

HEALTHY EATING PROMOTION ACTIVITY: EXPERIENCE REPORT

*ATIVIDADE DE PROMOÇÃO DA ALIMENTAÇÃO SAUDÁVEL: RELATO DE
EXPERIÊNCIA*

*ACTIVIDAD DE PROMOCIÓN DE ALIMENTACIÓN SALUDABLE: INFORME DE
EXPERIENCIA*

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ABSTRACT

To report the experience of an activity to promote healthy eating carried out with school children. Experience report, of an activity to promote healthy eating with schoolchildren aged 4 to 5 years, carried out by professionals from the Multidisciplinary Family and Community Health Residency, and Community Health Agents (CHAs), in the city of Horizonte, Ceará. For the systematization, the five times indicated by the author Oscar Holliday were used. The action was divided into two moments: correct hand washing workshop and assembly of fruit skewers. Among the potentialities, the use of workshops and the school as a space for health promotion activities stands out. The challenges involve limited time for planning and execution. Healthy eating activities in schools help to form health habits and promote moments of relaxation.

Keywords: *Healthy Eating; Children; Health Promotion.*

RESUMO

Relatar a experiência de atividade de promoção da alimentação saudável realizada com crianças escolares. Relato de experiência de uma atividade de promoção da alimentação saudável com escolares na faixa etária de 4 a 5 anos, realizada por profissionais da Residência Multiprofissional de Saúde da Família e Comunidade e Agentes Comunitários de Saúde (ACSs), no município de Horizonte, Ceará. Para a sistematização, utilizou-se os cinco tempos indicados pelo autor Oscar Holliday. A ação foi dividida em dois momentos: Oficina de lavagem correta das mãos e Montagem de espetinhos de frutas. Dentre as potencialidades, destaca-se a utilização de oficinas e a escola como espaço para as atividades de promoção da saúde. Os desafios envolvem a limitação de tempo para planejamento e execução. Atividades de alimentação saudável em escolas auxiliam na formação de hábitos em saúde e promovem momentos de descontração.

Descritores: *Alimentação Saudável; Crianças; Promoção da Saúde.*

RESUMEN

Reportar la experiencia de una actividad de promoción de alimentación saludable realizada con escolares. Relato de experiencia de una actividad de promoción de alimentación saludable con escolares de 4 a 5 años, realizada por profesionales de la Residencia Multidisciplinaria de Salud Familiar y Comunitaria y Agentes Comunitarios de Salud (ACS), en la ciudad de Horizonte, Ceará. Para la sistematización se utilizaron los cinco tiempos indicados por el autor Oscar Holliday. La acción se dividió en dos momentos: taller de correcto lavado de manos y montaje de brochetas de frutas. Entre las potencialidades se destaca el uso de talleres y de la escuela como espacio para actividades de promoción de la salud. Los desafíos implican un tiempo limitado para la planificación y ejecución. Las actividades de alimentación saludable en las escuelas ayudan a formar hábitos de salud y promover momentos de relajación.

Descritores: *Alimentación Saludable; Niños; Promoción de la Salud.*

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INTRODUCTION

The *Programa Saúde na Escola* (PSE) is a program that aims to collaborate for the integral formation of students in public education of Basic Education, through prevention, promotion and health care activities. The PSE can be considered as a strategy to unite health and education, having as its essence the link between school and Primary Health Care (PHC)¹.

In the PSE, some health activities are foreseen that aim at health care, promotion and prevention. Some actions indicated are: physical activity and health, nutritional assessment, clinical assessment, promotion of healthy eating, among others¹.

To promote healthy eating, Food and Nutrition Education (FNE) actions are used. FNE can be defined as the field of knowledge and continuous and permanent practice, in a multidisciplinary manner, which seeks to promote healthy eating habits, in a way that generates autonomy and decision-making power for the individual, collaborating to ensure the Human Right to Adequate Food (DHAA). In order for FNE actions to be successful and achieve their goal, it is important to be adapted to the audience that will participate. Thus, as a children's audience, playful tools are widely used, such as the use of movies, music, puppets, workshops and visual arts².

Childhood is a critical period for the formation of healthy eating habits and this phase will be reflected in adult life. Therefore, the school represents an ideal place for strengthening students' proper eating habits and healthy practices³.

Considering the school as an environment for the formation of habits and education, it is important to emphasize the relevance of activities that promote food and nutrition education for school children, since their physical, motor, cognitive and intellectual development are linked to the social inclusion promoted in the school environment and the formation of eating habits throughout life. In view of the above, the objective of the present study is to report the experience of an activity to promote healthy eating with school children.

METHODS

The present study is a descriptive work, of the experience report type, of an activity to promote healthy eating carried out by professionals of the Multiprofessional Residency in Family and Community Health and Community Health Agents (CHAs) of the District of Aningas, in the municipality of Horizonte, Ceará.

The target audience of the activity was children, aged 4 to 5 years, enrolled in the Early Childhood Education Center (CEI) in the municipality of Horizonte, Ceará. The action was planned and developed in May 2023 by the nutritionist, with the participation of the social worker and the dental surgeon (all from the Family and Community Health Residency team). The CHWs of the Aningas District also participated in the planning and execution of the activity. The activity consisted of two moments: a workshop teaching the correct hand washing and the assembly of fruit skewers.

To participate in the action, students aged 4 to 5 years enrolled in the CEI of the District of Aningas were included, and an authorization term was sent to parents and/or guardians.

The activities were carried out through adaptations of the "Activity Booklet Promotion of Adequate and Healthy Eating: Early Childhood Education"⁴ and planned taking into account the target audience, age group and cognitive capacity of the students. For the systematization of the experiments and description of the process, the five times indicated by the author Oscar Jara Holliday were used⁵.

According to the proposal of systematization in five stages, it is recommended that, first, start with the starting point, the second stage is the initial questions, the third stage the recovery of the process experienced, the fourth stage the deep reflection and the last step the points of arrival⁵.

RESULTS

The starting point, which constitutes the first stage of the systematization of the experience, is based on participation in the activity and the recording of this action. The activity to promote healthy eating was held in May 2023, on a Wednesday, in the morning. The action was attended by professionals from the Multiprofessional Family Health Residency Team (nutritionist, social worker and dental surgeon) and CHWs from the Aningas District, in Horizonte, Ceará.

For the planning of the action, the age group, the proposed theme, the necessary materials, as well as the structural conditions available in the chosen location were evaluated. The activity was planned in two moments: a workshop on correct hand washing and assembly of fruit skewers. In the morning, an activity was carried out explaining and demonstrating the correct washing of hands, followed by fruit skewers - activities adapted from the "Activity Booklet Promotion of Adequate and Healthy Eating: Early Childhood Education"⁴.

Regarding the initial questions, the objective of reporting the experience of the activity was to encourage Primary Health Care professionals to carry out PSE activities, in addition to promoting health education strategies.

As for the recovery of the process experienced, the first strategy was to plan the event. For the methodology of the activity, it was decided to use workshops, aiming to inform in a playful way and seeking to adapt the theme to the public, which, in this case, were children in the early childhood age group. To authorize the children's participation in the activity, parents and guardians were given a consent form informing how the moment would be conducted, the materials that were used and the fruits offered to the children.

At the beginning of the activity, a conversation circle was held with the children about fruits and vegetables and which fruits they liked. He was also asked about proper hand washing and its importance. Soon after, the students went in rows towards the hand washbasins, and in each washbasin, two professionals from the team helped.

For the activity teaching the correct hand washing, a small amount of liquid soap was offered to each child and then the facilitators demonstrated the correct washing movements. The sinks on site are adapted to the size of the students and thus each child has more autonomy to carry out the activity.

After the handwashing workshop, the participants went to the CEI cafeteria. In the cafeteria, cut fruits (grapes, oranges, tangerine, papayas, melons, bananas and apples),

blunt wooden skewers, caps and disposable plates were available. Before the start of the workshop, they were asked about their favorite fruits and what the activity would be like. Each child had a free choice of which fruit they wanted on their skewer and the quantities. The facilitators of the action assisted in the organization of the queues, cleaning and assistance in assembling the skewers.

The children interacted a lot with the team of professionals and chose their favorite fruits. Practically all the fruits available had a lot of acceptance, being able to highlight as the most chosen: grapes, apples, bananas and tangerine.

In relation to the fourth proposed time (background reflection), it was possible to analyze and interpret the potentialities, difficulties and challenges of the action with the students.

The formation of a bond between education and PHC was one of the potentialities of the activity, as the school environment is also a space for health promotion.

Another potential is the use of workshops as a tool for the formation of healthy habits in childhood. The children showed a lot of interest in the formation of the fruit skewers and were able to try a good variety of the fruits offered.

The incorporation of CHWs in the workshop was also a potential in the event, as the CHWs present in the activity already had a bond with the school professionals and with the children.

As for the difficulties and challenges, it is possible to mention the high demand for activities of reference professionals in the Basic Health Units (UBS), and actions in schools and public spaces are not carried out so frequently by PHC teams.

Another difficulty for the activity with children is the preparation of materials, because, for each age group, it is necessary to adapt the proposed theme and produce materials to ensure safety in the development of the action, in addition to maintaining interest in the proposed activity.

In relation to the last time, points of arrival, it was possible to perceive the great interaction of the children with the proposed workshops, promoting a moment of learning and fun, in addition to the cognitive and motor stimulus necessary for the execution of the action. It was also perceived the formation of bonds, union between PHC, school and the community, which the actions of the PSE promote.

DISCUSSION

In the first activity, the children were asked about the importance of hand washing, and then they explained how to wash their hands correctly in a practical way. Thus, the students had attention during the explanation and a good interaction with the professionals.

A study carried out with children in a daycare center promoted activities using playful strategies to prevent infection caused by enteroparasites, with emphasis on the importance of hand washing. The action used, at first, digital resources (video) and, later, the practical part of hand washing. In this same study, the children demonstrated that they knew the importance of washing their hands, especially at times such as before meals, and also interacted a lot with the video proposal and the practical activity of hand washing⁶.

In a study published in the *Cadernos ESP Journal*, of the School of Public Health of Ceará, an educational training was carried out with food handlers regarding good handling practices. To address the theme, digital resources and simple language were used for a better understanding and interaction with the target audience. The purpose of the action was to carry out the educational activity in an interactive way with the participants. The didactic material provided in the training presented illustrative images adapted to the activities carried out by the group. The use of the participatory approach allowed a greater proximity between facilitators and the target audience, through which the group was able to express their doubts and questions, making the moment more relaxed and with a great exchange of knowledge⁷.

In one study, of the experience report type, FNE activities involving the consumption of fruits were carried out. The actions were carried out weekly in a school. In the same study, the picnic dynamic was well accepted by the children and the fruits most preferred by the students were bananas, mangoes and apples. The NE actions, in general, were well accepted by the children, as it was noticed that the participants showed interest during all the activities⁸.

Actions that stimulate the development of culinary skills in the school environment and tastings, together with the theoretical component of EAN, are strategies in the formation of healthy eating habits⁹. FNE activities should be constant and preferably included in the children's disciplines, as this strategy enables a broader knowledge and a greater wealth of information about healthy eating, promoting the insertion of healthy habits in the routine of schoolchildren¹⁰.

CONCLUSION

The activity to promote healthy eating carried out in the school environment, which represents a place for the promotion of education and the formation of health habits, provided a moment of education, bonding and fun with the students.

The actions carried out within the scope of the PSE have the potential of the public already trained in the schools, thus reducing the time to attract participants and the physical structure of the school unit, as support for health professionals, and the support of teachers and other employees. It is recommended that activities to promote healthy eating be carried out periodically.

Regarding the challenges for the promotion of PSE actions, the rigidity of the agenda of PHC professionals is perceived, as these activities require specific shifts for the planning and execution of actions. In addition, another challenge is the production of materials, according to the age group of the public, for health promotion at school.

The educational activity given by the resident professionals, together with CHWs, was fundamental to strengthen the promotion of healthy eating. Among the potential of the action, the strengthening of links between health and education, the promotion of extramural health and the encouragement of the development of PSE actions stand out. However, the present study had limitations, but it is noteworthy that the activity was carried out in a single school unit and, thus, reached only a portion of students in the municipality. Another limiting point was the use of perishable food in the workshop and

therefore some adjustments were necessary in relation to the quantity and quality of fruits available in the region.

In view of the above, the results found in this study may support future studies that seek to promote actions to encourage healthy eating with children in the school environment.

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