

# Media-Smart Youth<sup>®</sup>

*Eat, Think, and Be Active!*

## Program Evaluation



### What makes Media-Smart Youth successful?

Through media awareness and media production, Media-Smart Youth motivates young people to think about nutrition and physical activity and helps them become aware of the connections between media and their health.

◆ **Media-Smart Youth** offers youth healthy, low-fat snack options, which provide much-needed fuel for youth after a long day in school, while also exposing youth to foods that they may have been otherwise reluctant to try:

“One [student] said she tried a vegetable she thought she didn’t like, and found she did like it.”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator*

**Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!** is an interactive after-school education program for young people ages 11 to 13. The lessons teach youth about the complex media world around them and about how it can affect their health—especially in the areas of nutrition and physical activity.

A recently completed rigorous evaluation of the Media-Smart Youth program found that the lessons worked in after-school settings and had a statistically significant positive effect on participating groups of young people compared with groups who did not participate. More details about the evaluation are included below.

### How was the evaluation conducted?

The *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), part of the National Institutes of Health, conducted the in-depth evaluation of Media-Smart Youth using multiple quantitative and qualitative methods. Highlights include the following:

- ◆ Using a randomized groups design, pairs of schools with after-school programs were matched according to the socioeconomic status of the school and were randomly assigned to either the experimental or the control group.
- ◆ Pre- and post-tests were administered to groups of youth participating in the program.
- ◆ Qualitative interviews were conducted with program facilitators.
- ◆ Facilitator logs and observer notes were used to document the steps in delivering the curriculum lessons and activities.



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*Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute  
of Child Health and Human Development

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“The young people learned a lot about alternate foods that taste good and are better for [them]. They were going to ask their moms to start buying the healthier snacks, such as yogurt and granola. They wanted to share the information with their school and cafeteria.”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator,  
Girl Scouts of Pine Valley Council*

- ◆ **Media-Smart Youth** is fun and engaging for participants and facilitators:

“After we finished creating physical activity jingles, the kids [begged] to do more of the “Fit to be Tried” activity, so I put it on for another two minutes.”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator*

“The students had fun learning, worked well together, and were anxious to participate. They led the *Action Break* at each session and begged to do it even when time had run out.”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator,  
Montana 4-H*

- ◆ **Media-Smart Youth** is educational and informative:

“[One] boy said he was at the store looking at microwave popcorn and was surprised at [how much fat] the ‘movie popcorn’ flavor had...I asked if he ever looked at labels and he said, ‘not before this.’”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator*

“During the grocery store tour, one of the girls was very involved in looking at food labels. Her mother reported that she came home and asked her to purchase a different kind of bread which contained more fiber and natural whole grains as a result of her new knowledge base.”

*Media-Smart Youth Facilitator,  
Girl Scouts of the Rio Grande*

## What were the evaluation results?

- ◆ Youth who participated in Media-Smart Youth groups displayed an overall increase in knowledge and skills in nutrition, physical activity, media awareness, and media analysis compared with youth in the groups who did not participate.
- ◆ Results showed a significant difference between the groups that participated in Media-Smart Youth and those that did not in terms of their intention to do more weight-bearing activities in the next month.
- ◆ The findings indicated a strong trend among youth who participated in the Media-Smart Youth groups for showing greater changes in their intention to eat fewer high-fat snack foods and to eat or drink more foods with calcium during the next month.
- ◆ Evaluators obtained useful feedback from the facilitators about the successes and challenges of administering the program in after-school settings.

## How can I learn more about Media-Smart Youth?

The full Program Evaluation Report is available on the Media-Smart Youth Web site at <http://www.nichd.nih.gov/msy>. The Web site also provides background information on the development of the program and links to Media-Smart Youth materials for download and order.

If you have additional questions about Media-Smart Youth, contact us at [MediaSmartYouth@mail.nih.gov](mailto:MediaSmartYouth@mail.nih.gov).

To order free copies of the Media-Smart Youth Facilitator’s Guide and other materials, contact the NICHD Information Resource Center at 1-800-370-2943 (TTY: 1-888-320-6942) or at [NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov](mailto:NICHDInformationResourceCenter@mail.nih.gov).

