



SPARK Early Childhood Research

The SPARK Early Childhood (EC) program being disseminated today applies the lessons learned from rigorous research and subsequent field-testing in the “real-world”. SPARK EC is designed to provide children ages 3-5 with high activity, academically integrated, enjoyable movement opportunities that foster social and motor development and enhance school readiness skills.

Note: The numbers after each outcome correlate to the project/paper references that follow.

General

- Experience with large implementations (e.g., NYC) 823 sites, 3,838 staff trained via 147 workshops (2)
- Experience with minority children at high risk of overweight/obesity (3)
- After SPARK EC training 91% of respondents reported using SPARK EC curriculum in their classrooms (2)
- On average, teachers taught a SPARK lesson 3x per week (2)
- In daycare settings, the amount of structured PA time increased significantly after teachers participated in SPARK training (2)
- Full-day teachers, median time increased from 78-100 min. per week. Half-day median time increased from 60-78 min. per week (2)

Changes in Health Behaviors

- Reduced screen time (1)
- Reduced consumption of fast and junk foods (1)
- Increase in overall healthy choices and food scores on the child assessment (1)
- Frequency of junk food consumption decreased among overweight children (1)
- Parent reports on normal weight children showed children’s duration of PA increased significantly (1)
- Increase in levels of moderate to vigorous physical activity during EC session time (4)

Changes in Body Composition

- Overweight and obese children BMI (N=96 or 26% of students) decreased (1)
- Mean BMI at beginning of year was 91.43, end of year 83.60 (1)

Selected references:

- Healthy for Life Study – St. Josephs Health System, CA, 2011 (1)
- NYC Dept. of Health and Mental Hygiene studies, NY, 2005-2007 (2)
- State Dept. of Health study on Childhood Obesity in New York State 2004 (3)
- University of Tennessee, Memphis Head Start study in Title 1 schools, TN, 1998 (4)

