Importance of Kicks4Kids

National statistics show that 13% of children ages 6-12 and 14% of children 12-19 are overweight; children are at high risk for cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and other serious health problems. Because children are important to Oklahoma, Kicks4Kids is an educational program to curb child obesity and promote good health. The target audience is elementary children kindergarten through fourth-grade.
Service Learning through Youth-Adult Partnerships

Kicks4Kids is a youth service learning project with two main goals: 1) To provide an educational curriculum that teaches youth the importance of hygiene, physical fitness, and nutrition; and 2) To create a program where children can receive athletic shoes needed for physical education classes.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service provides the leadership and training for adult and youth volunteers of any youth serving organizations to implement the program.

Kicks4Kids can be implemented as an after school program, complement classroom activities, or could be taught as a workshop.

Unit 1 “Being Clean and Cool”, focuses on hygiene. Participants learn about cleanliness, proper hand washing, and good dental health.

Unit 2 “Feeling Fit” focuses on exercise and physical fitness. Participants are introduced to the five components of fitness; muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, body composition and cardio respiratory endurance.

Unit 3 “Eating Smart from the Start”, utilizes the food pyramid from the USDA, introduces the 6 food groups, serving sizes and how much to eat from each group. Basic food safety and food handling rules will also be taught.

History of the Program

Kicks4Kids is the result of a National 4-H Conference Back Home Action Plan. Two delegations have been involved in the planning, writing, introduction, and testing of this program. A third delegation is being mentored and trained. They will continue introducing, developing, and promoting the program along with collecting and compiling data from the evaluation process.

Youth have been responsible for seeking and writing grants for funding which have totaled $1050 to date. Funds have been used to print materials for distribution.

The Oklahoma Department of Education and the Oklahoma State Superintendent of Education, Sandy Garrett has endorsed the Kicks4Kids program. State Extension Specialists in Family Consumer Sciences and 4-H Youth Development from Oklahoma State and Langston Universities (1890 institution) are serving as resource persons and advisors. The curriculum has been included as part of the youth component of the Healthy Living A-Z Impact Team for OCES Family and Consumer Sciences.

Youth Provide Primary Leadership

This program is an ideal project for teaching service-learning and promoting community partnerships. The youth leadership teams in each community will secure donors for purchasing or supplying the tennis shoes. They are encouraged to network with businesses and local service groups.

Youth make contact with local schools for explanation and implementation of the program. They work with the school to teach the activities, collect evaluation, and deliver shoes to the school contact. Adults are to serve as mentors and counselors to the youth conducting the program.

Local county extension offices will provide professional and volunteer staff time to train, promote, educate, and guide the youth providing the service. County offices will also provide copies of handouts and collect and submit the evaluation data.