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PRESchool@HealthyWeight: A Preschool-Based Intervention For Promoting Healthy Eating And Physical Activity In Toddlers

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Oral Presentations Session 8: Other

PRESCHOOL@HEALTHYWEIGHT: A PRESCHOOL-BASED INTERVENTION FOR PROMOTING HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN TODDLERS

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Background and aims

The aim of this study was to gain insight in the effect of a preschool-based intervention for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) teachers on promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers.

Methods

In a cluster randomized controlled trial, 37 preschools of child care organization Impuls in Amsterdam Nieuw-West, the Netherlands, were randomly allocated to an intervention or control group. In total, 115 female ECEC teachers (mean age: 42 ± 9 years) participated. The intervention for ECEC teachers consisted of two existing Dutch programs: 'A Healthy Start' and 'PLAYgrounds'. The practices and knowledge of ECEC teachers concerning healthy eating and physical activity and the level of confidence in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers was assessed at baseline and 9 months of follow-up. To examine the effect of the intervention linear mixed models were used.

Results

Preliminary analyses of the practices indicated that Activity-related-Teaching/Autonomy-Support was increased in the intervention group (mean difference: 0.181), but not in the control group (mean difference: -0.048; p-value group*time: 0.025). Food-related-Pressure-to-Eat was decreased in the intervention group (mean difference: -0.580), but not in the control group (mean difference: -0.158; p-value group*time: 0.014). No effect of the intervention was found on knowledge (p-value group*time: 0.24) and the level of confidence (p-value group*time: 0.98) of ECEC teachers.

Conclusions

The preschool-based intervention seems to increase Activity-related-Teaching/Autonomy-Support and to decrease Food-related-Pressure-to-Eat. No effects were seen on knowledge and level of confidence of ECEC teachers in promoting healthy eating and physical activity in toddlers.