



The Säjai® Foundation: Who We Are and What We Do

Why?

Childhood obesity has increased to frightening levels:

- Nearly 1 in 5 children between the ages of 6-19 are obese.
- Pediatricians have begun recommending cholesterol screenings and medication for kids as young as 8
- According to the CDC, 26% of kids watch 4+ hours of TV per day; 67% watch 2+ hours daily.
- Participation in outdoor recreation activities has declined more than 20% in the past 20 years.
- The current generation of children may be the first in decades to have a shorter life span than their parents.

What?

The Säjai® Foundation is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to teaching children why to value and how to live a healthier life by encouraging them to experience the outdoors, to be active and to make smart nutrition decisions.

Our programs:

Wise Kids®

The original Wise Kids program focuses on Energy Balance, which provides a framework for decision-making around smart nutrition and activity choices. It promotes a healthy, lifelong approach to staying in balance for good health. Topics cover both the Energy IN (Energy Balance, Food Pyramid, Calories, Food Labels) and Energy OUT (Heart, Body Composition, Activity, Balance in Action) sides of the equation over nine weeks of programming. The curriculum teaches youth ages 6 to 11 through self-directed workbooks, learning activities, and physical activity.

Wise Kids® Two

A logical follow-up to the original Wise Kids after-school wellness program, Wise Kids Two seeks to broaden the knowledge base that the kids gained about Energy Balance. Also a nine-week program, Wise Kids Two covers the Energy IN and Energy OUT topics of Energy Balance, Goal Setting, Serving Size, Vitamins, Water, Muscles, Bones, and Balance in Action/Moving it Outside.

Wise Kids® Outdoors

Children today are spending less time outdoors. The Wise Kids Outdoors program is an evaluated after-school and summer program which gives children ages 6 to 11 the opportunity to explore nature outside their door while teaching them about the importance of eating right and being physically active. Each session sends the kids on outdoor adventure missions, guided by trained staff. They'll learn about critters, bugs, and the natural environment as well as gain knowledge about how to be prepared to go on outdoor adventures.

Where?

Currently Wise Kids programs are being offered by youth-serving agencies in 32 states, and we're able to provide them in Canada as well. Programs are sold as turn-key kits giving agencies all the resources they need for training staff and delivering the programs to children. As of July, 2009, more than 8,200 children have been given the opportunity to learn about health and wellness through one of the Wise Kids programs. Most programs are offered through after-school or out-of-school-time programs, an important partner for these reasons:

- Nearly 6.5 million kids are in out-of-school-time programs across the U.S. and more than 15 million children and youth are on their own after school because quality, affordable programs don't exist.
- More than 30,000 after-school programs are offered.
- Quality out-of-school-time programs have been shown to have a strong impact on kids in terms of their personal, social, and academic behaviors.
- More than 45% of programs lack the funds necessary to sustain quality programs.

Results?

In partnership with the University of Minnesota and Penn State, we've developed survey tools that allow us to evaluate changes in attitudes, values behaviors, and knowledge levels among participants.

How?

The Säjai® Foundation's vision is to create positive community-level changes in childhood obesity to help kids become active and healthy, as well as appreciative of and involved with nature. We do this by providing youth leaders with all the tools and resources they need to bring kids to that level; helping families learn and promote healthy lifestyles and outdoor exploration with their children; and helping the broader community engage everyone in teaching kids why healthy living is important and fun.

Get involved!

There are so many ways you can help support the Foundation's work—ask us about our Wish List! Or consider sponsoring a child. Just \$25 gives one child nine weeks of health and wellness education. How many children could you sponsor?

Healthier kids. Healthier communities. Healthier world.

