

Putting Research to Work for Military Families



Focus:
Civilian

Impact of Let's Go! 5-2-1-0: A Community-Based, Multisetting Childhood Obesity Prevention Program

Rogers, V. W., Hart, P. H., Motyka, E., Rines, E. N., Vine, J., & Deatrick, D. A. (2013). Impact of let's go! 5-2-1-0: A community-based, multisetting childhood obesity prevention program. *Journal of Pediatric Psychology*, 38(9), 11-Jan.
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SUMMARY: Many programs attempt to increase health-promoting behaviors in families. This study investigated the use of a consistent-messaging campaign (Let's Go! 5-2-1-0), which uses media in several different settings to attempt to influence parent behavior. These messages encourage parents to ensure that their children consume five servings of fruits and vegetables per day, limit recreational screen time to no more than two hours per day, engage in at least one hour of physical activity per day, and limit consumption of sugary drinks. The program seemed to be effective.

KEY FINDINGS:

- When parents were exposed to the consistent messaging through multiple media in multiple settings, their knowledge increased along with certain child health behaviors.
- Two of the four targeted behaviors improved across time: children eating five or more servings of fruits and vegetables each day and limiting consumption of sugary drinks to no more than one per day.
- The other two targeted behaviors did not change over time: children getting at least an hour of physical activity per day and limiting recreational screen time to less than two hours per day.

IMPLICATIONS FOR MILITARY PROFESSIONALS:

Military professionals could:

- Work with families to help them determine specific changes to current behavior that may have a significant impact on child and family health and well-being
- Support parents who are working to make changes in their family's habits and behaviors

IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAMS:

Programs could:

- Develop consistent messages to increase the health and well-being of military families and convey those messages through a variety of media
- Encourage military families to focus on increasing specific health-promoting behaviors

IMPLICATIONS FOR POLICIES:

Policies could:

- Recommend training for professionals who work with military families regarding the impact consistent messaging can have on the health and well-being of families
- Continue to support the development of programs that aim to increase health-promoting behaviors in military families

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METHODS

- Participants were randomly selected from communities in the greater Portland, Maine area in which the program was running at three time points: before, during, and after the program.
- Structured telephone interviews with questions regarding program exposure, parent knowledge, and child health behaviors were conducted with each participant.
- Data were analyzed to determine whether parent knowledge and child health behaviors changed throughout the course of the program.

PARTICIPANTS

- Participants were 2,400 parents of children under 18 years who lived with them at least seven months of the year.
- The sample was 67% female, 50% under 45 years old, 44% college graduates and 37% household incomes of less than \$50,000 per year. No other demographic information was provided.
- Children of the participants had a mean age of 11.3 years old (SD = 4.7).

LIMITATIONS

- There was no comparison group of parents who did not receive the messages from the program, so it is unclear whether the changes are actually due to program implementation.
- Individuals may have responded in what they hoped was a more socially-acceptable way during telephone interviews, which may have influenced results.
- The people who were willing to participate in a phone interview may differ from those who were not in important ways that may affect findings.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research could:

- Investigate the use of consistent messaging campaigns for military families
- Use a comparison group that does not receive the messaging to examine whether changes are related to exposure to the messaging
- Explore reasons why child physical activity and recreational screen time were less amenable to change in this sample

ASSESSING RESEARCH THAT WORKS



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