

Growing Healthy is Fun! A co-creation nutrition intervention to children aged 3-6 years

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Background: In order to promote healthier eating habits and consequently lower obesity levels, that it is important for children to have knowledge of diet and nutrition.

Objectives: Increase nutritional knowledge about healthy eating and Portuguese food wheel in children aged 3-6years.

Methods: Our group developed the Growing Healthy is Fun! to 3-6 years old children, at the Kindergarten of Obra Kolping. Several funny activities were planned, in order to instill knowledge about healthy eating and Portuguese food wheel, leading to best eating practices and adequate nutritional status. Structured interviews were conducted with the children pre and post the intervention for all children that parents or guardian delivered a written informed consent.

Results: At pre intervention, the percentages of children that considered the example food as healthy food are: 100% for apple, beans, carrots and unflavored milk; 57.1% for fish; 28.6% for chocolate and cake. At post intervention the results are: 100% for apple, beans, carrots and unflavored milk; 85,7% for fish; and 0% for chocolate, cake and pizza. About Portuguese food wheel knowledge, at pre intervention, all children indicated cauliflower and banana, 71.4% considered olive oil and plain milk, 42.9% considered cake, and 28.7% considered egg and candy as foods belonging to the wheel. In post intervention, 100% of children considered egg, olive oil, cauliflower and bananas as food belonging to the wheel and 71.4% of them considered milk as belonging to the food wheel. Chocolate, candies, hamburger and cake were not classified as part of the food wheel. The gains in nutritional knowledge are represented in figure 1.

Discussion: With the intervention, it was possible to transmit to the children information about healthy eating and the results showed that the activity was successful..

Conclusion: This intervention allowed the children to increase knowledge about the difference between healthy and unhealthy foods, as well as those belonging to a Portuguese food wheel.



Figure 1: Gains in nutritional knowledge in children from pre to post intervention