



Smart Bodies

Part of building a healthier Louisiana is addressing the problems that stand in the way. One of those problems is childhood obesity, which is a serious issue in Louisiana and the entire country. Overweight and obese children are at risk for type 2 diabetes, hypertension, depression, cardiovascular disease and other health problems.

When it comes to childhood obesity, education is the answer. That's why the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation developed Smart Bodies, a school-based program that teaches children in grades kindergarten through 5 about nutrition and fitness. This signature Foundation program, in partnership with the LSU AgCenter, integrates classroom activities with hands-on learning.

Since its inception in 2005, Smart Bodies has been implemented in more than 330 schools, serving more than 100,000 students, in every parish across Louisiana.

Components

If children adopt a healthy lifestyle now, they're less likely to become obese later in life. Smart Bodies consists of three components that promote healthy lifestyles:

Louisiana Body Walk. This walk-through exhibit invites children to explore the functions of the human body and the effects that different foods have on each organ.

OrganWise Guys. These fun characters appear in lessons, books, games and videos that help children understand how healthy behavior improves their bodies.

Take 10! Classroom Program. This teacher-created tool incorporates 10-minute sessions of physical activity into academic lessons. The program is backed by the standards of the Louisiana Department of Education LEAP test, which combines physical activity with academic lessons.

Smart Bodies is working

Smart Bodies combines fun with education to address a serious health problem, and a two-year research study at 18 elementary schools shows that it's working. Children who participated in the program were more likely to eat fruits and vegetables, and they better understood the benefits of physical activity. Parents who reviewed body-mass-index (BMI) reports, meanwhile, better understood their children's weight and could help manage it.

More information

For more information about Smart Bodies, please contact the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Louisiana Foundation at 225.298.7979 or foundation@bcbcls.com.