



Program Effectiveness


May 30, 2024


Evaluation of Local Health Departments' (LHD) CalFresh Healthy Living programs documents the effectiveness of their Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change (PSE) efforts, Direct Education (DE) classes, and comprehensive interventions that combine PSE with education.


ADOPTION OF HEALTHY EATING & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PRACTICES

LHDs work with schools, early childhood programs, out-of-school time programs, and food retail stores that are planning or implementing PSE changes to complete an annual assessment. Each site receives an overall best practices score (out of 100) and scores in specific practice areas (also out of 100). Statewide, average scores across sites show how CFHL sites are progressing towards adoption of best practices and areas with the greatest opportunity for improvement.


On average, **schools** (N=170) scored **66 out of 100** in FFY23.


 Greatest **adoption of best practices:**
Physical education (75/100)


 Greatest **opportunity for improvement:**
Gardens (36/100)

 **Most sites improved** from FFY22 (N=120):
Physical activity (61% of sites)


On average, **early childhood programs** (N=131) scored **73 out of 100** in FFY23.


 Greatest **adoption of best practices:**
Physical activity & screen time (86/100)


 Greatest **opportunity for improvement:**
Gardens & nutrition education (50/100)

 **Most sites improved** from FFY22 (N=50):
Physical activity & screen time (72% of sites)
Gardens (72% of sites)


On average, **out-of-school time programs** (N=88) scored **66 out of 100** in FFY23.


 Greatest **adoption of best practices:**
Food and drink (81/100)

 Greatest **opportunity for improvement:**
Gardens & nutrition education (19/100)

 **Most sites improved** from FFY22 (N=65):
Physical activity & screen time (69% of sites)

On average, **food retail stores** (N=79) scored **60 out of 100** in FFY23.

 Greatest **adoption of best practices:**
Health-promoting atmosphere (77/100)

 Greatest **opportunity for improvement:**
Ready-to-eat meals (28/100)

YOUTH DIETARY & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OUTCOMES

LHDs evaluated school-based interventions at 71 schools where series-based DE occurred. Many interventions were comprehensive, including PSE approaches (33 schools, 46%) and sometimes indirect education. Interventions were evaluated via pre and post surveys at the beginning and end of the school year. Students (n=3,539) in 4th-12th grades reported intake of fruits, vegetables, and sugary beverages (SSBs) and engagement in physical activity. Just over half of students were Hispanic/Latinx.

The **top PSE approaches** at participating schools:

- Physical activity (non-PE)
- Behavioral economics in the cafeteria
- Gardens

The **top DE curricula** used with participating students:

- Let's Eat Healthy
- CATCH (K-5) - Kids Club Manual and Activity Box
- TWIGS: Teams With Inter-Generational Support

Statistically significant **improvements in health behaviors** included:



11% increase in how often youth ate vegetables



6% increase in how often youth ate whole fruits



6% decrease in how often youth drank sugary drinks (SSBs)



11% more days per week that youth met activity guidelines



ADULT DIETARY OUTCOMES

LHDs evaluated 112 DE series that included at least 4 classes. Pre and post surveys were collected before the first and after the last class, respectively. Adults (n=531) reported intake of fruits, vegetables, and SSBs, use of the nutrition facts label, and running out of food before month's end. The majority of participants were female (77%) and Hispanic/Latinx (70%), and about half (47%) had school-aged children.

The **top DE curricula** used with participating adults:

- Food Smarts for Adults
- Nutrition 5-Class Series
- Eat Healthy, Be Active Community Workshops



Statistically significant **improvements in health behaviors** included:



24% increase in cups of vegetables eaten daily



36% more adults eating >1 kind of vegetable daily



28% increase in cups of whole fruits eaten daily



45% more adults eating >1 kind of fruit daily



56% fewer adults drinking SSBs often or daily



52% more adults reading nutrition facts labels often or always