



Fit2play Submission

The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing inquiry into obesity

Terms of Reference

This submission targets the following terms of reference stipulated by the inquiry committee into obesity; what governments, individuals and the broader community (through schools) can do to prevent and manage the obesity epidemic in children, youth and adults.

Although the food industry has not been targeted as one of the terms of reference in our submission, we believe they have a duty of care to facilitate this process. Again, although we acknowledge this, we must also acknowledge that we live in a consumer driven market, where the consumer dictates what is sold on the shelves of supermarkets. Based on this we can only expect significant changes to occur in the supply of foods laden with sugar, fat, and salt via a change in the purchasing habits of our next generation (i.e., our children).

Children need to be empowered to make healthy choices for a lifetime. Fit2play aims to facilitate this process through its theoretical underpinnings, which are based on Self Determination Theory.

What is Fit2play?

The Fit2play program is evidence based and provides the federal government with a national blueprint (through the school curriculum) for encouraging healthy lifestyle behaviours that protect against obesity in both children and their parents alike.

The Evidence

The Fit2play program focuses on the lifestyle behaviours recommended by The Institute of Medicine Committee on Prevention of Obesity in Children & Youth (Koplan et al., 2005, p.17); reducing television viewing, improving physical activity; and increasing fruit and vegetable consumption. These behaviours comprise of four out of the five ingredients incorporated within Fit2play's Recipe for Life.

1. Aim to watch less than 2 hours TV per day.
2. Aim to participate in 30 minutes (+) of after school physical activity on most days.
3. Aim to eat 2 (+) servings of fruit per day.
4. Aim to eat 3 (+) servings of veggies per day.
5. Aim to drink 6 glasses (+) water per day.

Research has also highlighted the benefit of drinking more water in an effort to displace sweetened beverages, including that of soft drinks (Robertson et al., 1999). This makes up the fifth ingredient to Fit2play's Recipe for Life.

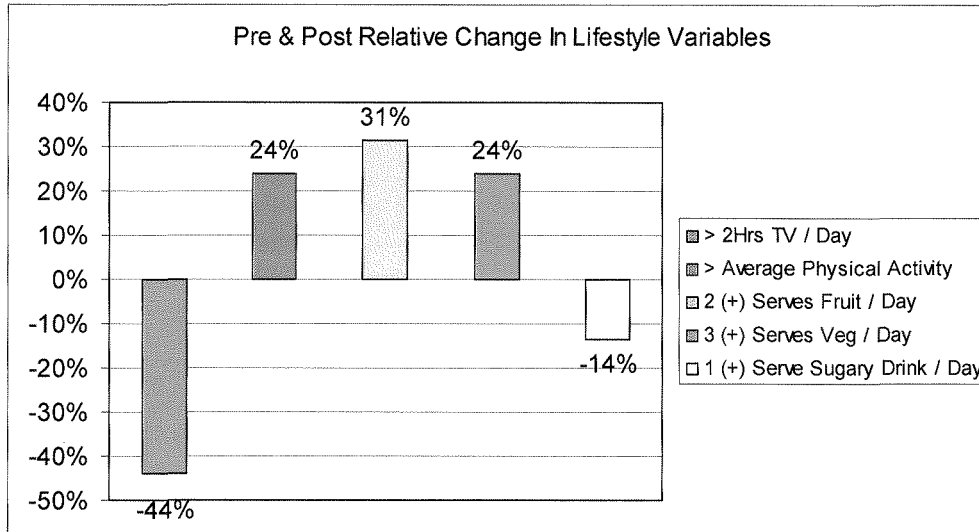
Because motivational dynamics play such a pivotal role in the uptake of these protective lifestyle behaviours, it seems useful to integrate motivational theorizing within models of childhood obesity prevention. One theoretical model that offers promise in understanding health behaviour motivation and its subsequent transfer from one social context to another is self-determination theory (SDT: Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2000, 2002). SDT mandates that a teacher, who supports the satisfaction of a child's psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, will energise a child's motivational processes. This in turn facilitates the uptake of protective lifestyle behaviours and the transfer of these behaviours to the home, and ultimately parents via their children.



Results 2006 Evaluation

Dr Drummond from The University of South Australia was quoted in his 2006 report as saying "It was clearly evident that the Fit2play program had impacted students across all year levels when it came to food, water, physical activity, and television".

Selected Results Fit2play Evaluation, Term 3, 2006, South Australia (n = 2500).



Arguably the most important impact of the program was upon the family. Evidence clearly suggested that children were taking their newly acquired behaviours home with them. To quote Drummond & Birbeck (2006) "... parents in turn were reinforcing their children's healthy behaviours by embracing an alternative lifestyle to which they were accustomed. This speaks volumes about the positive tangential factors associated with Fit2play".

Post program evaluation at 9 months by The University of South Australia showed sustainability in healthy food choice behaviours, and maintained positive attitudes toward physical activity.

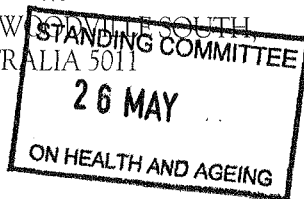
In summary:

- The Fit2play program is valued by students, teachers, and parents, and has produced significant improvements in a range of protective lifestyle behaviours associated with the prevention of overweight and obesity.
- The reduction in TV viewing and an improvement in free time physical activity, demonstrates a successful transfer of learned behaviours from the classroom to the home.
- There is sufficient qualitative evidence to suggest that the Fit2play program effectively targets both student and parental positive lifestyle behaviours.
- Fit2play integration into the school curriculum and delivery by classroom teachers, creates a cost effective population-based model for the uptake and engagement of obesity protective lifestyle behaviours in both children and parents alike.

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21 May 2008

Committee Secretary
Standing Committee on Health and Ageing
House of Representatives
PO Box 6021
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

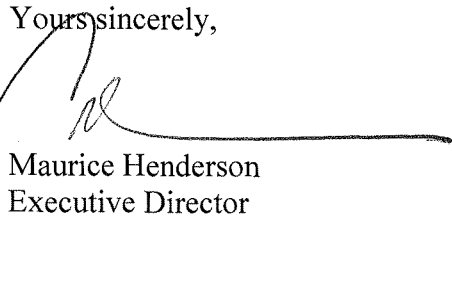
Dear Secretary,

Inquiry into Obesity in Australia

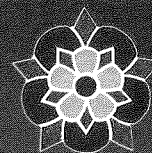
The Queen Elizabeth Hospital Research Foundation Inc is pleased to have an opportunity to contribute to The House of Representatives Standing Committee on Health and Ageing inquiry into obesity in Australia.

A two page submission is attached to this letter.

Yours sincerely,



Maurice Henderson
Executive Director



Research for
Life's Sake

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