



# Families and Schools TOGETHER<sup>INC.</sup>

PROTECTING HEARTS AND MINDS<sup>™</sup>

**Integrating healthy living  
practices into school-based  
prevention programs**

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# Agenda

- Introduction to FAST™
- Background
  - Why Healthy FAST™
  - What the research says
  - Study of Healthy FAST in Hawaii
- Healthy FAST Activities
- Role of the Nutrition Team Members
- Evaluation of Healthy FAST
- Q&A



# Families and Schools TOGETHER<sup>INC.™</sup>

- Charitable organization - 501 c 3
- Creator of FAST, an evidence-based family strengthening and parent involvement program
- Research and Values based model developed in 1988 by Dr. Lynn McDonald, Professor of Social Worker at University of Wisconsin, Currently at Middlesex University in England continuing research on FAST
- Help children succeed in school and in life
- Family strengthening & parental involvement
- Prevention/ early intervention program
- Program placed in 46 states, plus 9 countries
- SAMHSA/ NREPP model recognition



- Parental involvement via empowerment process within extracurricular format
- Builds lasting, multidimensional relationships
- Nonjudgmental, universal, prevention, intervention
- Experiential & participatory learning
- Professionally led with gradual parental empowerment
- Instills accountability-driven motivation to improve
- A collaborative community effort:
  - Child, Parents, Family Support, School and Community-based Agencies



# FAST Models

 Baby FAST™

 Kids FAST™

 Teen FAST™

 Pre-K FAST™

 Middle School FAST™

 FASTWORKS™



## Family Unit at Family Table

- Meet & Greet
- Meal
- FAST Hello & Singing
- Scribbles
- Feelings Charades

8 Week Program –

1X per week, 2.5 hours per week

## Parents' Time

- Buddy Time
  - Parent Self-Help Group
- (Only Parent Partner and Community Partner)

## Peer Group Time

## Kids' Time

Children divided by age group for group activities  
(Community Partner and School Partner)

**Special Play** One-to-One Time  
(Parent & Community Partner)

Siblings continue **Kids' Time**

**Family Table** Door Prize  
Entire Team

**Closing Circle** Announcements & RAIN  
Entire Team



# How FAST Activities Empower Parents

- **Table-based coaching**
- **Parents are in charge of activities**
  - Flag
  - Family meal
  - Scribbles
  - Feeling Charades
- **Parent Group**
- **Parent-Child Time (Special Play)**
- **Lottery**
- **Graduation**

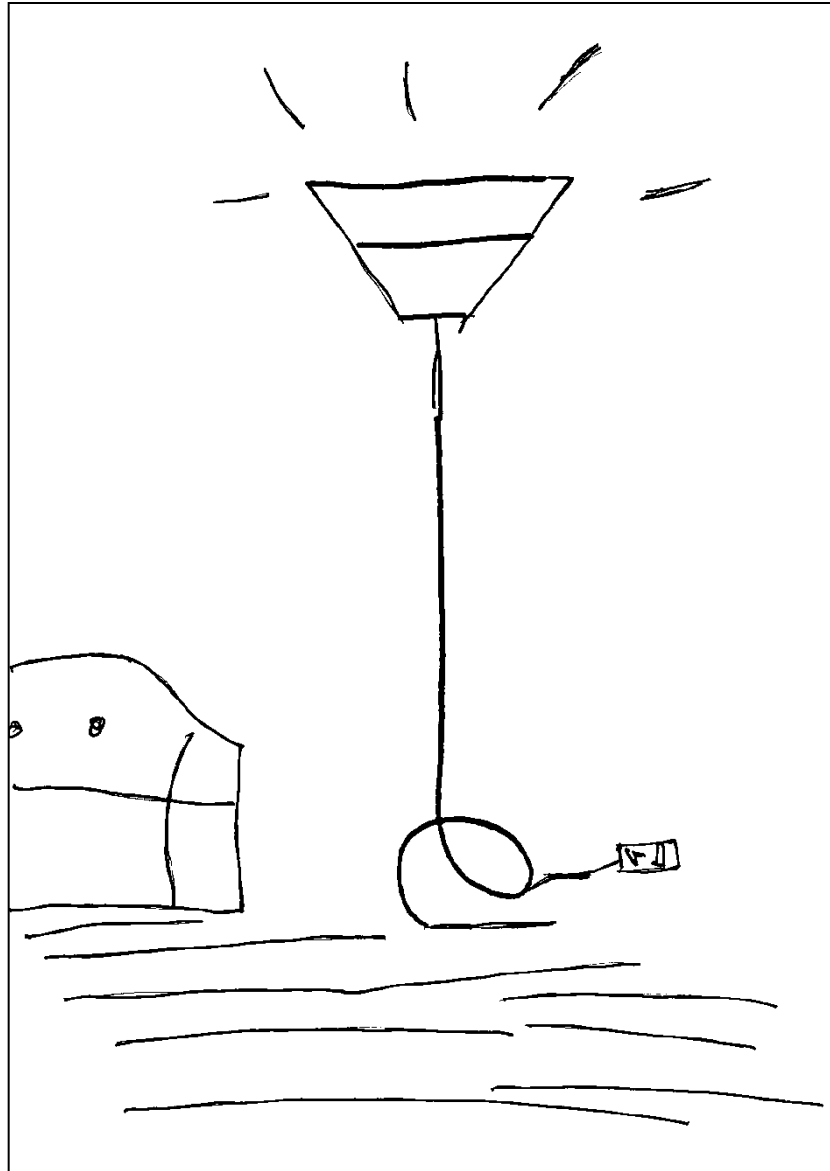


# Learning through Repeated Experiences

- **Children practice respectful behaviors towards their parents (300X in 8 weekly sessions)**
- **Children practice taking turns, waiting for a turn**
- **Children practice talking about their drawing, their feelings, and their play with their own parents**
- **Parents practice taking charge, making requests**
- **Parents practice listening to their children**
- **Parents practice playing with their child**
- **Parents practice asking for social support**



# SCRIBBLES





# Family Meal





# Family Flag





# Family poses with Family Flag





# BUDDY TIME





# Lottery



# Graduation





# Healthy FAST™

- The obesity epidemic
  - % of overweight 6-11 year olds has more than doubled in the last 30 years, and that of 12-19 year olds has nearly tripled
- Funders are interested in obesity prevention
- Requests for “Healthy” FAST



# Dangers of Obesity

**Overweight children are at increased risk of:**

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Type 2 diabetes, and other diseases
- Face increased discrimination
- Are viewed as lazy, academically unsuccessful, unhealthy and unhygienic
- Severely obese children report a lower quality of life than children with cancer undergoing chemotherapy



# Research

**There are good reasons to  
make FAST “healthy”!**



# Family-Based Programming

The Surgeon General recommends empowering families to eat healthy and exercise through skill-building in the areas of parenting and behavioral management and creating community-based prevention programs. (2001)



# Research

**Many of the same factors play a role in ATODA prevention and successful health programs**

- Social support
- Feelings of self-efficacy
- Family functioning
- Family meals
- Parents' involvement in school



# School-based Approaches

- Change environment (change menu, reduce soda machines)
- Increase physical activity
- Can reduce caloric intake and increase physical activity, but limited effect on BMI and uncertain effects on nutrition and physical activity



# Family Involvement

- Evaluations of school-based interventions attribute part of the lack of change to a lack in parents' involvement
- Parents play an important role in the development of healthy eating and physical activity habits
- A number of studies have shown that involving the whole family is more effective in achieving and maintaining weight loss



# Why include parents?

- “Do as I do” is more effective than “Do as I say”
- Parents engage in behaviors that facilitate overeating, e.g. excessive TV viewing, provide television for children’s room
- Parents of younger children control food selection, preparation and children’s activity levels



# Targeting Elementary School Children

- Adolescent obesity is best predictor of adult obesity
- Activity and eating habits change drastically during puberty
- Parental influence is stronger with this group than with older children



# Study of Healthy FAST™ in Hawaii

## Healthy FAST can make a difference:

- Statistically significant increase in encouragements from family members to eat fruits and vegetables
- Significant increase in comments from friends if they ate unhealthy foods
- Significant increase occasions when family members offered to exercise with them



# What parents said...

## What did you like best about Healthy FAST?

- Forming relationships with others who share concerns
- Trying new and more healthy meals and life habits
- Exposure to nutritionist's knowledge
- Encouragement and advice



# What parents said...

## What changes did you make to your eating habits?

- I have started eating a lot more fruits and vegetables than before. Cut down on trans fats, salts, fast food
- I have tried smaller portions and better ratios
- More fruits for snacks. Read more labels than before!



# What parents said...

## What changes did you make to your physical habits?

- Joined a gym, with a personal trainer
- Take walks and monitor BP
- Awareness and kids activities
- Encouragement to be more active



# What parents said...

## What changes did you notice in your child's eating habits?

- They enjoy trying new things; they are more aware of nutrition
- More willing to at least try vegetable dishes and balance food intake
- Awareness and sports



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## Program duration:

- After the 5<sup>th</sup> week: add 15 minutes to the parent group for a separate health-focused parent group. Nutrition partner leads this “Healthy” parent group engagement



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## Family Meal:

- Parent and the Nutrition Team Partners provide guidance in preparing a healthy main course (requires commitment to parent empowerment)
- Team members can accompany parent to the supermarket and provide education about nutrition labels, integrating fruits and vegetables into the meal (parent's retain choice)
- Team members provide water, juice and low-fat milk rather than soft drinks
- Team provides a healthy desert, and healthy side dishes



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## “Healthy” Parents Group:

- Separate from parents group
- Starts after 5<sup>th</sup> week
- Led by the Nutrition Partner
- Parents are in charge of deciding what they want to discuss/learn
- 15 minutes after the “regular” parent group
- Move to a separate location
- Introduce this new component during the 5<sup>th</sup> Week Special Presentation



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## Kids' Time:

- Nutrition partner can use this time for nutrition and fitness activities
- Kids learn how to make snacks and serve them to families
- Engage children in active play
- Nutrition Partner plays key role (suggesting activities for Kids' Time)
- After 5<sup>th</sup> week, children will spend an extra 15 minutes in Kids' Time
- Kids must have fun!



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## 5th Week Special Presentation:

- Nutrition Partner presents
- Introduce parents to “healthy” parents group which will start in Week 6
- Walking Club: Encourage parents and children to get together outside of FAST to walk
- If funding is available,
  - Distribute pedometers to participants (can chart progress)
  - Provide health-related gifts (certificate to gym, cook books)



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## Special Play:

- Coaches parents in how to spend time with their children
- Non-directed, don't teach, don't judge, follow the child's lead
- Focused on physical activity
- Age-appropriate
- Provide toys (balls, hula-hoops, etc..)



# Component Changes for Healthy FAST

## Resource Table:

- Display health related materials (starts the 1<sup>st</sup> week)
- Nutrition and physical activity materials
- Child safety materials



# Role of the Nutrition Partner

- Resource to parents
- Lead “Healthy” Parents Group
- Provide advice to parents in meal preparation
- Lead 5<sup>th</sup> week Special Presentation
- Help structure Kids’ Time
- Select materials for resource table
- Advise team on food provided for family meal (side dishes, deserts)
- Available for FASTWORKS



# Evaluation

## Additional survey:

- Frequency of family meals
- Eating out
- Family meal practices
- Fruit and vegetable consumption
- Physical activity
- Confidence in one's ability to change nutrition and physical activity habits
- Social support for healthy eating and physical activity
- Open-ended responses
- Will provide a Healthy FAST report in addition to regular FAST report



# Same FAST Values & Norms

- No teaching for the first four weeks
- Parents are family-empowered
- Focus on creating social support
- Giving families time to bond
- Parents take charge
- Parents have a choice
- Building relationships with community agencies
- Creating a cohesive family unit
- Give the FAST process a chance to work



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