

Title: Model Project Children, Food and Activity.

Author (s): Anne Smetana, Deputy Office Manager, County of Funen
Morten Kromann Nielsen, Project Coordinator, County of Funen

E-mail: mrk@afs.fyns-amt.dk

Organisation: Department of Prevention and Health, Funen County, Ørbækvej 100, DK-5220 Odense SØ, Denmark. Tel: +45 6556 1209, Fax +45 6556 1205

Homepage: www.boernmadbevaegelse.dk

The model project Children, Food and Activity is a cooperative project between the County of Funen and 10 municipalities (boroughs), the Danish Ministry of the Interior and Health, The National Board of Health, Aarhus School of Architecture and The County Centre for Education.

The project began in August 2002, ended its first phase in January 2005, and has been extended to other municipalities in the county. The project has been evaluated by the National Institute of Public Health.

The main aim is to enhance the well being and health, and prevent illness among children between 3 and 10 years of age through a number of precise and measurable goals:

- To develop food and activity policies;
- To enhance knowledge and action competence of professionals and children;
- To involve parents and families;
- To create social and physical environments that promotes healthy choices;
- To ensure that children's eating and activity habits meet the official the recommendations

The core activity of the project is consultancy assistance for the development and implementation of policies and an educational programme on food and physical activity directed at professionals working with children in institutional contexts. These activities focus on the social and cultural framing of health behaviour of children by creating an attractive and inclusive culture of health i.e. using food skills as a health promotion method and physical activity as a socializing event.

The project is firmly anchored at community level, and is emphasized through a parallel organizational approach in formulating local food and physical activity policies based on local experimentation and documenting local evidence – i.e. what works for children and professionals in their everyday routines, thus combining upstream and downstream approaches to health promotion.

The evaluation and experiences from the first 2½ years of the project stress some central outcomes:

- Policies based on local evidence function as a tool for mutual understanding in an area often dominated by conflict and unclear division of responsibilities between institutions and families.
- Policies that combine health related goals with pedagogical (learning) goals, promote new ways of seeing food and physical activity as a means in learning processes.
- Policies significantly strengthened the role of institutions to go forward, and inspire and motivate children and families in making healthier choices.
- Parents appreciated the work of institutions as a help and inspiration in their daily lives.
- Parents and families were influenced positively – through the impact of the children's experiences in the institutions. Parents acknowledge the role of children as agents of change.

These experiences provide new insight into interesting synergistic effects between health cultures of institutions and families, and should be investigated further.

In the workshop presentation Anne Smetana will be dealing with aspects of organization and leadership and Morten Kromann Nielsen will focus on the results of the project.