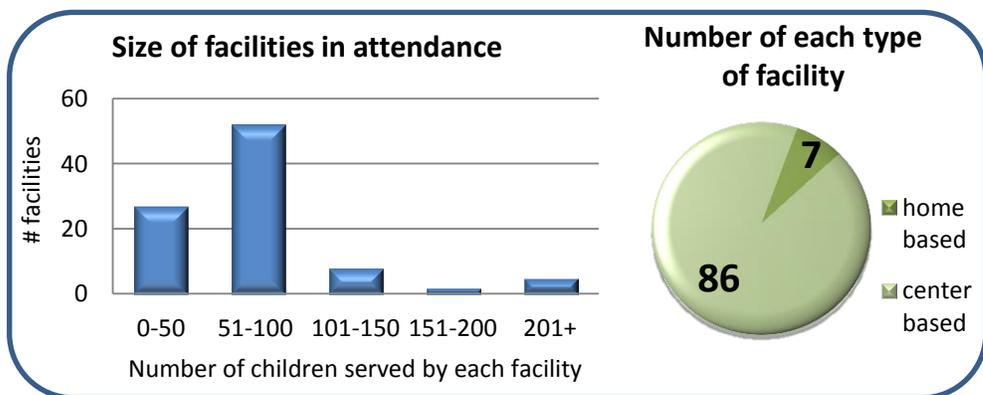


Wellness Roundtables for Child Care: Networking & Peer Support to Sustain Healthy Child Care Environments

In the fall of 2014 Wellness Roundtable events were piloted by Child Care Aware[®] of Missouri, the Missouri Alliance of YMCAs and the Missouri Department of Health & Senior Services in three locations around the state – Springfield, Columbia & St. Louis, MO. The Wellness Roundtable model brings together child care providers in an enhanced training environment that includes formal teaching and interactive participant-lead discussions with the goal of increasing knowledge and skills as well as building efficacy around the application of health promotion practices in the child care setting. Networking is a central component of this model which allows providers to share success stories, brainstorm ideas together and learn from each other in a guided environment. The overarching goals for these training events are:

- Sustain health and wellness best practices among an already engaged network of child care professionals who have previously participated in TSHS, Eat Smart, Move Smart, I am moving I am learning, Cooking Matters, and YMCA’s Healthy Eating & Physical Activity.
- Create ongoing opportunities for child care program staff to support each other in implementing early childhood health and wellness best practices and disseminate new strategies and information.
- Leverage the expertise of current TSHS, Eat Smart & MOve Smart child care programs and offer an opportunity to engage new child care providers around nutrition, physical activity, breastfeeding, parent engagement, and staff wellness practices in the child care setting.

The three pilot Wellness Roundtables held in Columbia, Springfield and St. Louis on the topic of physical activity. Specifically, the learning objectives for these events were, 1) develop an understanding of the need for physical activity in early childhood and the important role it plays in the physical development and creation of healthy, life-long habits, 2) build an awareness of the recommendations for best practice standards for physical activity in the child care setting, and, 3) connect child care professionals to one another and community resources that can aid in the implementation of best practices for physical activity.

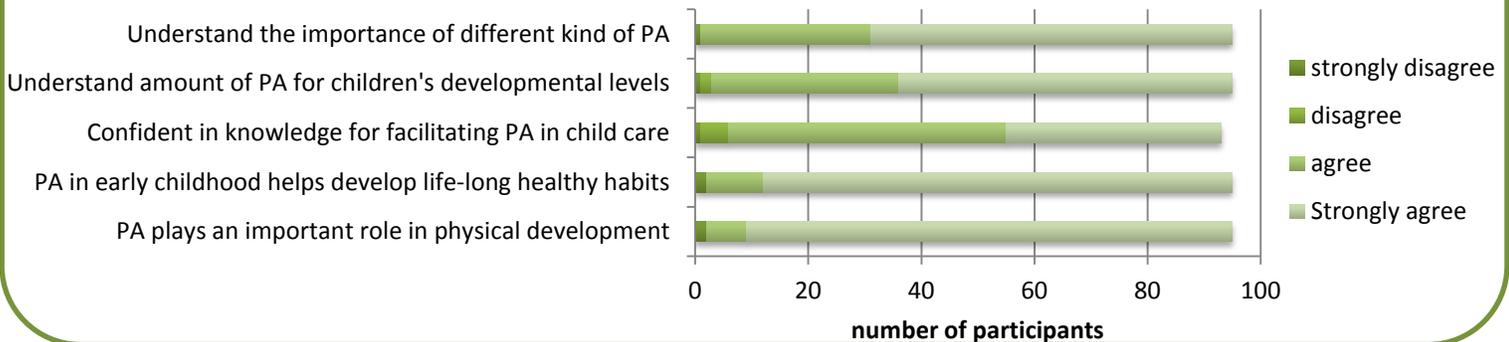


A total of 95 child care workers representing 36 facilities participated in these three events. The majority of participants represented center-based facilities serving 100 or fewer children. Nearly half of participants represented facilities that were Eat Smart certified, however, less than 7% were MOve Smart certified.

Twenty-eight percent (28%) of all attendees had participated in the TSHS program.

Post-training, most participants reported understanding the importance of physical activity in early childhood but were less confident about their ability to implement the recommended age-appropriate amounts of physical activity. Nearly all participants agreed or strongly agreed that they found the training and resources useful.

Knowledge assessment of participants



Participants suggested the following topics for future Wellness Roundtable events:

- Nutrition: Picky eaters, menu planning, healthy cost effective recipes, family style dining
- Family engagement: Communication, educating parents on best practices
- Staff Engagement: Motivation, on-boarding, promoting positive attitudes, stress, planning

Potential Next Steps

- Create a model of regional, quarterly Wellness Roundtables and ongoing resource sharing
- Expand beyond the current 4 population hubs (Springfield, StL, Columbia, KC)
- Leverage the Conference of the Young Years as an annual outreach option
- Design standards for recognition of leaders of health in childcare best practices
- Convene regional stakeholder groups and partners to develop localized engagement
- Leverage the MOCAN messaging and communication group to market and brand
- Seek funding and support to sustain and expand trainings and outreach

Participants' Response:

"A light bulb went off for me when..."

- We discussed "on boarding" with staff as a solution to most participation issues
- Someone mentioned not withholding physical activity as punishment.
- We went over 6 different movements of physical activity
- I heard about incorporating physical activity into regular learning activities.
- We talked about having a "planned" physical activity being prepared for rainy days.
- Learning how easy it is to implement physical activity, whether big or small