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Reducing childhood obesity: Opportunities for engaging families in school settings

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The incidence of childhood obesity has dramatically increased in the last 20 years. Currently about 1 out of every 3 children in the United States is overweight. Furthermore, the incidence of childhood obesity in the US is 17% and the incidence in El Paso, Texas mirrors this statistic. Various interventions have been utilized to decrease these numbers. Most experts agree on a family approach to tackling this issue with education as one key component. A project was employed at a local charter school in El Paso, Texas. The prioritized population was sixth graders due to the obesity among these youth based on school data. The project focused on the concepts of portion control based on the "Choose My Plate" initiative from the US Department of Agriculture. Educational sessions were performed in a classroom setting with the child and at least one parent. Parents completed a post-intervention survey to evaluate their acquisition of knowledge. 75% of parents were able to state the proper portion control for fruits, vegetables, grains and protein. The high number of correct responses to the proper portion size suggests that the educational sessions were successful and informative for those who participated. The project achieved its objective of teaching the parents and the children about proper portion control & nutritional label reading & food preparation tips for reducing childhood obesity.

Biography

Laura Rodriguez received her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree in 2013 from the University of Texas at El Paso. She is a Clinical Assistant Professor and the Director for the Traditional Nursing Undergraduate Program at the University of Texas at El Paso School of Nursing. She is the Course Coordinator of the Senior Nursing Practicum. Her expertise is in Pediatric health. She has presented at local and state conferences on health related topics as well as academic topics. Presentations range from 'Childhood Obesity Interventions' to the 'Use of Guided Reflection for Nursing Students'.

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