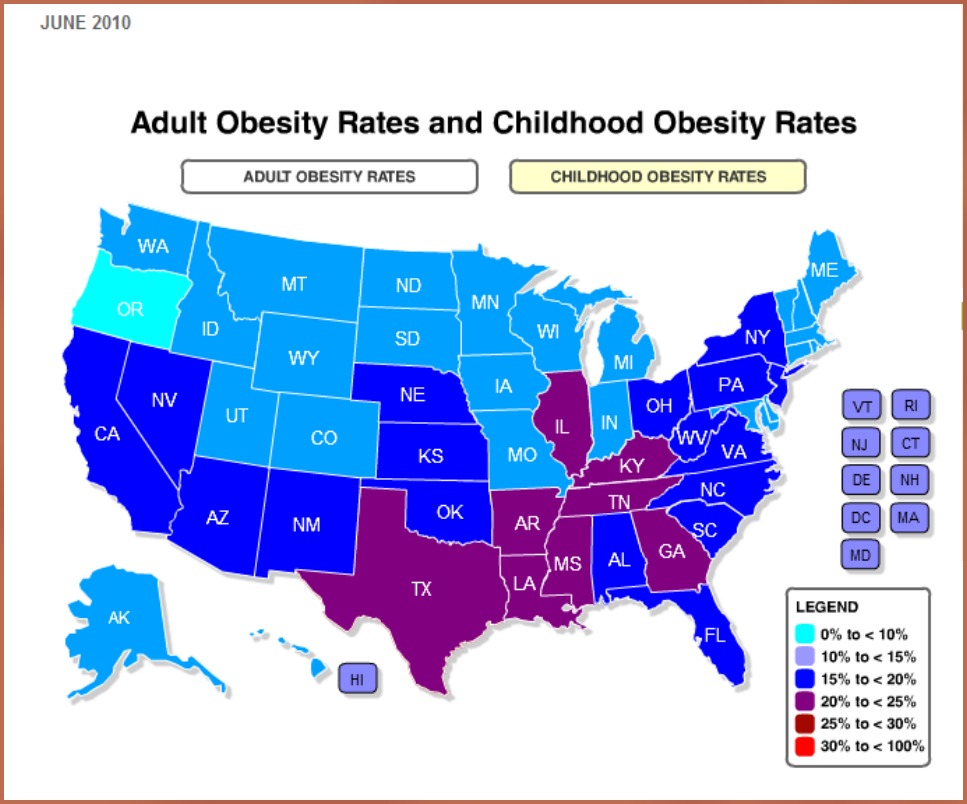
The Wise Kids® Programs

- Wise Kids® Family of Programs
  - Developed for programs in out-of school-time settings
  - Designed for children ages 6 to 11
  - Offered as turn-key kits for easy implementation



Childhood Obesity is a Crisis

- Recent study reveals state-by-state ranking
  - New color coding and ranking
  - Next measurement and reporting scheduled in 2011



Childhood Obesity is a Crisis!

- ✓ 20 states have passed requirements for BMI measurement and reporting in children
- ✓ Cholesterol medication prescribed for children as young as 8 years old
- ✓ Compared to overweight and obese children physically fit children did better on tests of English Language Arts (ELA) and Standardized Math Tests (NYC Vital Signs, June 2009, Volume 8, No.1)
- ✓ Obese students, compared with those of normal weight, are 20 percent more likely to have persistent feelings of hopelessness.
- ✓ Research shows 1/3 of children and teens are considered overweight or obese however 84% of parents feel their child is at a healthy weight

What Unhealthy Trends Do We See?

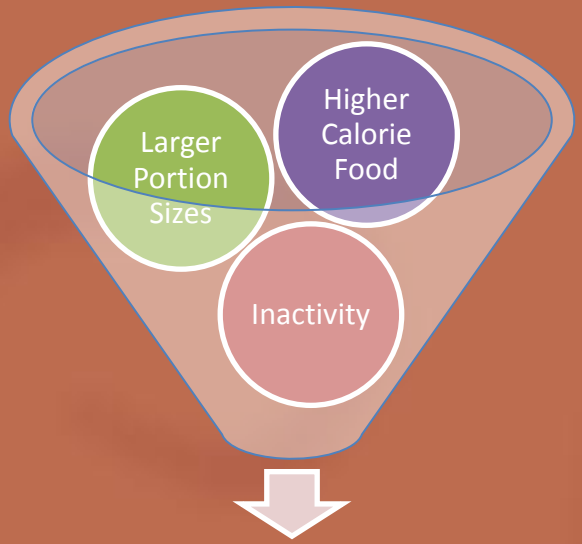
- Screen time or “media time” has increased to 7.5 hours per day
- 1 in 5 school-aged children have up to 6 snacks per day
  - The majority have 3 snacks per day
- On average we eat 31% more calories than we did 40 years ago
- 18.4% of children are active 60 minutes or more per day 7 days per week
- 23.1% of children DO NOT participate in at least 60 minutes of activity on any day of the week
- 34% of youth ages 6-17 take part in outdoor activities less than 2 times per month

What Healthy Trends Do We See?

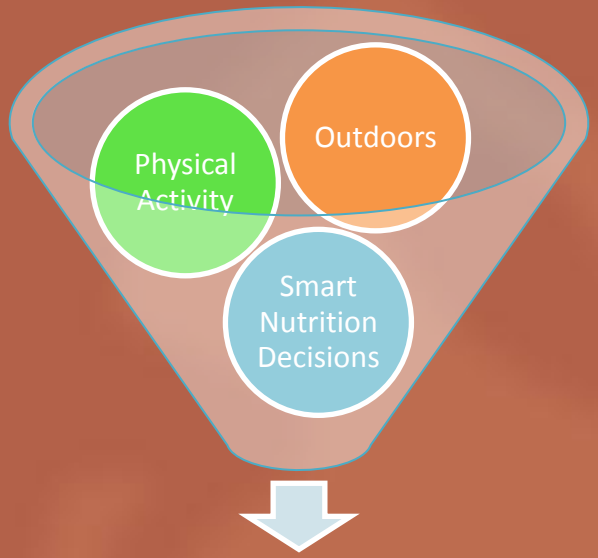
- In 2009, participation in youth ages 6-12 continued to decline with only 62% of children participating in any type of outdoor recreation
  - The rate of decline slowed to only a -2% loss
- 80% of American's recognize childhood obesity is a significant and growing challenge for the country
  - Let's Move campaign; Media coverage; Research
- 50% of Americans believe the childhood obesity challenge is so important that we need to invest in prevention
  - Healthy school lunches

Our Conclusion: Do Something!

- We can change the future by taking action in any and every way!



Childhood Obesity

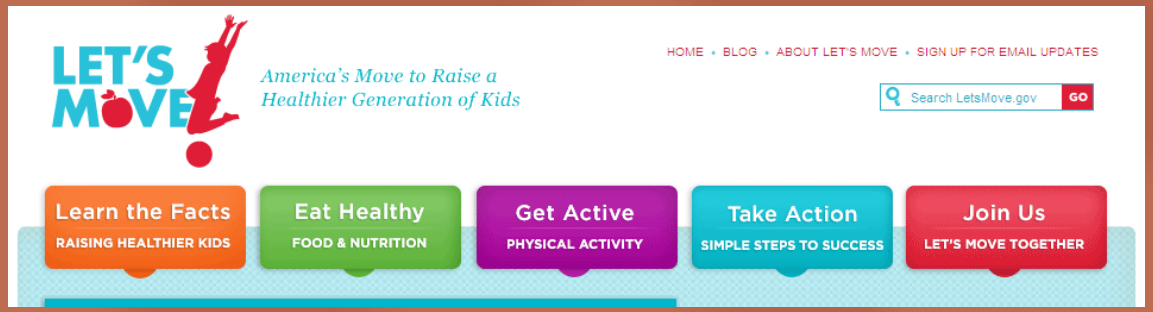


Healthy, Active Children

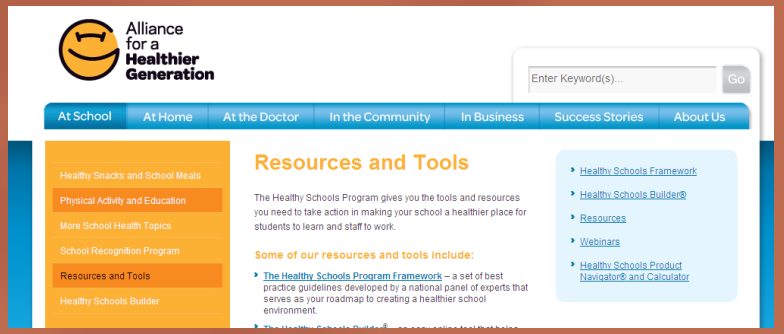
Resources for Childhood Obesity Efforts

- Centers For Disease Control (CDC)

- Let's Move Campaign

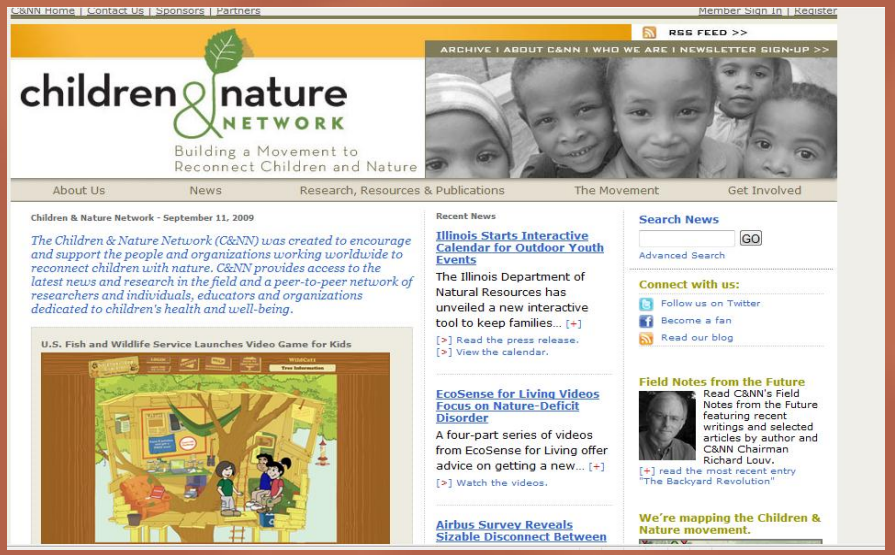


- Alliance for Healthier Generation



Resources for Connecting Children to Nature

- Children & Nature Network
  (childrenandnature.org)
- National Wildlife Federation
- National Park Service
- Outdoor Industry Foundation



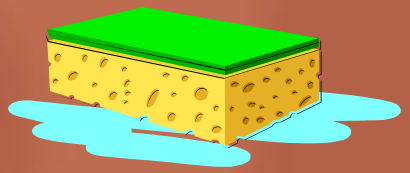
Why Reach Children at a Young Age?

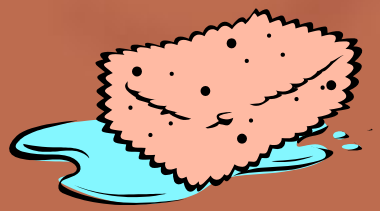
- Middle childhood (6-11 years old)
  - More independence from parents
  - Beginning awareness of the future
  - More attention to friendship and team work
  - Rapid development of mental skills
  - Critical time for children to develop confidence in all areas of life

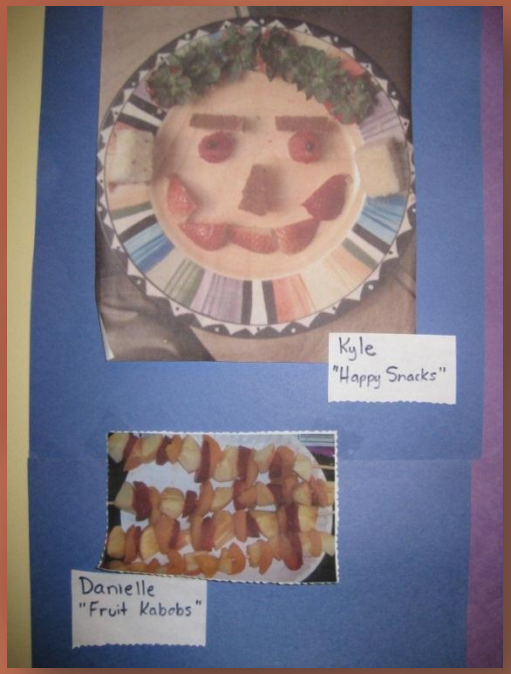
NNCC Middle Childhood
http://www.nncc.org/Child.Dev/mid.dev.html

Why Reach Children at a Young Age?

- They are learning to plan ahead and evaluate what they do
- They learn by watching and talking to others of the same age
- They want to do things by and for themselves, yet they need adults who will help when asked or needed
- THEY ARE SPONGES!! ☺







NNCC Middle Childhood
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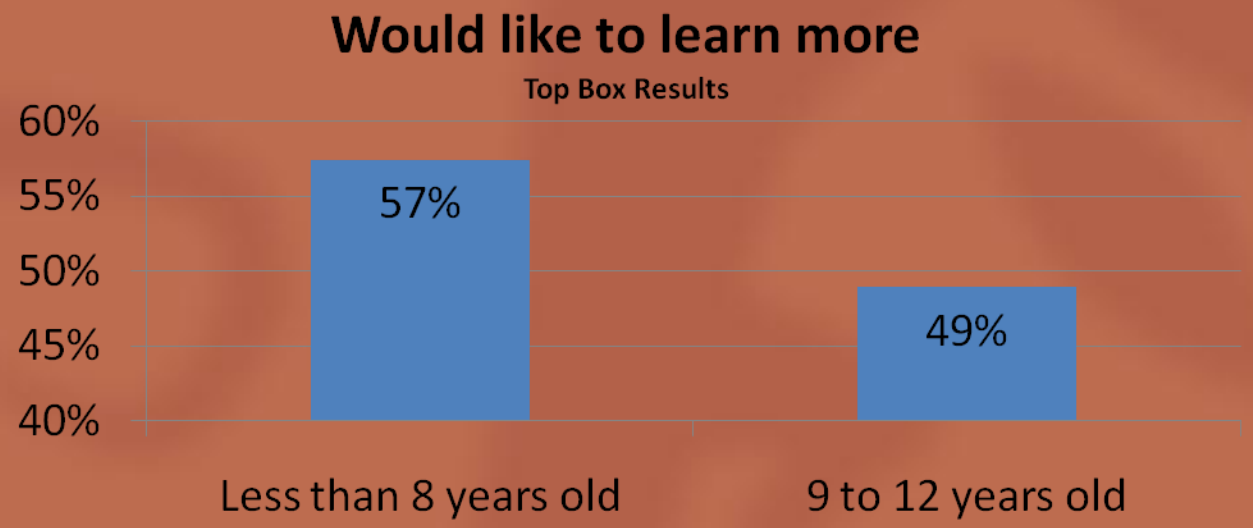
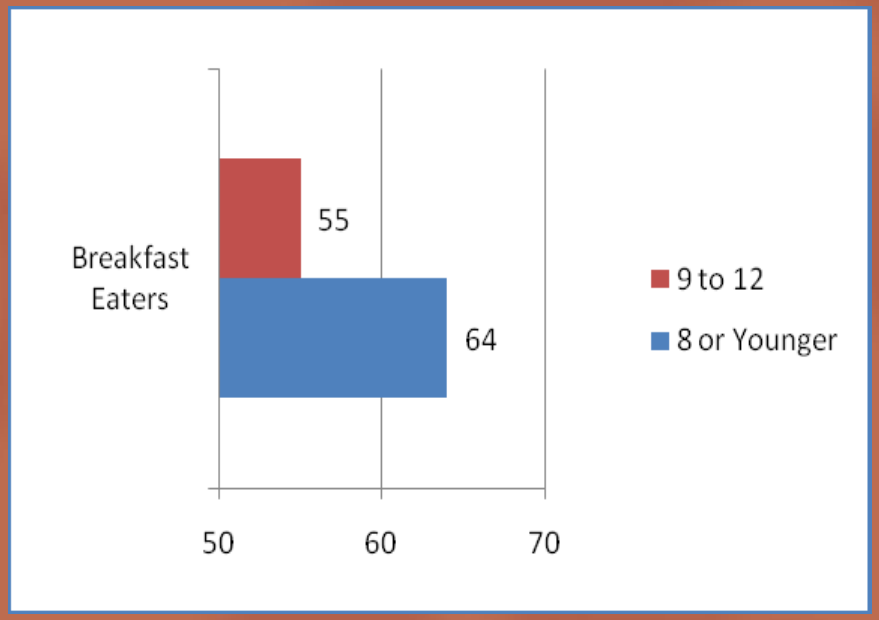
Wise Kids® - Desire to Learn More

- Overall, 86% of respondents are interested in learning more about healthy eating and activity (Top 2 box)
  - Especially among the younger children, urban, African American, girls



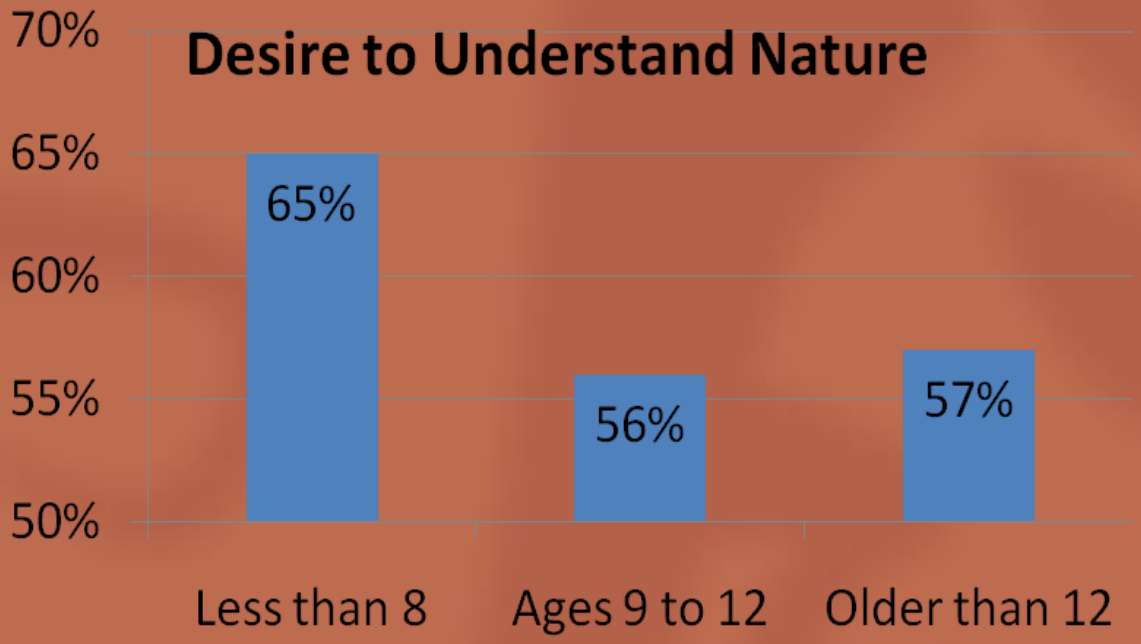
Wise Kids® Research: Patterns in Breakfast Supports Catching them Early

- Because they learn and watch, positive behavior patterns can be encouraged



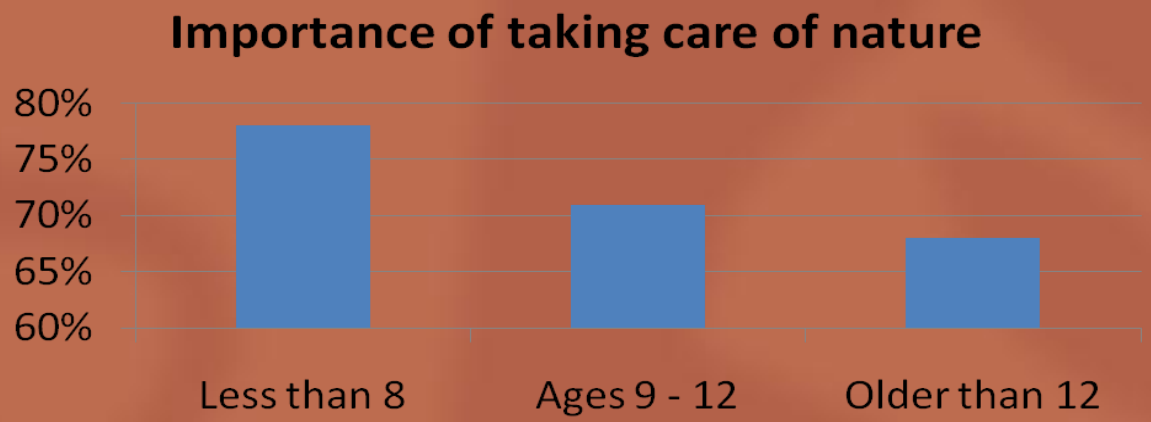
Wise Kids® Outdoors
Values: Importance of Outdoors

- Younger children tend to want to understand nature more than older children



Wise Kids® Outdoors - Values: Stewardship

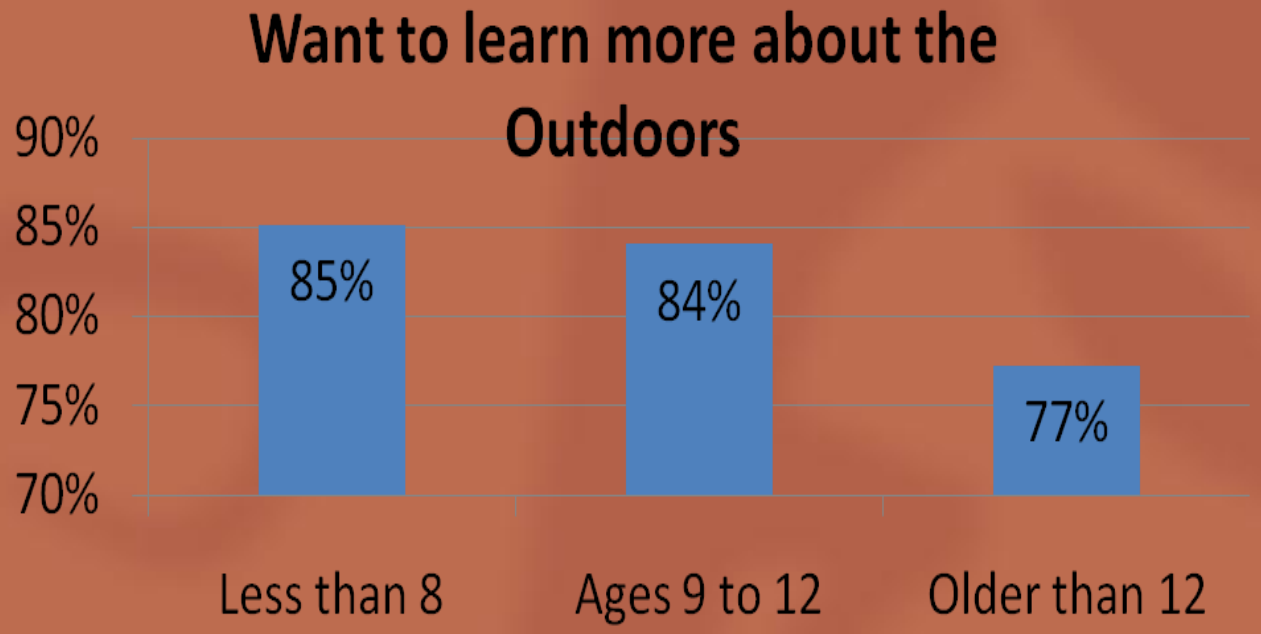
- 73% of respondents report that taking care of nature is important to them
  - Again, age is a factor



- "The environment we encounter in childhood becomes our norm." -Peter Kahn, Ecological Psychologist, University of Washington

Wise Kids® Outdoors – Desire to Learn More

- 85% want to learn more about nature and the outdoors



Hands-on Helps Them Visualize

- Things tend to be black or white, right or wrong, great or disgusting….there is very little middle ground so seeing it for themselves helps!
  - Sugar scientists
  - Label reading
  - Collecting trash

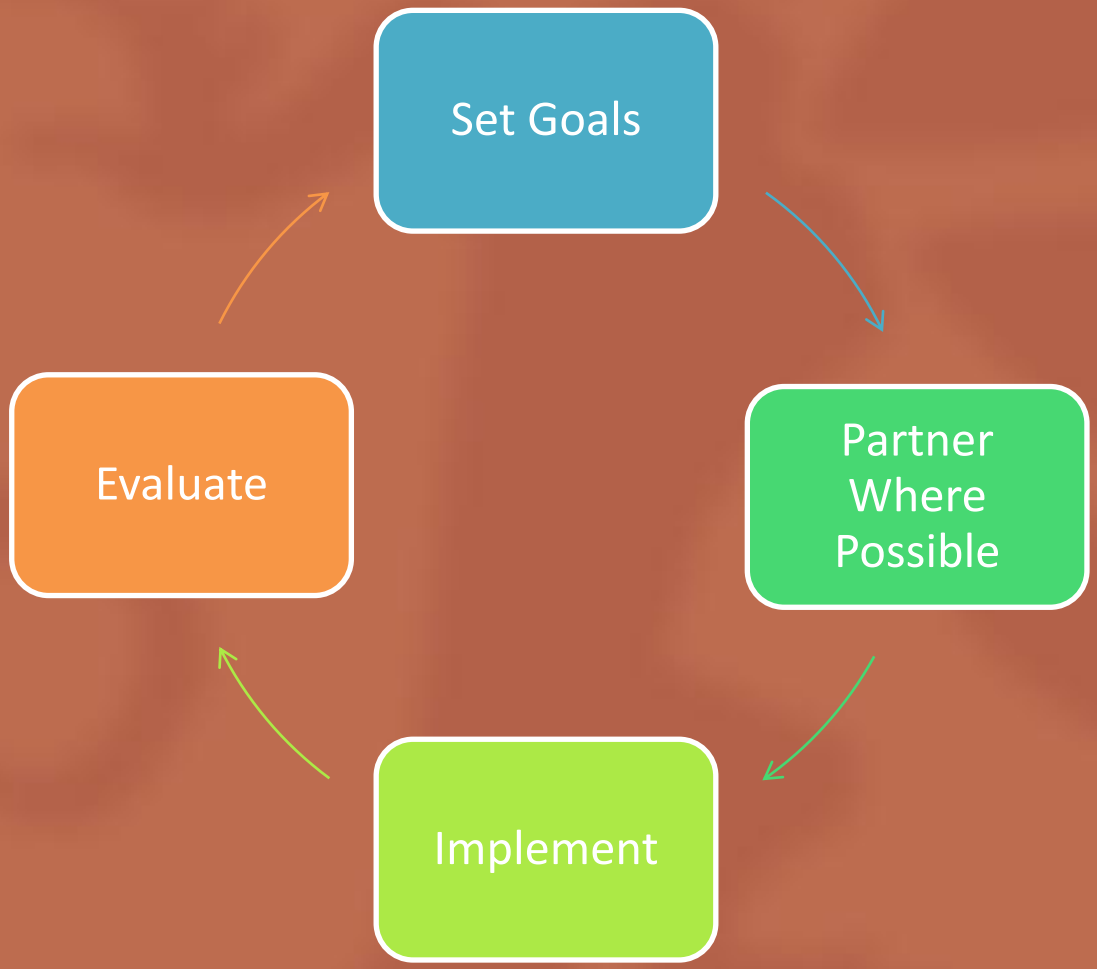
Now You Try!

- 4 Activity Stations
  - Sugar Scientists
  - Balloon Soccer
  - Serving Size
  - Scavenger Hunt

Best Practice Themes

- Simple and easy
  - Staff can focus on delivery, not creation
- Hands-on experiences
  - By making it seem possible for them to do on their own, you increase the chance that a habit is made
- Engaged staff
  - Children will get as much out of it as what you put into it
- Community
  - Show children and families where and how they can get active easily right in their own community

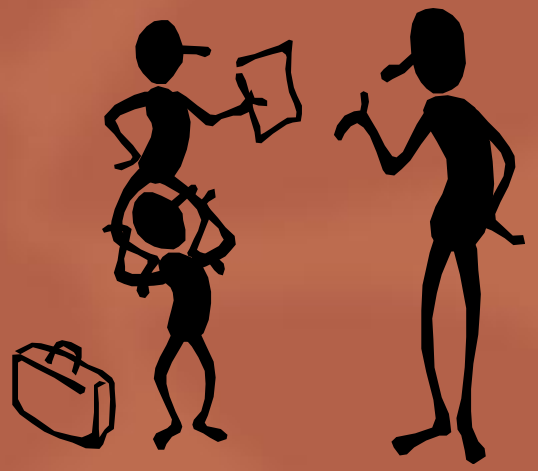
Building a Successful Plan



Set Goals

- Setting goals allows you to PLAN
  - Not a wish that doesn't happen
  - Everyone knows where you are headed
  - Check point so you don't wander
- Examples:
  - Teach 5 healthy snacks/meals children can make
  - Start a running club
  - Visit 4 nature areas
- Your Turn!

Partner Where Possible



- Partners allow the idea to grow
  - Higher level resources than you alone
  - Avoid duplication of effort
  - Accelerate goal achievement

- Examples:
  - Local running group visits once per week to conduct a running club for the kids
  - Farmers market gives children a tour and chance to taste
  - Rotary provides funding

- Your Turn!

Implement

- Figure out the who, what, where and when of your goal
  - A detailed plan ensures progress is made
  - Assigning ownership builds engagement and responsibility
  - Provide time for dealing with issues
- Examples:
  - Getting ingredients for GORP – Susan – By 7/6
  - If it rains, have tarp to cover the ground and/or have ponchos or garbage bags available
  - Week 1 deliverables – volunteers identified
- Your Turn!

Evaluate

- Evaluation helps you identify successes and areas for improvement
  - Results necessary for a funding partner
  - Evaluation can lead to additional partners or funding
  - Staff improvement
  - Public relations
- Examples:
  - Satisfaction survey
  - Pre to Post comparison
  - Quantification
  - Photos
- Your Turn!

Wrap-up

- You can and must make a difference in children's health and well-being
  - Begin efforts with all children but the younger, the better
  - Look for hands-on or visual activities
- Solid planning can pay off
  - Set goals, find partners, establish deadlines and evaluate
- Make it yours and have fun!

Thank You!

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www.sajaifoundation.org