

Youth in Motion: Healthy Lifestyle Choices  
Age Range: 5-12

A community task force of educators, medical experts and community activist convened in New Orleans, Louisiana to look at the prevalence of youth risk behaviors, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Upon examination of both quantitative and qualitative data it was clear that local youth were making poor choices in the areas of nutrition, fitness, violence, safety and substance abuse. In 2000, Healthy Lifestyle Choices (HLC) was formed as a non-profit organization to embark on a pilot program to reduce these youth risk behaviors. After implementing a combination of programming and hands-on intervention in 14 public school sites, HLC learned consistent instruction in behavioral-health knowledge and skills produced measurable behavior change.

As a result of the study, HLC developed and published a cross-curricular, behavioral-health program that can be used as part of physical education/health classes, in traditional classroom settings or during after-school and summer camp programs. The program addresses the five risk behaviors identified by the CDC as contributing to the leading causes of early death and disability in children. The topics include: nutrition, fitness, conflict resolution, safety and substance abuse prevention. In addition, the HLC program meets all important ideas, issues and concepts related to health literacy and achieving good health.

The HLC Program has been developed for use in grades K through 6<sup>th</sup>. Additionally, programs are currently being piloted for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Evaluation Highlights**

Findings reported here are based on an independent process and outcome evaluation conducted by a senior evaluator from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), 2002-2005.

- Children exposed to HLC programming demonstrated significantly higher health knowledge than peers without HLC
- Children put their health knowledge into action, eating healthier on campus, demonstrating safer behaviors and exhibiting fewer behavioral problems
- Knowledge gains from HLC translated into behavior changes in the home

### **Implementation**

HLC includes 24 instructional lessons to be taught as one 45-minute lesson per week, or divided into shorter, multiple weekly lessons. Each unit begins with a two-page overview, outlining each lesson's objectives, vocabulary and literature. Introductory pages outline how the units correlates to the National Health Education Standards and provide core subject integration including language arts, visual arts, science, social studies, math, physical education and dramatic arts. The HLC program also offers a variety of user-friendly assessments to document health knowledge gains and behavior change.

To view our scope and sequence, sample lessons and online resources, visit [www.hlconline.org](http://www.hlconline.org).

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