



Children's Hospital Boston Northeastern

# A FOCUS ON PREVENTION: HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY FUTURES

To prevent obesity in children, efforts must focus on the environments where kids live, learn and play. To tackle this issue, The Boston Red Sox, Children's Hospital Boston and Northeastern University have developed Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures (HKHF), a community-based obesity prevention initiative. In an effort to improve wellness among Boston families disproportionately at risk of and burdened by chronic diseases, including obesity, HKHF is partnering with Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD) Head Start, and Boston Centers for Youth & Families (BCYF) to provide programming, education and training in the Boston neighborhoods of Fenway, Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, and Lower Roxbury.



## HOW DOES IT WORK?

HKHF works with child care providers, parents, and caregivers of young children to promote healthy eating and increased physical activity, in child care settings, at home, and in the community. HKHF currently works with four Head Start programs and one City of Boston community center.

With Head Start, HKHF works in the following areas:

- Head Start program self-assessment using the Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC)
- Head Start goal setting and implementation
- Head Start staff training and professional development

- Wellness education for parents and caregivers of Head Start children

HKHF's on-site wellness education classes at partner Head Start programs focus on encouraging families to:

- reduce the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages;
- increase their fruit and vegetable consumption; and,
- engage in more physical activity together.

HKHF supports the whole family in their efforts to be healthier. In the community, HKHF provides access to free, family-based physical activity through the Saturday Open Gym at the BCYF Madison Park Community Center.

Through participating in HKHF at home, parents and caregivers of young children have reported that the program encouraged them to reduce children's consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods, limit portion sizes, talk about healthy foods with the family, and plan more physical activity for their children. In child care settings, Head Start staff reported increased awareness about promoting healthier eating and drinking in the classroom. In the community, HKHF's Saturday Open Gym offers the only free, ongoing physical activity program in Boston for families with children ages 3-8.



## HKHF APPROACH

Our individual health behaviors are shaped by our access to health-promoting environments. It's critical that healthy behaviors are promoted where we live, learn, work, and play. Since children spend most of their time at home, in child care, and in the community, promoting healthy eating and physical activity in these settings can have a significant impact on children's health today and in the future.

## HKHF GOALS

- To improve the ability of early childhood providers and programs to prevent childhood overweight and obesity among pre-school-age children and their families.
- To increase opportunities for parents and caregivers of young children to build skills that support informed and healthful food

choices, increased physical activity, and reduced recreational screen time.

- To increase opportunities for young children to be physically active with their families in safe, accessible, and age-appropriate settings.

## FUTURE AHEAD

As one of the few initiatives designed specifically for families with young children ages 3-8 years, HKHF promotes healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood environments. In its second year, HKHF will continue to support efforts to make child care, home and community environments healthier for young children. Continued efforts include Head Start staff professional development, caregiver wellness education, and operation of the Saturday Open Gym at the Madison Park Community Center in Roxbury.

For more information about Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures and Saturday Open Gym contact: 617.373.7615 or visit [www.northeastern.edu/stonybrook](http://www.northeastern.edu/stonybrook) or [www.childrenshospital.org/communitybenefits](http://www.childrenshospital.org/communitybenefits)

### COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.  
Native American Council Head Start  
Jamaica Plain Head Start  
Parker Hill Fenway Head Start  
Roxbury Lenox Street Head Start  
Boston Centers for Youth & Families  
*Madison Park Community Center*

### PARTNERS

Northeastern University  
Children's Hospital Boston  
Boston Red Sox

## HEALTHY KIDS, HEALTHY FUTURES FACTS

### 1 out of 3

children in the Head Start programs where HKHF partners is obese or overweight.

### 47

Head Start providers from HKHF's partner Head Start programs collectively completed over 200 hours of professional development training focused on nutrition and physical activity promotion, personal wellness, and communicating wellness with families.

### 72

Head Start parents participated in wellness classes led by licensed Spanish- and English-speaking nutritionists and dieticians.

### 17

Saturday Open Gym sessions were offered during the summer and fall of 2009.

### 36

Northeastern University student leaders were recruited and trained to lead Saturday Open Gym during the summer and fall of 2009.

### Over 150

Boston residents with young children participated in Saturday Open Gym.

### 100%

of respondents attending Saturday Open Gym said they would recommend Saturday Open Gym to others.



# Northeastern



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STONY BROOK INITIATIVE  
AT NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY