Fit Families: Promoting Healthy Habits for Overweight Children and their Families

Introduction
Fit Families is a successful, interactive program that helps families adopt healthier lifestyles.

Objectives
To help families with overweight/at risk for overweight children:
- Eat healthy
- Get active
- Feel positive

Methods
Subjects
- Children 5-17 years of age with a BMI ≥ 85th percentile
- At least one parent or guardian must accompany each participant, but all family members are encouraged to attend.
- Program participation is voluntary.
- Participants receive incentives that promote physical activity at each session.

Class Sessions
- Offered in English and Spanish
- 2.75 hours once per week for 7 weeks
  - Family meal/mindful eating-45 minutes
  - Separate adult and child classes in nutrition and feeling positive-35 minutes each
  - Family physical activity-35 minutes
- Hands-on activities and goal setting enhance each lesson
- Taught by licensed professionals

Methods, cont.

Data and Results, cont.
- 82% reported eating meals together as a family.
- 83% used food labels to make healthy food choices.
- 85% ate healthy foods for snacks.
- 62% reported family physical activity for 60 minutes per day.
- Parents reported a marked improvement in their children’s positive attitudes and self-esteem.

Conclusions
- Participants of this 7-week community-based outreach program reported significant improvements in composite intake of healthy foods, particularly fruit.
- Families reported improved knowledge and behaviors related to nutrition, physical activity, and positive feeling.

Acknowledgements
Funding for the Fit Families Program is provided by General Mills and New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.