

The Energize way: working in the education setting to “eat healthy, be active, have fun”

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Introduction

The evidence is clear that optimal diet and physical activity across the lifespan is beneficial for health and optimal weight gain for children. The question of how this message can be translated into real-life supportive environments and health literacy of the population is not easily answered. What is known is that a lifecycle approach is needed and that needs to start, ideally, from before conception.

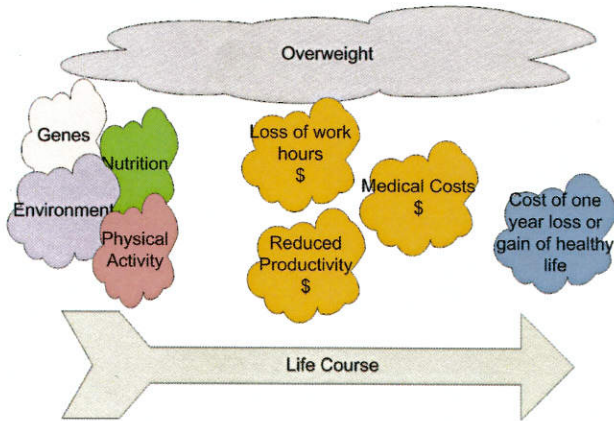


Figure 1 Why- putting life into years, years into life – starting early in life and for the next generation

Figure 2 Consistent and clear messages

For twelve years the Energize way of working with schools and early childhood education centres has been tried and tested in diverse environments¹ including the Waikato, Counties Manukau, Northland and Capital Coast in New Zealand and Cork in Ireland. The longevity of this programme is based on team work, a clear vision and goals and a need to do more with less.

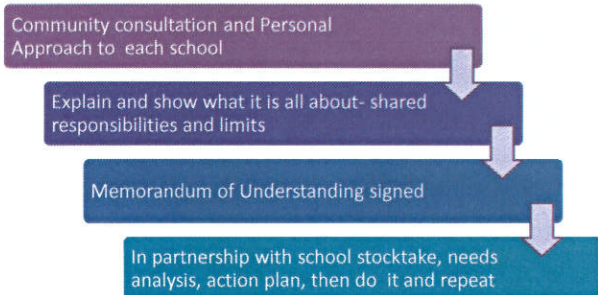


Figure 3 Process of working with schools – win win

Results

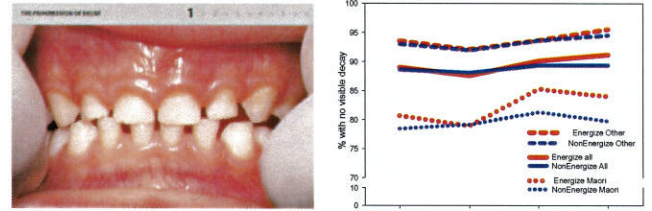


Figure 4 Change in visible dental decay between Under 5 Energize and unEnergized children over time. Lack of tooth decay – a novel marker of nutritional status- improved in Under 5 Energize children in the Waikato



Figure 5 What parents said were in lunchboxes 2013, 2014 and 2015

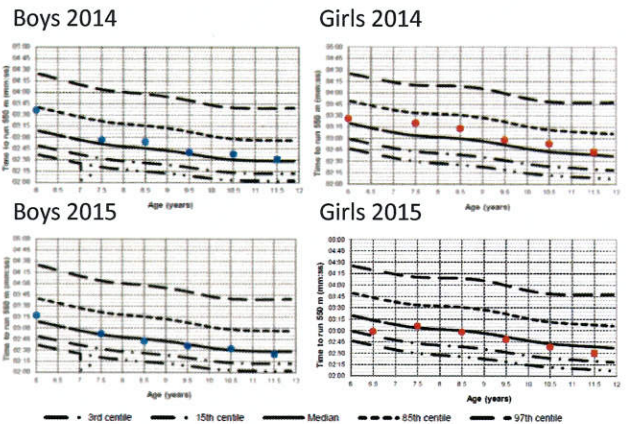


Figure 6 Time to run 550m– better nourished and fitter children can run faster

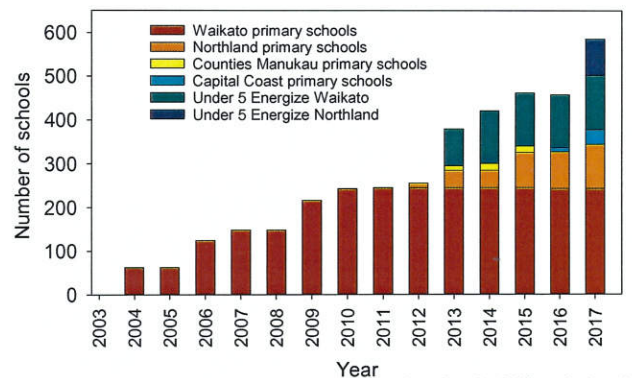


Figure 7 Progressive increase in number of schools and early childhood education centres Energized from 2003 to 2017

Conclusion

Evidence for effectiveness- performance in the real world – is demonstrated from different points of view and with real-life examples.

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The evidence is clear that optimal diet and physical activity across the lifespan is beneficial for health and optimal weight gain for children. The question of how this message can be translated into real-life supportive environments and health literacy of the population is not easily answered. For eleven years the Energize way of working with schools and early childhood education centres has been tried and tested in diverse environments¹ including the Waikato, Counties Manukau, Northland and Capital Coast in New Zealand and Cork in Ireland. The longevity of this programme is based on team work, a clear vision and goals and a need to do more with less. The programme has evolved and adapted – and Energizers – the people on the ground are part of their community providing a “fit” and face to face interactions (kanohi-ki-te-kanohi) with each school. Accountability and evaluation of the delivery and its impact is a continuous process and informs future actions. Current evidence for effectiveness-performance in the real world – will be presented from different points of view and with real-life examples.

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Energize peer reviewed publications and theses

1. Rush, E., Obolonkin, V., Young, L., Kirk, M., & Tseng, M. (2017). Under 5 Energize: Tracking Progress of a Preschool Nutrition and Physical Activity Programme with Regional Measures of Body Size and Dental Health at Age of Four Years. *Nutrients* <http://www.mdpi.com/2072-6643/9/5/456>
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12. Graham D, Appleton S, Rush E, McLennan S, Reed P, Simmons D. Increasing activity and improving nutrition through a schools-based programme: Project Energize. 1. Design, programme, randomisation and evaluation methodology. *Public Health Nutrition* 2008;11:1076-84.
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16. Kira G. Associations of patterns of daily life, physical fitness and body composition of primary school age children [PhD]: AUT University; 2009.

The full report of the 2011 evaluation may be found at

<http://weightmanagement.hiirc.org.nz/page/29135/an-evaluation-of-nutrition-and-physical-activity/?q=Project+Energize&highlight=project+energize§ion=42>