

JOINT EVENT

10th International Conference on **Childhood Obesity and Nutrition**
&
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The effectiveness of the 'way to go kids' programme for children who are overweight and underactive**Elaine Shea**

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Statement of Problem: Childhood overweight and obesity has become an epidemic health issue in today's society with one in four children (nine, seven and as young as three years of age) are overweight or obese in Ireland. The cost of treating obesity in Ireland is costly and has a huge economic impact. 'Way to go kids' is a nutrition and fitness education programme designed to support overweight children in developing the skills needed to adopt a healthy lifestyle. 'Way to go kids' was adapted from an American programme and redesigned by the author from Limerick Sports Partnership and by Limerick Health Service Executive to meet the needs of Irish children. The Irish 'way to go kids' is the first national programme to target overweight children and childhood obesity in Ireland. This report is the first review of the effectiveness of the Irish 'way to go kids' programme.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: 24 overweight/obese children (9-12years) and their parents were recruited for this study. 12 participants' weight and fitness levels before and after the 'way to go kids' programme was compared to 12 participants of a similar stature in a control group who did not participate in the programme. Pre and post questionnaires were also carried out to investigate if the 'way to go kids' programme improves participants' knowledge, confidence, attitudes and behaviors in relation to nutrition, physical activity and weight.

Findings: Results revealed that participants who completed the 'way to go kids' programme lost weight, decreased waist circumference, decreased BMI, improved muscle strength, muscular endurance, cardiovascular endurance, lung capacity and flexibility. 'Way to go kids' participants also showed an increase in knowledge and confidence, and positive changes in attitude and behaviors in relation to nutrition, physical activity and weight.

Conclusion & Significance: Due to the small scale of this study, some of the results did not reach statistical significance. However, indication of clinically different changes were identified which may have become statistically significant if the study had continued for a longer timeframe.

Biography

Elaine Shea has her expertise in Exercise and Nutrition Science with her Master's Degree at University of Chester in 2016. She received a distinction in her Master's project titled "The effectiveness of the 'way to go kids' programme for children who are overweight and underactive". As a Sports Development Officer for Limerick Sports Partnership, she redesigned the 'way to go kids' programme and manual along with Limerick Health Service Executive which was adapted from an American programme to meet the needs of Irish children.

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