



# IMPACT 2025

Through Extension programs across the nation, Family and Consumer Sciences Extension Educators provide a multitude of Educational opportunities to meet the needs of diverse audiences.

## Childhood Obesity Prevention Empowering Communities for a Healthier Future

Childhood obesity is a persistent public health concern that impacts physical health, emotional well-being, and long-term quality of life. Through educational programs, strategic partnerships, and hands-on learning experiences, Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) professionals are actively addressing this issue. By fostering community engagement and equipping individuals with the knowledge to make healthier choices, these programs contribute to improved health outcomes and long-term economic benefits through reduced healthcare costs.

### Scope of the Problem

The increasing prevalence of childhood obesity has significant implications for public health, contributing to a higher risk of diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and other chronic conditions. Addressing this challenge requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates nutrition education, physical activity promotion, and community involvement. Through targeted interventions, FCS professionals are working to combat childhood obesity and support healthier lifestyles for youth and their families.

### Programmatic Response

Family and Consumer Sciences professionals implemented a range of childhood obesity prevention programs nationwide, delivering essential nutrition and wellness education to thousands of participants. Programs such as the **Kentucky LEAP initiative**, **Idaho's True Leaders in Equity Institute**, and **Colorado's Nature & Health initiative** focused on hands-on activities to instill lifelong healthy habits. In total, these programs were offered more than 4,700 times, reaching 325,553 participants across various states. Additionally, 18,010 engaged through virtual participation, expanding the reach of these initiatives.

Each program utilized evidence-based curricula tailored to specific community needs. The **Kentucky LEAP** program, for example, provided six educational sessions to 205 youth, integrating structured nutrition lessons with physical activity. In **Idaho**, the *True Leaders in Equity Institute* introduced hydration and healthy eating practices to 122 participants, reinforcing positive behavioral changes. In **Colorado**, the *Nature & Health* program reached 1,567 individuals, emphasizing the connection between outdoor activity and wellness. Other impactful programs included **Kentucky's Youth Nutrition & Physical Activity** initiative, which reached 246,806 participants, **North Dakota's Children are On the Move to Better Health** program, which engaged 33,432 individuals, and **Utah's Create Better Health (SNAP-Ed)** program, benefiting 10,512 participants.

### Key Impacts

The collective efforts of these programs yielded measurable outcomes:

- **Over 325,553 youth and families participated in educational sessions**, increasing their understanding of nutrition and the importance of physical activity.
- **More than 4700 program offerings** provided consistent engagement, allowing participants to develop and reinforce healthy habits.
- Numerous community partnerships strengthened program reach and sustainability, fostering collaboration between schools, community centers, and healthcare organizations.
- **18,010 individuals participated virtually**, expanding accessibility to critical health and nutrition education.
- Improved access to nutrition education, particularly in underserved communities, where childhood obesity rates are often higher.



*I liked tracking my calcium and the bingo game. I liked getting more exercise. My favorite activity was the lockbox one. We got lots of prizes and practiced teamwork. - ND Children are On the Move to Stronger Bodies Participant*



## Future Directions

As childhood obesity remains a critical issue, FCS professionals will continue expanding these initiatives, incorporating new strategies to enhance program effectiveness. Future efforts will focus on:

- Integrating digital learning tools to reach a broader audience and provide accessible, on-demand education.
- Strengthening community partnerships to amplify program impact and ensure sustainability.
- Enhancing data collection and evaluation to measure long-term behavioral changes and health outcomes.

By continuing to engage communities in meaningful ways, FCS professionals are making a lasting difference in the fight against childhood obesity. These programs not only improve individual health but also contribute to stronger, healthier communities for future generations.



*Your program has given these students a wealth of lifetime knowledge with in-depth understanding of health, safety and physical competency. - Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, Graham County*



## Success Stories

The impact of these programs is evident in the individual stories of participants and families who have adopted healthier lifestyles. In **Kentucky**, professionals involved in the *LEAP* program reported increased engagement in physical activities among students, with many children demonstrating improved motor skills and greater enthusiasm for movement-based learning. In **Idaho**, parents noted significant improvements in their children's dietary choices, with more families incorporating fruits and vegetables into daily meals. Meanwhile, the *Nature & Health* program in **Colorado** empowered youth to engage in outdoor activities, reducing screen time and encouraging physical fitness.



Jerome Boys and Girls Clubs 4-H Cooking Club, Idaho



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*Raising kids, Eating right, Spending smart*



**National Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NEAFCS)** provides professional development for Extension professionals who improve the quality of life for individuals, families, and communities and provide education in the areas of: Childhood Obesity Prevention; Community Health and Wellness; Diabetes Prevention and Management; Financial Management; Food and Nutrition; Food Safety; Healthy Homes and the Environment; Improving Children's Lives; and Protecting our Resources – Family Life. NEAFCS is an equal opportunity/affirmative action association. NEAFCS values and seeks a diverse membership. There shall be no barriers to full participation in this organization on the basis of race, color, gender, age, religion, national origin, disability, veteran status, or sexual orientation. Membership is not by invitation. (Strategic Plan 1993-97)