



Balancing Food and Play

The *Balancing Food & Play* curriculum was designed to improve knowledge and behaviors related to the following four educational constructs:

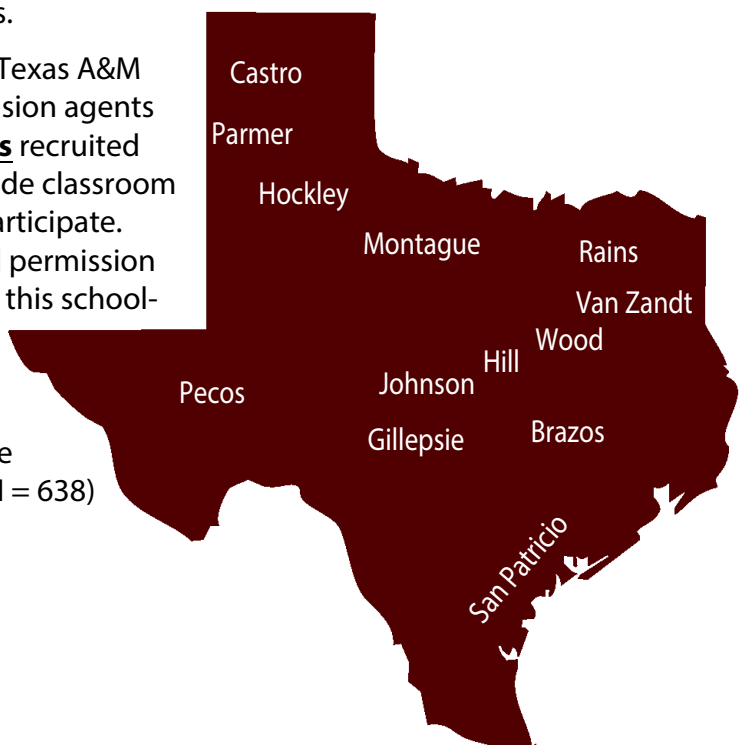
- snacking on fruits and vegetables,
- drinking milk with meals and water with snacks,
- encouraging 60 minutes of physical activity each day, and
- limiting screen time to two hours or less per day.

The curriculum contains four elements: 20 lesson plans, eight take-home reading assignments, four parent letters, and a 41-page journal for each student. The second edition of the *Balancing Food & Play* curriculum incorporates the Food Guidance System called *MyPlate*. The *MyPlate* icon serves as a reminder for healthy eating and illustrates the five food groups.

Relevance

Too many adults and children weigh too much. Texas is now the tenth most obese state in the nation. The obesity rate among children is especially concerning, as it foretells a lifelong struggle with weight-related poor health — and its associated increased need for medical care. Best practice behaviors associated with healthful weight have been identified and include an eating pattern consistent with *MyPlate*, increasing physical activity, and decreasing sedentary behaviors. For children to adopt best practice behaviors, education, skills building, family engagement, and community support are required. School-based interventions, which include family engagement, augment and reinforce other obesity efforts.

During 2018, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension agents in **13 counties** recruited local third grade classroom teachers to participate. They received permission to implement this school-enrichment program, and 638 students completed the curriculum. (N = 638)



Balancing Food & Play



Gender Breakdown



Male

49%

Female

51%

Knowledge Questions (Mean Correct – Pre-1.31/Post-2.69)

How many minutes a day should a child your age be physically active?



Correct Answer:
60 minutes

Pre	#	Post	#
48%	306	74%	472

Children your age should have no more than how many hours a day of screen time?



Correct Answer:
2 hours

Pre	#	Post	#
33%	210	64%	408

How much of your dinner plate should be filled with vegetables or fruits & vegetables?



Correct Answer:
½ of plate

Pre	#	Post	#
29%	185	58%	370

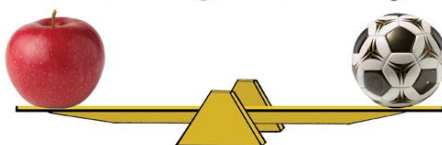
How many teaspoons of sugar are in a can of regular (not diet) soda?



Correct Answer:
10 teaspoons

Pre	#	Post	#
22%	140	73%	466

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Ethnic Breakdown



Behavior Questions (Self-reported)

How often do you get at least 60 minutes (1 hour) of physical activity each day?



Pre	#	Post	#
55%	351	79%	504

How often do you drink regular (not diet) soda each day?

(Never or Almost Never)



Pre	#	Post	#
33%	210	42%	269

Yesterday, did you have screen time away from school?

(Yes, 2 or less hours)

(Yes, 2 or less hours)



Pre	#	Post	#
75%	479	90%	574

Yesterday, did you have any physical activity?

(Yes, 1 hour or more)

(Yes, 1 hour or more)



Pre	#	Post	#
46%	294	74%	472