



# Institute for Community Health

A collaboration of the Cambridge Health Alliance, Mount Auburn Hospital, and Partners Healthcare

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### **Fit together family nights: Promoting healthy weight by reaching out to families and school communities.**

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Family involvement is essential for achieving healthy eating and physical activity changes, however reaching families is challenging. Objective: To promote healthy weight by educating Cambridge families and school communities about healthy eating and physical activity, using the 5-2-1 message. Methods: Fit Together (FT) events at K-8 schools in Cambridge, MA offer the following components: demo of novel physical education (PE) activities, "do-it-yourself" wrap meal and demo, multidisciplinary talk-show style presentation, and child performance such as dancing show or nutrition play. To aid retention of participants, each FT event ends with a raffle of healthy prizes (i.e., fruit baskets, running shoes) donated by the local business community. Events are evaluated by survey at the end of the evening. Results: To date 10 of 12 Cambridge K-8 schools have held successful events. A Georgia elementary school has replicated the event, utilizing the planning tools. FT events were attended by an average of 30 families and 90 individuals. Evaluation results showed that events were successful in providing participants with ideas for physical activity, eating fruits and vegetables and reducing screen time. BMI trajectory of children of participating families will be evaluated and presented. Discussion: We believe that our ability to attract families was due to 1) offering a meal, 2) having children perform (so parents come to see them) 3) raffle prizes and 4) recruitment through the schools.