



Children and Families are Fit-2-Play and Having Fun-4-Life

Families focus on getting active and healthy snacks are mandatory for Fit-2-Play summer camp

Each summer thousands of youth participate in summer programs provided by Miami-Dade (FL) Park and Recreation. The department has produced and implemented health focused curriculum during summer months that reaches over 10,000 children.

Developing Program Curriculum

For the first year of the program, Miami-Dade staff developed the Fit-2-Play program which includes informational messages on nutrition and physical activity, in a fun, active environment. The second year the department partnered with a group of local doctors, dieticians, and nutritionists to further refine the program curriculum.



Performance Measurement Features of Fit-2-Play

The Fit-2-Play program includes two main components. A point system to encourage youth and pre/post tests to track individual improvements and program effectiveness. Campers earn points by performing a physical activity, bringing healthy lunches/snacks to camp, and by turning in grocery store receipts to exchange for healthy items at the end of each the summer.

The ability to demonstrate improved health outcomes as a result of participating in this program is an important component for the department. Children’s fitness capacities, weight, height, and body mass index are measured to determine program effectiveness. The President’s Physical Fitness Challenge components (sit-ups, push-ups, shuttle run, and ¼ mile run) are utilized by Fit-2-Play counselors to measure fitness capacities. The results show that most youth enhanced their performance by the last week of camp.

Leading by Example

Camp counselors experience a Fit-2-Play training prior to the start of the program where they are strongly encouraged to lead by example. They are encouraged to eat healthy foods, especially in front of the children, and to refrain from bringing fast food to camp. The staff also sets time aside in their weekly schedule to make healthy snacks with the children.

Celebrating Success

Each summer the Fit-2-Play program concludes with a huge carnival event to celebrate accomplishments and reward participants. Those children that improved their level of fitness (regardless of their initial fitness level) as well as their camp counselors are entered into a raffle to win tickets to Disney World. Campers experience a variety of physical activities during the celebration and the day also includes a recognition ceremony to highlight participation and achievement.

At the start of each summer program youth receive a Fit-2-Play silicone ID band. If they participate in all program components, they receive a Fit-4-Life ID band.

Program Evolution

In 2006, Miami-Dade Park and Recreation added a family fitness component to the successful Fit-2-Play summer program. Participants are given family-oriented fitness activities and healthy recipes on a weekly basis. As with the youth summer camp, a point system is utilized to rewarded families for healthy behaviors such as making a healthy meal, bringing healthy foods for lunch and snacks or performing a physical activity.

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NRPA PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE RATING: Key Factors for Success

P1 People Medical Professionals	P5 Places & Spaces Updated equipment
P3 Programs & Services Summer camp program	P6 Policies & Practices Provided healthy snacks
P4 Public Visibility Local TV and newspaper; camp video promo	P7 Performance Measures Fitness assessment

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