



Supporting our Staff to Support our Students We Wish You Well(ness)!

Principal Name: Kelly Wright

School Name: Darrough Chapel Early Learning Center

Team Members' Names: Melanie Giek and Kathy Tokarcik

Principal's Email Contact: kwright@kokomo.k12.in.us

Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2)

- New admin team (Director and Assistant Director) came on in July 2019
- Several program changes to start the year
- Staff was supportive of changes but also uncertain and nervous about what lie ahead; uncertainty adds stress and staff needed to be able to rally together
- A major focus of Head Start is on Staff and Student Wellness
- Wellness committee was already in place and had discussed at the end of last year the need to focus on staff wellness

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 3)

Therefore, the purpose of our action inquiry was to . . .

- The purpose of our action inquiry was to see how focusing on staff wellness could help bring staff together and promote positivity and collaboration in the building. Staff constantly are giving so much of themselves to our children, we wanted to see what would happen if they had "permission" to focus on themselves for a bit.

Our Wondering (Slide 4)

With this purpose, we wondered . . .

- How does focusing on staff wellness impact the supports we are able to give our children?
- How does focusing on staff wellness impact building culture?

Our Actions (Slides 5-8)

- Our IPLI Teacher Team joined forces with our Wellness Committee (one teacher was already on the committee and the other works at our outreach site, which allowed both sites to be involved)
- Wellness Survey was given to all staff covering topics related to: Preventative Health, Nutrition/Healthy Eating, Physical Health, Financial Health, and Mental Health.

- Survey showed our top areas of interest/concern for staff were Nutrition/Healthy Eating and Mental Health, followed very closely by Physical Health.
- Survey showed that staff members preferred email as a way to get wellness information at work. There was also a strong interest in having a set time or place to exercise at work.
- We did a skit to kick off our Wellness initiative at a full staff training in early February.
- We decided to focus on three main staff wellness initiatives to begin:
 - Motivational Mondays (Short emails with a rotation of wellness topics-recipes, exercises, ways to save money, mental health tips)
 - Walking for Wellness (tracking laps walked weekly, taped routes in building, hung motivational signs, added a bonus 7 minute workout station, encouraged team walking)
 - Staff Motivation (Allowed time in staff meetings to walk, model breathing, sharing a resources, and other activities related to wellness; sent positive messages and motivators to staff members; planned incentives to celebrate, community partners (example: Mental Health America) signed up to come share resources with staff)

Data Collection (Slide 9-10)

- Wellness Survey
 - Completed in January
 - Set our Baseline
 - Gave us valuable feedback as we designed our Wellness initiative.
 - Data was also shared with our Community Partners and many of them offered suggestions and resources.
- Walking tracking cards
 - completed by staff daily and tracked weekly/monthly.
 - Staff were encouraged to set goals for themselves.
 - Our plan was to add some challenges and offer incentives. After a month or so, we planned to add some team challenges too.

Our Data (Slide 11)

- Quantitative--Our plan was to give a second Wellness Survey in May in order to compare data from the survey in January. This did not happen due to COVID closure.
- Qualitative Data—We did get feedback on our regular Staff End of Year Survey---that staff did enjoy the walking focus and hoped we could do more of that next school year, especially since it was cut short. We also did have a few staff members who met by Zoom a few times over building closure to do the 7-minute challenge workout together. We also got some positive responses back from some of the Motivational Monday emails that went out.

Our Discoveries (Slide 12-14)

- Focusing on staff wellness does have a positive impact on our school community.
 - Even though we only got the program going for about 4 weeks, we heard lots of positive feedback. We also noticed staff members challenging themselves and each other to get their laps in or practice their breathing (to stay calm). We had some groups who started to walk together and it was neat to see that in the building.
- When staff are in a more positive frame of mind, they are able to give more to their students.
 - Even in the four weeks, we had many staff members who carried over the walking, 7-minute workout, and breathing/calming tips into their classrooms. Whole classes or small groups would walk a lap at certain parts of the day. Other times a staff member would use the lap route to walk, breathe, and talk with a child who was upset.

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 15-16)

- We plan to continue with our Wellness focus next year, especially since our time was cut short. There were pieces we never got to this year and some new ideas---such as walking outside when we return.
- We know that Wellness will be a continued focus for our staff, students, and families next year—and will be even more critical after everyone has dealt with the results of COVID-19 for so long.
- A future goal is to use some of our strategies from our Staff Wellness initiative with families. This is still in the brainstorming stages---but perhaps Motivational Monday emails or social media posts, walking and fitness family challenges, and increased focus on mental wellness at home by sharing more of the resources we use at school.

Bibliography (Slide 17)

- Head Start ECLKC—Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center Website--
<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/>
- Carson, Damon & Cosico-Berge, Lily (2019) Wellness & Well-Being Within Our Workforce—We Will Thrive! Presentation at Frog Street National Conference in July 2019, Texas.
- Mental Health America of Indiana Website--<https://mhai.net/>

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Purpose of This Inquiry

- The purpose of our action inquiry was to see how focusing on staff wellness could help bring staff together and promote positivity and collaboration in the building. Staff constantly are giving so much of themselves to our children, we wanted to see what would happen if they had “permission” to focus on themselves for a bit.



Our Wondering

- How does focusing on staff wellness impact the supports we are able to give our children?
- How does focusing on staff wellness impact building culture?



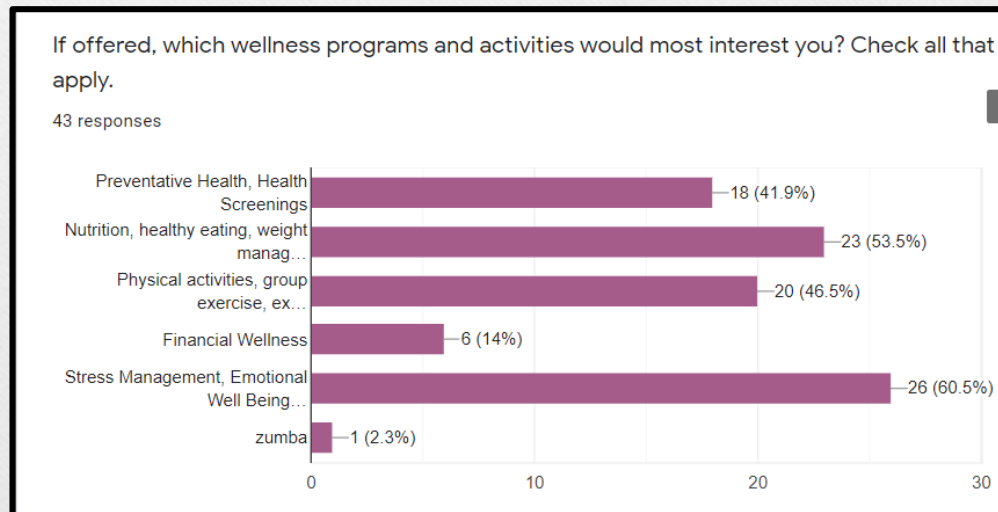
Our Actions-Getting Started

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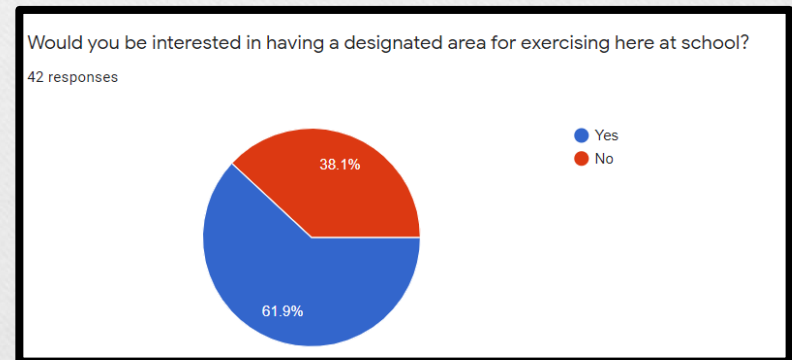
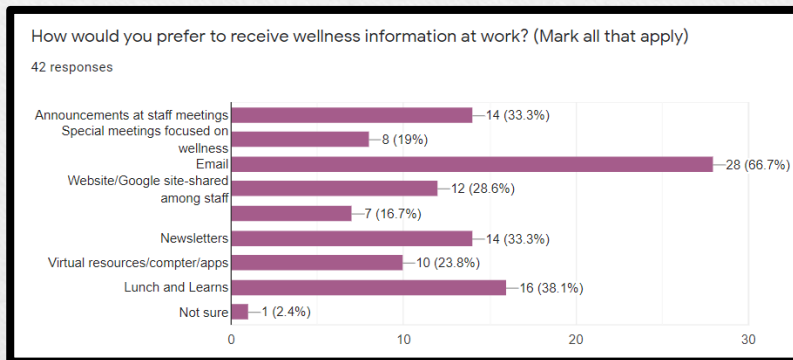
Our Actions-Getting Feedback

- Survey showed our top areas of interest/concern for staff were Nutrition/Healthy Eating and Mental Health, followed very closely by Physical Health.



Our Actions-Getting Feedback

- Survey showed that staff members preferred email as a way to get wellness information at work. There was also a strong interest in having a set time or place to exercise at work.



Our Actions-Implementation

- We did a skit to kick off our Wellness initiative at a full staff training in early February.
- We decided to focus on three main staff wellness initiatives to begin:
 - **Motivational Mondays** (Short emails with a rotation of wellness topics-recipes, exercises, ways to save money, mental health tips)
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Data Collection



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Data Collection

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Name: _____

Begin Date: 2-17-20 4-Week Goal: _____ End Date: 3-13-20

Walking for Wellness at Darrough Chapel

<input type="checkbox"/> laps 7 - min workout	<input type="checkbox"/> laps 7 - min workout	<input type="checkbox"/> laps 7 - min workout	<input type="checkbox"/> laps 7 - min workout	<input type="checkbox"/> laps 7 - min workout
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*We had just finished week 4 when we closed our building due to COVID-19.



Our Data

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Our Discoveries

- Focusing on staff wellness does have a positive impact on our school community.
- When staff are in a more positive frame of mind, they are able to give more to their students.



DISCOVER!



Our Discoveries

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Bibliography/Resources

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