PROMOTING HEALTHY PRACTICES PROJECT

Family Engagement Event Handbook
National Black Child Development Institute

PROMOTING HEALTHY PRACTICES PROJECT – FAMILY ENGAGEMENT EVENT HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

At the National Black Child Development Institute (NBCDI), our mission is to improve and advance the quality of life for Black children and their families, through education and advocacy. Throughout our four decades, we have been committed to building on our communities’ strengths, assets and rich cultural backgrounds to address the most searing issues and inequalities that confront us.

Right now in America, poor nutrition practices among individuals and families, as well as systemic issues such as food deserts, economic insecurity, and the lack of affordable and accessible healthy foods, have contributed to the dramatic rise in childhood obesity and hunger. These dual epidemics, however, have had a disproportionate effect on low-income communities and children of color. According to the CDC, one out of every four Black children is overweight, compared to one in seven White children. Over 20% of 4 year olds are obese, with the highest numbers among minority populations, and the trends continue as children grow up: among Black teenage girls ages 12 to 19, more than 40% are overweight or at risk of being overweight. At the same time, 90 percent of Black children will be in families receiving food stamps at some point in their childhood – and the consequences of obesity and hunger in terms of children’s healthy development over the course of their lifetime are critical.

As we work to change the odds for our children to ensure that they are growing up in a world in which they are educated, healthy and happy, living in strong families and safe communities, NBCDI has, with generous support from the Walmart Foundation, developed a project to encourage healthy nutrition and physical activity practices specifically among Black families with young children.

As a part of this project, NBCDI has compiled this Family Engagement Event Handbook, describing innovative and culturally-relevant family engagement events and activities related to health and nutrition that our Affiliates have developed and implemented. We created this manual so that Affiliates and partners implementing the Healthy Practices Program – and other health education initiatives – will have tools to help them plan and evaluate meaningful workshops and events.

This handbook has targeted resources for parents and caregivers, and will assist individuals and programs in learning how to support changes in parents’ knowledge and behavior to reflect positive nutrition and physical activity practices. The handbook is organized by activity category, and in each event, we have outlined the cost, partners and outreach efforts undertaken by our Affiliates to provide readers with ideas for what is required to host each particular event.

We hope that you find the Healthy Practices Project Family Engagement Event Handbook helpful as you plan and host parent and family engagement events and activities in your community. We look forward to hearing your ideas and suggestions – and adding them into the next handbook!
**CONTENT AREAS**

NBCDI has broadly classified the majority of events as either “Physical Activity” events or “Nutrition” events. We have also identified additional categories; as you review the manual, you will find that some events may fall under nearly all categories, and others may only identify with three or four areas:

**Categories**
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Parent only (note: this includes primary guardian)
- Whole family
- Indoor OR outdoor
- Ongoing OR one time only

Each event description may also include the following information:

- *Location (where the event originally took place)*
- *Overview*
- *Goals / Outcomes*
- *Challenges*
- *Outreach Tools*
- *Cost*
- *Number of participants*
- *Partners*
- *Additional Information*

This information is designed to help programs implement similar events and activities; at the end of the handbook, there are several additional ideas for parent and family engagement.

Please take advantage of all of the activities and events and be creative in crafting events of your own!
**Physical Activity Events**

**Olympics**
“Family Fun Day/Graduation Celebration”

**Categories**
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Whole family
- Outdoor
- One time only

**Location**
Next Door Foundation / EduCare of Milwaukee

**Overview**
This event involved educational and family activities that shared the importance of physical fitness as part of a daily regimen.

**Cost**
- $500-$700
- Included door prizes, food, presenters, advertising and outreach (flyers)

**Number of Participants**
- 150-200

**Partners**
- Next Door Foundation and EduCare of Milwaukee provided the location for the event
- The BCDI Milwaukee Affiliate was the host

**Further details about the nature of this event and activities**
- This event encouraged and supported physical fitness as children participated in various stations of obstacle courses such as basketball jump shots, relay races, balance activities, climbing, jumping and skipping over objects, and tug of war activities. The children rotated around the play area in small groups of 10 or so. The children were also given little awards for completion of each activity. Healthy snacks were provided and parents and grandparents attended the event along with other community people to cheer and support each activity taking place. The children were able to learn and build on teamwork, skill building, social skills, and physical stamina.
**Family Fitness Fun Night**

*Categories:*
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor

*Location*
Destiny Youth Plaza of Milwaukee

*Impact*
Participants were enlightened, educated, and empowered to make changes in current practices of healthier choices and getting engaged in physical fitness activities.

*Challenges*
The challenges for this event were the event timing. This event was held on a Monday evening, after work for many. One may suggest that it be held during the day if at a school or a weekend to engage families more.

*Cost*
- $500-700
- The funds were used to purchase food, we engaged a local fitness expert, a local dietician, and also to purchase really nice door prizes for fitness. Gift cards for healthy food stores were also purchased.

*Outreach Tools*
- Website
- Media (radio)
- Brochures
- Video commercials
- Word of mouth

*Number of Participants*
- Approximately 45

*Partners*
- American Heart Association-brochures
- Cancer Society of Milwaukee-brochures
- KTS-technical support
- WeMerge-Media Website
- Radio Station 1290-promos
- Destiny Youth Plaza-space
- CFFC Ministries
- Wheaton-Franciscan Health-Information
- City of Milwaukee-Health and Wellness Giveaways
- Aurora Family Services-Educational materials and take a ways
- BCDI support staff- facilitation and door prizes
- Darrell Lynn Hines Academy of Milwaukee

Further details about the nature of this event and activities
- A healthy food demo and physical fitness demonstrations were given from two local experts. Participants were able to take health and wellness surveys about current practices and changes they would be willing to commit to in order to make for a healthier lifestyle and practices they were able to do.
**Y’s Healthy Kids Day**

**Categories:**
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor /outdoor

**Location**
The Columbia North YMCA and West Philadelphia YMCA.

**Overview**
Healthy Kids Day is a part of the YMCA’s commitment to address critical gaps in communities, particularly low income communities where children of color are most often at risk.

There was a purposeful focus on encouraging the children to stay both physically and intellectually active as the summer months approach. Summer is a time of play, but for some, experience with activities that stimulate mind and body conclude with the end of the school year. With additional support from Walmart, several Y’s engaged in activities to combat summer learning loss and inappropriate food and nutrition practices.

**Impact**
Families were able participate in a fun filled day that was informational and supportive of healthy living and eating.

**Cost**
Approximately $ 4,000
- Marketing
- Staffing, administrative and overhead cost
- Materials
- Giveaways and incentives
- Various rides and games

**Outreach**
- Radio ads
- Community newspaper ads
- Word of mouth
- Flyers

**Number of Participants**
- More than 500

**Partners**
- Children’s Hospital
- St. Christopher Hospital
The hospitals and health agencies provided bath temperature gauges, tote bags, pens, pencil, handouts and notice as well as testing for eyes, weight and dental check-ups. Additionally, the insurance companies provided information with regards to CHIP. Food Market provided coupons and samples of healthy snacks. Family organizations, such as Please Touch Museum, Zoo, Franklin Institute, etc. provided information with regards to their programs and services and provided free one day passes. *Please Touch* also provided information about Kindergarten Transition and Readiness.

*Further details about the nature of this event and activities*

- Information for this program is provided on the web site of the YMCA of the USA. It is a patented activity that all Y’s are asked to facilitate as a way of engaging their children served and the families they represent.
Come Zumba with Dad and Me

Categories:
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Whole family (focus on fathers)
- Indoor

Location
Columbia North YMCA

Overview
This event used Zumba to involve parents, specifically Dads, in an activity with children and to get the children ‘moving’ and exercising through dance. The overall purpose was to highlight Dads in a positive light and provide an enjoyable, fun event which allowed the Dads to exercise, interact and dance with their children.

Cost
Total Cost: $733.85
- (Parent Raffle) 15 Walmart Crock Pots = $284.85
- (Parent Raffle) 10 $20 Walmart Gift Cards = $200.00
- Refreshments and snacks = $157.00
- Books for children (50) = $125.00

Outreach
30 days’ notice was given to parents whose children were participating in the program

Participants
48 Dads and 50 children

Partners
Classroom teachers from Columbia North YMCA
**Yoga Your Stress Away: Learning to Decompress While You Stretch**

**Categories:**
- Physical Activity
- Fun
- Parent only
- Indoor

**Location**
Christian Street YMCA

**Goal**
This parent event promoted healthy living lifestyles. The goal was to help parents learn how to use exercise as a method to decompress from their stressful lives.

**Cost**
- In-kind donation from the Yoga instructor
- $100 snacks and refreshments

**Outreach**
- Flyers
- 14 day notice for parents of children participating in the program
- Word of mouth

**Number of Participants**
- 20

**Partners**
- Christian Street YMCA

**Further Information about the event**
- Parents engaged in a yoga session to learn strategies to help them decompress from their stressful life. Simple techniques of lighting candles, burning essential oils, or simply engaging in yoga positions, meditation and mindfulness can help anyone unwind. Parents also learned how to incorporate physical activity throughout the day without compromising their already busy schedules.
Fitness Event

Categories:
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor / Outdoor

Location
Campus of Bennett College, North Carolina

Overview
The interactive “Iron Chef” cooking session was the highest rated session with parents saying having the hands on exposure to making a “no-cook, no-fuss” meal plus the recipes they gave after allowed them to learn some useful tools in how to make healthy choices with limited time. The event was open to parents and children with a focus on nutrition and healthy choices plus a Zumba session and a speaker on getting affordable health coverage.

Cost
The costs for this event, including in-kind services, were approximately $1,200. Costs included facility usage, workshop presenters and food for cooking contest.

Outreach
This event involved getting the word out for free to families who wanted the experience via flyers at the YMCA, through our community sites and on our college campus.

Participants
Approximately 50

Partners
- MO Betta Fit for Christ – Provided an African dance session for the children.
- Zumba Instructor – Daisia Grant – Did a Zumba Workshop for parents and children
- Nutritionist from Hayes Taylor YMCA – Did a workshop on portion control
- Thomas from AvaCare facilitated a session on health benefits at a low cost
- Staff at BCDI-Greensboro and Hayes Taylor organized a parent/child “Iron Chef” cook-off contest.

Further Information about the event
This program had an iron chef cook-off (one main ingredient with a challenge for a parent/child team to make a healthy snack with the ingredients in under 15 minutes), a Zumba dance session for families, outside “field-day” activities for the children while parents were in information sessions, information sessions on portion sizes and health care and a motivational speaker from person who had lost over 100 pounds.
**Parent/Kid Healthy Families Event**

**Categories:**
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Outdoor

**Location**
Wade Walker Park, Georgia

**Overview**
This engagement activity afforded the parents opportunities to connect with community partners [YMCA South DeKalb, Fathers in Action (FIA), Grow Kids, Inc., DeKalb Farmers Market, DeKalb County Health Department, Wade Walker Parks and Recreation] who focused on health and nutrition.

The parents also participated in soccer, a 5k walk/run, and competed in a healthy food Grill Off. They also visited learning tables that passed out healthy snacks, planting seeds, and recipes.

**Impact**
This event impacted the families because it allowed them to be engaged in physical activity and it also allowed them the opportunity to come out to learn fun ways to improve their health. Most importantly the event was free of charge, although very valuable.

**Cost**
$1450
- Venue: $150
- Food: $400
- Staff: $500
- Decorations: $150
- Rental Items (Inflatables) $250

**Outreach**
Flyers and word of mouth were tools that worked best.

**Participants**
250

**Partners**
- South DeKalb YMCA: Coordination of Activities
- Fathers In Action: Father Involvement
- Grow Kids: Activity: Planting
- DeKalb Farmers Market: Donation of Fruits given to participants
- DeKalb Health Department: Educational brochures and tools to promote healthy behaviors.
- Wade Walker Park: Venue
**NUTRITIONAL EVENTS**

**Father and Daughter’s Luncheon**

Categories:
- Nutrition
- Fun
- Whole family (targeted at fathers)
- Indoor

**Location**
- West Philadelphia YMCA

**Overview**
This event was the result of a conversation with the Coordinator for the City of Philadelphia Fatherhood Initiative. So often, our African American Fathers are presented in such a negative light; this event offers a different look and opportunity.

**Impact**
This event strengthened the bond between daughters and fathers, inclusive of step-fathers and other father figures.

**Cost**
$500.00
- $400.00 – Cost of Caterer
- $100 – Gifts to attendees

**Outreach**
Flyers given out in afterschool program and invitation posted in the YMCA Lobby.

**Participants**
35 Daughters – 29 Fathers

**Partners**
- West YMCA Afterschool Program
- ‘Fatherhood Initiative’ at West YMCA
Project FUN (Families Understanding Nutrition)

Categories:
- Nutrition
- Physical Activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor/outdoor

Location
- Hayes Taylor YMCA

Overview and Goals
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity most days of the week for adults and one hour a day for children, controlling portion size and eating at least 5 to 9 fruits and vegetables daily. This program incorporated these solutions into the Parent Event. Objectives were to produce sessions where parents and children can work together to: 1) move at least 30 minutes per day; 2) understand how to control portion size; and 3) learn how to make healthy food choices.

Cost
$1200
- Food (both bought and in kind donations: $700)
- Prizes ($300)
- Outreach materials ($50)
- Other materials ($150)

Outreach
- Word of mouth
- Flyers

Participants
100 participants (parents and students)

Partners
- Hayes Taylor YMCA
- Get Healthy Guilford
- Cooperative Extension (nutritionist)
- Food Lion (food donations)
- Moses Cone Hospital
- Guilford County Schools
- Guilford Child Health
- MoBetta Fit For Christ Christian Aerobics LLC
- Piedmont Health Services- blood pressure testing
- EarthFare Grocery Store
Further details about the nature of this event and activities

The project activities included:

1) Making movement fun, possible, and affordable by having three 10-minute dance sessions and competitions throughout the day using the cha-cha dance movements popular in this region, parent and child “dance off” competition, and an aerobics instructors session. Additionally, we set up the dance-dance revolution game station in the back of the room to encourage the video game generation to find games that make them move.

2) Having tables set up around the room to show food with different portion sizes where parents get to see correct sizes/portions of items. Parents and children had the option of going to tables with a score-card to rate items, and the parents with the highest score won a prize. There was a group discussion about the correct answers.

3) A session from a nutritionist who focused on healthy food choices. This session was followed by an iron-chef contest where parents and children got to compete with each other using simple recipes that require no baking or cooking, with the challenge of making them within 10 minutes. The audience had the chance to sample the foods and vote on the winner and got handouts of items used to make the quick meals.

Additionally, the room was set up with service providers on the perimeter, including handouts, nutritional information, a blood pressure testing station, providers to discuss how to shop for healthy choices on a budget, information on Diabetes and Hypertension and a mini-gardening interactive area for the children to learn how to plant mini gardens inside their homes.

Timeline:
1:00 pm to 1:15 pm – Registration
1:10 pm to 1:30 pm – Participants move between booths to gather information (“bingo” cards given and parents that visit all booths will be given take away bags)
1:30 pm to 1:35 pm – Welcome
1:35 to 1:45 pm – First 10 minute movement session – Group “Cha Cha” movement
1:45 to 2:00 pm - Presentation by Fitness expert on why movement is important
2:00 pm to 2:15 pm – Break and perusal of “healthy choices tables” (four setup around room) which shows portion sizes, Good/Bad food choices (participants rate items)
2:25 pm to 2:30 pm – Prizes for “Dance Off” competitors and Health Choices Table winners
2:30 pm to 2:45 pm – “You are what you eat” – Nutritionist workshop
2:45 pm to 3:00 pm – Break and perusal of health booths: Setup time for next session
3:00 pm to 3:30 pm – “Iron Chef” Contest. Three families will work with recipes and nutritionist to make a healthy lunch/dinner and snack under 10 minutes.
3:30 to 3:40 pm – Third ten minute movement session (Instructors choice)
3:40 pm to 3:55 pm – Perusal of health booths (some areas are interactive, others informational)
3:55 pm to 4:00 pm – Wrap-up and thank you!
**Love Yourself Cooking Live: Healthy Cooking Dinner Demo**

**Categories:**
- Nutrition
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor

**Location**
Christian Street YMCA

**Impact**
This parent event promoted healthy eating and healthy living lifestyles. The goal was to encourage parents to get up and get healthy with their children. Parents were educated on how to prepare healthy meals that will counteract obesity without compromising flavors and tasteful meals; as well as making healthy food choices, and understanding the impact unhealthy food choices have on their children.

**Cost**
$500 for food

**Outreach**
- Flyers
- 30 day notice for parents of children participating in the program
- Word of mouth

**Number of Participants**
- 20

**Partners**
- Aramark/Cisco Foods (provided the Chef for the event)
- Pathmark
- Walmart

**Further Information about the event**
The project activities included:

1. Food Network Style Cooking Lesson where parents engaged in a cooking demonstration with a prominent Chef, learning how to prepare a delicious meal without compromising flavors and taste. Participants received an activity packet of recipes to try at home.

2. Parents engaged in a discussion with a nutritionist to learn how to make better food selections when shopping and/or dining out and to learn how to read and process food labels to uncover unhealthy choices.

Additionally, resources on healthy eating and healthy living were provided in the form of handouts, nutritional information, shop for healthy choices on a budget, Information on Diabetes and Hypertension and a mini-gardening interactive area for the children to learn how to plant mini gardens inside their homes.
Timeline:

1:00 pm to 1:30 pm – Registration and Introductions

1:30 pm to 2:15 pm - Participants will be separated into two groups: one group will remain in the classroom for the nutritionist discussion; the other will relocate to the kitchen for the demonstration.

2:15 pm to 3:15 pm – Two groups will switch: group that participated in the kitchen demonstration will rotate to the classroom for the nutritionist discussion and the group that attended the nutritionist discussion will rotate to the kitchen for the cooking demonstration

3:15 to 4:00 pm – Both groups will come together in the classroom to dine on the delicious meal demonstrated by the Chef and for Q&A

Closeout
Family Food Fun Night

Categories:
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family
- Indoor

Location
Hayes Taylor YMCA

Overview and Impact
This event focused on an introduction to healthy eating and preparing food safely. Parents were able to prepare mini meals at this event to demonstrate the concepts learned during the lesson.

- Parents were given the tools on how to make healthy nutrition choices on a budget
- Parents were given the tools on how to work together as a family to incorporate movement with household items or in their community.
- Parents and their children were taught how to incorporate healthy living in their life and make it fun.
- 85% of participants reported an increase in knowledge of healthier practices.

Challenges
The greatest challenge was getting the parents to commit to coming out to the event. To overcome this, the event was tied into another program at the YMCA for which participants could earn “points” towards a prize.

Cost
The average costs for this event was about $2,000, which included in-kind services. Costs were related to the facility usage, workshop facilitators, materials and supplies (food, printing of promotional materials, incentive items) and postage.

Outreach
The best outreach for the program came with working with the local YMCA and through programs that already had the families engaged and using that as a medium for the program.

Participants
30

Partners
- NC Cooperative Extension - nutritionist
- Get Healthy Guilford - program materials plus a workshop on health snacks
- The local grocery store - healthy snacks for program participants (2nd workshop)
- State Farm- pedometers
- Guilford Health Department
**Parent Forum**

**Categories:**
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Fun
- Informational
- Whole family

**Location**
Scottsdale Community Center

**Overview**
During this event, parents came out and received information from various vendors on health and nutrition topics. This event impacted the parents that participated greatly. Foremost it gave the families an opportunity to fellowship together, learn and sample good nutrition, be physical and bond with other families that share the same interest of being healthy.

**Cost**
$500
- Venue: $250
- Refreshments: $250

**Outreach**
Getting out into the community and knowing the leaders; the majority of outreach was done by word of mouth.

**Participants**
Approximately 150 participants

**Partners**
Partners for this parent engagement activity included: Alpha Kappa Alpha, DeKalb County Extension Office, Grow Kids, Inc., Young Chefs Academy, and Scottsdale Community Center. Each partner participated in our parent engagement activity; their role was to provide activities for the parents and children that promoted healthy behaviors and physical movement.
- Scottdale Community Center: Event Space
- DeKalb County Extension Service: Nutritional Information (brochures and nutritionist)
- Grow Kids Inc.: Volunteers and Planting Material
- Young Chef Academy: Nutritional Snacks – Make and take
- Alpha Kappa Alpha DeKalb: Volunteers

**Further details about the nature of this event and activities**
The Parent Forum was an event in which the families and community came out for a day of fun. The agenda for the day included physical activities, sharing of the curriculum and sharing of goals, as well as various activities including story time, cooking and planting. Educational family talk forums were the highlight of the day.
OTHER PARENT/FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IDEAS

- Host a “Family Walk” day and take this walk to do a “clean up” day in the community.
- Encourage parents and/or community members to draw a garden on a community wall, sidewalk or playground area with their favorite fruits and vegetables, flowers and plants, and trees. This activity can help children and their parents stay engaged with each other and their community, and learn more about being active in the community.
- Use the American Community Gardening Association’s website at http://acga.localharvest.org/ to find a community garden near you. Then ask parents to take their children to a community garden that you have found near your school or their neighborhood. This will allow the family to see how fruits, flowers and vegetables are grown. Encourage your children and their families to volunteer at the garden, pulling weeds, watering plants and maintaining the area.
- Help families to implement healthy eating strategies into their daily routines by sharing some ideas and strategies to make eating healthy fun and exciting! Here are a few to get you started:
  - Listen to music while cooking
  - Have friends over to prepare meals
  - Try new recipes
  - Pretend you are on a cooking show and video tape your presentation
  - Share stories and the history behind particular meals and family recipes
  - Be creative with presentation, and use lots of color
  - Create a song about the meal that you made
- Encourage and remind families to participate in regular exercise together. Even if they are watching TV at night, during every commercial break, parents and students can take turns leading jumping jacks, push-ups, sit ups, jumping rope and running in place. With music, these exercise moves can even be incorporated into dance routines.
- Encourage parents to include their children as they make dinner. Ask them to make a family recipe that has been passed down from generation to generation – but with a twist that incorporates a healthier way of creating the dish. For example, if the recipe calls for potatoes, use sweet potatoes instead; or if the traditional way of cooking is to fry something up, try oven-baking it for a change. Then ask parents to submit their recipes so that the group can compile, decorate and create a cookbook for everyone to share!
- Encourage families to put on music, and dance together. Suggest that the parents share dances and music from their generation, and kids share “new” moves and dancing trends with the latest music.
- Encourage parents to make “cleaning up” fun. This can be done by putting on music while cleaning up, and encouraging friendly competition between the family to see who can clean up their designated area the fastest – and make it the cleanest area in the house!
- Host a town hall meeting with a panel of experts in the field of childhood obesity and/or hunger.
- Partner with a range of local restaurants serving food from different cultures and communities to show parents how to be healthy and creative!
- HAVE FUN!