

KIDS CAFE

A PROGRAM OF THE FOOD
BANK OF CENTRAL AND
EASTERN NORTH
CAROLINA

Annual Evaluation 2010

A cross sectional survey of Kids Cafe personnel, parents, and participants

Jocelyn D. Taliaferro , MSW, PhD

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Final Report**2010 Evaluation of the Kids Cafe:****A Program of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina****Sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina****By Jocelyn D. Taliaferro, PhD**

The Kids Cafe was initiated by Feeding America in 1993 and has been administered locally by the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina (FBCENC) since 1999. The program is sponsored by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina. Kids Cafe is an after-school program that offers tutoring, mentoring, nutrition education, physical activity, and nutritious meals to children at risk of hunger. Children are defined as at risk for hunger if they are from low-income communities and qualify for free and reduced price school lunches. The goal of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina's Kids Cafe program is to provide children who are at risk for hunger access to nutritious meals in addition to academic and health education in a safe, well-supervised, and easily accessed environment. Additionally, the program promotes parental involvement. The FBCENC commissioned this annual evaluation of its Kids Cafe program as a part of its continuous program improvement efforts.

The objectives of the FBCENC Kids Cafe are as follows:

Academic Enrichment:

1. To maintain or increase academic performance in a minimum 75% of program participants.
2. To foster a positive attitude toward school and academic subjects.

Mentoring:

1. To provide support, direction and encouragement to children in both academic and social activities by providing one-on-one interaction with students.
2. To support the social interaction of children using group activities while also seeking to improve self-esteem.

Nutrition Education:

1. To hold monthly nutrition education activities which educate children on the importance of healthy eating and its positive effects.
2. To encourage healthy eating habits of children during and outside of the program.

Nutritious Meals:

1. To provide a meal based on USDA guidelines, excluding milk, to every child enrolled each program day.

Physical Activity:

1. To provide monthly opportunities for children to play in a structured and safe environment using the Be Active North Carolina curriculum.
2. To foster an increased understanding of the importance of an active lifestyle.

Parental Empowerment:

1. To provide a system of support that provides parents with resources to support their child's academic and health potential – as well as their own – by distributing the quarterly publication, *PARTNERSHIP: A Parent's Resource*.

During the months of January – May 2010, surveys were distributed to the directors of the Kids Cafe sites as well as to participants in the Kids Cafe program and their parents. Survey data were analyzed using the computer statistical software, SPSS. Qualitative data were examined using manifest and latent content analysis methods. This report details the results of the evaluation and will be used by the Food Bank to monitor and enhance the program.

Program Descriptions*Kids Cafe Program Goals and Funding*

Twenty- of the 27 Kids Cafe sites eligible to participate in the evaluation completed program surveys. All 20 participating sites implemented programs with mission statements that were congruent with the goals of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina (FBCENC) as evidenced by the levels of importance ascribed to each of the Kids Cafe program goals. All the agencies reported that providing academic enrichment, nutrition education, and promoting children's overall development were very important. Programs generally embraced missions that focused on strengthening families and children through a "holistic" approach. They also reported that it was the goal of their respective programs to provide nutritional education, supervision, academic enrichment, cultural appreciation, and overall child development. Although the number of Kids Cafe faith-based partnerships is low, 53 % of the program directors suggested that faith-based or religious instruction was at least a little important. Those who did not find this goal important cited restrictions of 501(c)3 nonprofit status as the reason it was not at all important.

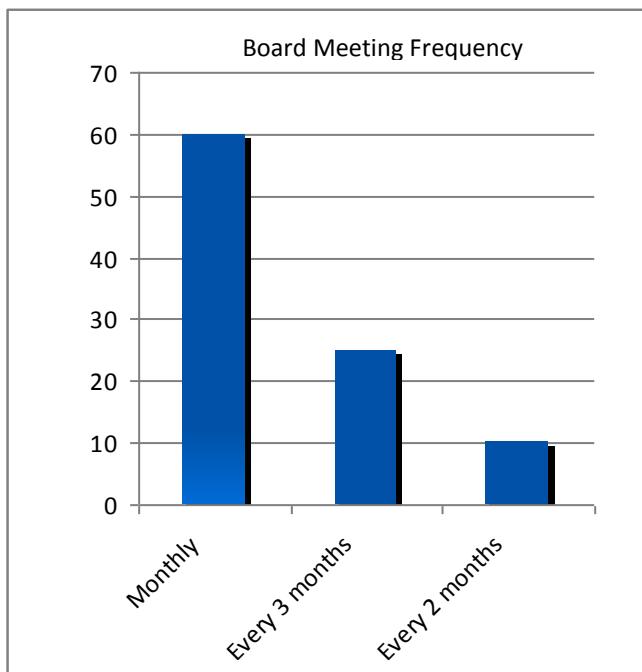
Program Goal Congruence

		not at all importan t	a little importa nt	very important
1.	To provide after school supervision to students	-	5	95
2.	To provide academic enrichment (tutoring, homework clubs, gifted and talented activities)	-	-	100
3.	To provide nutrition education to students	-	-	100
4.	To provide faith based/religious instruction to students	47	16	37
5.	To teach children to appreciate their own and/or other cultures	-	10	90
6.	To promote children's overall development (social, language, mental, etc.)	-	-	100

Two of the programs were implemented by for-profit organizations and less than half (45%) charged parent fees. Fifteen percent of the programs accepted purchase of care funds. These funds would be available to the 42 % of licensed programs. However, the programs had multiple funding streams including grant funding (74%), private donations (75%), fundraising (20%), and local government funding (4.5%). Of the 47% that charged fees, the fee schedules ranged from \$5 per year - \$60 per week.

Program directors reported these fee schedules on the Kids Cafe survey, even though Kids Cafe is a free program. These findings suggest that Kids Cafe activities may be embedded in larger programs of the organizations. For instance, one program offers a larger scale after school program but reserves Kids Cafe meals and specific activities for the end of the program day. Kids Cafe participants are not charged a fee but this implementation structure serves as a means of leveraging programmatic resources. Another program has variable eligibility requirements and sliding fee scales for their program activities, with those qualifying for Kids Cafe services in essence being subsidized by fees charged for other organizational programming. These different funding mechanisms are represented in the responses noted above.

Governance, Organization Structure and Capacity



All of the nonprofit organizations have an elected board of directors with a median of 13.5 members (a range of 4-32 members). According to survey responses, the boards of directors met at least every 3 months, with the majority of them (63%) meeting monthly. Seventy-four percent of the boards had an independent audit within the last 18 months. This number was slightly up from 62% last year.

As stated previously, the majority of the sites are nonprofit organizations. Most sites were using best practices, with 80 % (down from 90% last year) having an employee handbook and 65 % with a parent handbook. The majority (85%) of the programs conduct annual evaluations for employees and 85% offer

opportunities for continuing education and training (e.g., in-service training, conferences). Technical assistance has been received by 68 % of the programs. Technical assistance is defined as advice, recommendations, information, equipment, literature, instructions, and materials provided for program implementation. It has come in many forms, the most often reported was

information technology but also including fiscal consultation, literature, teaching, equipment, local and state government information and early childhood education instruction,

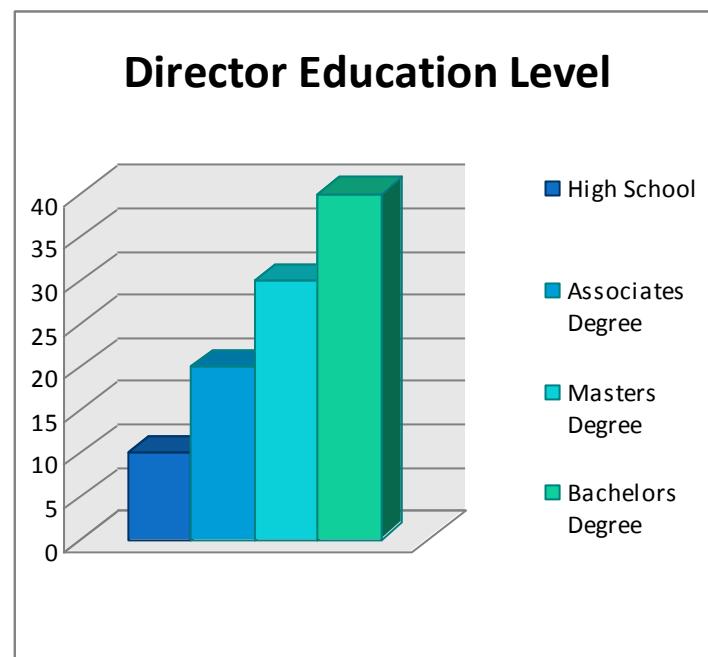
The median number of Kids Cafe paid program staff was 4.5. However, there was substantial variation in the range of staff of 1 - 23. Most of the programs (87%) had 12 or fewer staff members. Four of the programs had no full time staff but the median full time staff size was one with one organization having as many as 10 full time equivalent (FTE) positions. The median part time equivalent (PTE) staff size was four with a range of 0 - 17 PTE.

The median number of female staff was three and only two programs reported having no female staff members. While the staffs were predominantly female, 81% of the programs had at least one male staff member while half had between one and three male staffers. Most of the programs (85%) were fully staffed. Only 3 vacancies exist in all the programs combined.

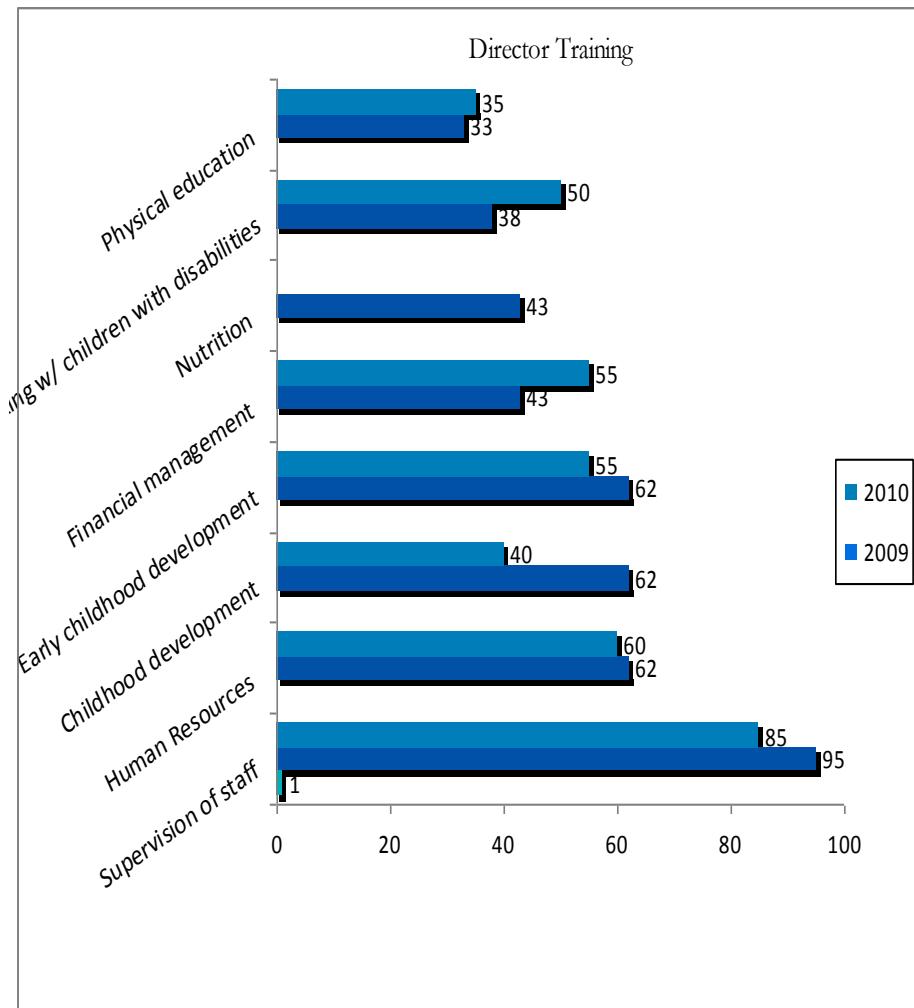
Each year Kids Cafe programs are recognized by not only the FBCENC but other organizations as well. As a testament to their programmatic structure and achievement, many of the sites had won special recognition, awards, or honors including:

- Standards of Excellence Award from Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina
- Local church award nominations
- Community Service Award
- Jr. League Legacy Fund Award
- Recognized for planting a community garden
- Been featured on television, radio, and newspapers for impacting the lives of children and families.

The overwhelming majority (90%) of the directors had a college degree (Associate's, Bachelor's or Master's degree). Their degrees were in education or a variety of business or social science disciplines. The areas of study represented included business, management, child development and family relations, counseling, criminal justice, early childhood education, education, health and applied human sciences, journalism, psychology, and sociology. Further, the directors have a wealth of specialized training including human resources (60%), supervision of staff (85%), financial management (55%), early childhood development (55%), childhood development (40%), working with children with disabilities (50%), nutrition (40%) and physical



education (35%). Directors were paid for a median 40 hours per week to work in the program, 10 more hours than in 2009. However, 39% of the directors were paid to work 20 hours or less. A full 27 % of the directors worked more than 40 hours in the program, irrespective of the number of hours for which they were paid. This finding has been consistent over the course of several years. It speaks to the dedication of the directors and program staff. Of the directors that responded to the query regarding salaries, the median salary range was \$21,000 to \$30,999. This range is lower than the NC household median income of \$46,574; however, it must be noted in this comparison that It is unknown if directors are sole providers or their salaries are only a portion of the household income.



Program/Service Capacity

Directors reported a total of 2,339 unduplicated program participants over the course of the year. The median program capacity was 60 slots. Consistent with the goals of Kids Cafe, 75 % of the programs report having over 75 % of the children enrolled eligible for reduced or free lunch. Thirty-five percent of the programs had 100 % of children eligible for this benefit. Only one of the programs had less than 50 % of children who receive reduced or free lunch. These numbers speak to an overwhelming need for the program.

More than half the programs (55%) have children enrolled who have disabilities. However, cumulatively, less than 5 % of program participants are reported as having any type of disability. Most often, the disability reported by the directors was an emotional disability. It is not known if these numbers represent diagnosed or suspected disabilities. Further, it is likely

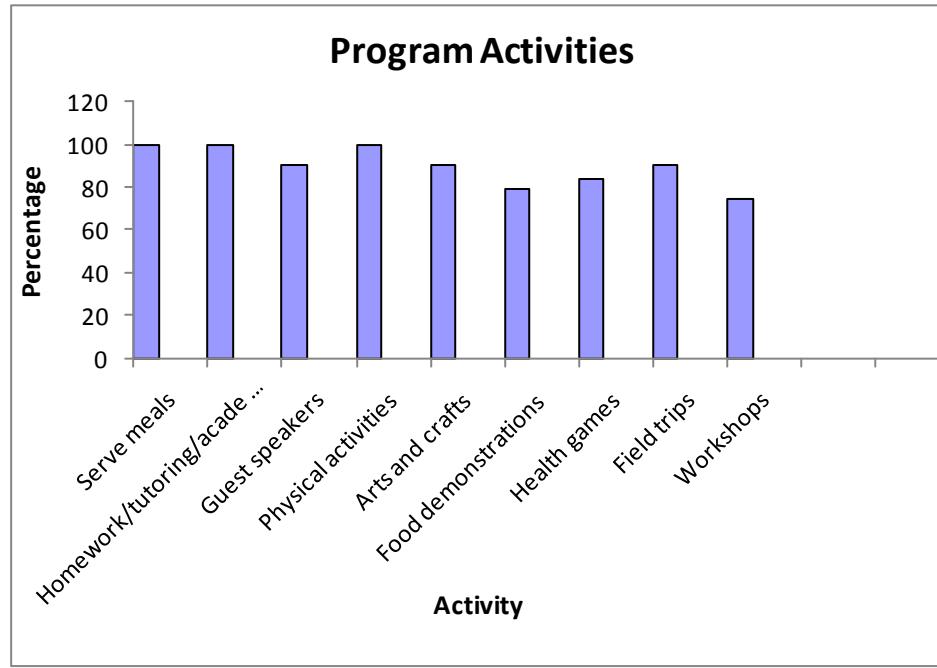
that these numbers are under-reported, as often children are undiagnosed or do not disclose a disability status.

The majority (65%) of children travel less than five miles to the program. Five percent, down from 19% in 2009, travel more than 10 miles. Although half of the sites provide transportation to participants, the program directors reported that students also use a myriad of transportation methods to get to the program including riding with parents, relatives, or friends (65%), and taking the school bus (85%).

It is important to note that many of the programs offer the Kids Cafe program as a larger or comprehensive service offering. As such, the numbers of students reported, may reflect the total number of students enrolled in the program rather than only those that are served by the Kids Cafe program.

Program Activities

All sites served meals and majority of those meals (90%) were based on the USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program meal requirements. This percentage may have been higher if milk were included in the FBCENC distribution. However, the FBCENC provides juice as a substitute for milk.



programs had arts and crafts (90%), field trips (90%), and health games (84%), while 79% had food demonstrations.

Workshops, trainings, guest presentations and other activities focus on personal hygiene, drugs and alcohol, bullying, peer pressure, leadership, health and hygiene, team building, gang prevention, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, CPR, general health, crime, fashion and appearance, and poverty. Other activities include aerobics, bowling, movies, games (e.g., board games, tag, Twister, etc.), cultural events and festivals.

Children in the Kids Cafe program generally have regular opportunities for outside play. Seventy percent play outside daily (weather permitting) and an additional 20% play outside 2 – 3 times per week. Slightly less than half (47%) had a gymnasium on site but only 32 % of the programs were without an outdoor playground on site. However, half of the programs (42%) used other physical activity facilities as a supplement to their primary facility. These included local parks, public or club pools, outdoor fields (e.g., baseball, football), community centers and playgrounds.

When asked how the FBCENC could enhance or supplement the physical education component of the program, the most common request from the directors was that the FBCENC could provide physical education equipment including balls, ropes, and outdoor equipment (e.g., portable basketball hoops). One director suggested that “Ideas shared from other agencies could be passed along to everyone, any educational materials would [also] be appreciated.”

Most of the programs (85%) do not take weight measurements of the youth participants but all feel like the program is impacting the participants’ health outcomes.

Food & Nutrition:

All of the programs rated the nutrition education component of the program as important or very important. Similarly 95% of directors used the nutrition education materials and found them valuable. Only one program did not find it important or did not use this component of the curriculum. Although most of the programs relied on the FBCENC for materials, the programs obtained nutrition education information from multiple sources including:

- National/Parent organization
- NC State Nutrition Science Program
- Health department
- County Extension agency, 4-H specifically
- Program staff and community volunteers with expertise in the field
- Smart Start
- Lending library
- Internet
- Volunteer nutritionist

Most programs fulfill the nutrition education component of the Kids Cafe program by distributing and posting literature, modeling appropriate nutrition by providing nutritious meals and holding discussions. Discussions focused on food handling, the food pyramid, and benefits of proper nutrition. Several programs noted having a weekly theme or new food introduced on a weekly basis. Some groups take on a slightly more participatory role by having students plan meals using the news paper, participate in mock shopping exercises, and prepare meals.

The use of curricula and guest speakers were common practices among the programs. Many of the programs reported working with other organization or receiving technical assistance on the nutrition education component of the program. As in previous years, a few directors reported that they needed additional help with this component of the program, specifically gaining access to age-appropriate information for the participants. When asked for ways the

FBCENC could supplement or help improve nutrition education suggestions included the following:

“Adding additional fun worksheets... activity books”

“More up-to-date information”

“Nutrition games and a specific curriculum would be helpful”

“Provide more on-site workshops, provide field trips to nutritional education sites”

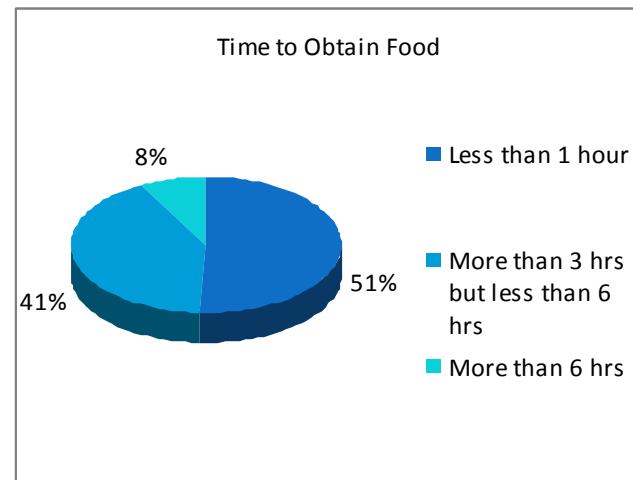
“Receiving additional materials to distribute would help, especially with the parents.”

The majority (90%) of directors would like fresh produce. The most common requests were for apples, oranges, bananas, strawberries, carrots, tomatoes, lettuce, corn and other fresh vegetables.

The programs have begun to diversify the source of food for their programs. Almost half (47%) received food from sources other than the FBCENC. However, the FBCENC remained an “important” or “very important” source of food for all the programs. The frequency of obtaining food from the Food Bank varied. However, most of the programs (80%) obtained food at least monthly. One program did not have a regular schedule for obtaining food but simply utilized the Food Bank on an as needed basis. Obtaining food from the FBCENC is somewhat easy (21%) or easy (68%) and takes less than 3 hours, including travel time, for most programs (74%); most programs (90%) travel less than 60 miles to obtain food from the FBCENC.

Directors acknowledged that the FBCENC had made improvements in their processes or they were satisfied with the overall process of obtaining food. “I’m satisfied with the way food is obtained” was a common comment regarding the process common comments. However, as in previous years, variety of food selection and distance to obtain food have been issues. Several of the directors would like to see more central locations or a “mobile Food Bank”. The check-out process has become a recurring concern as detailed by the following comment, “Making shopping on-site easier by stocking the Kids Cafe shelves, having items in stock and ready to be purchased, reducing the length of time it takes to check out, providing a shopping list that can be faxed in so the items are ready when staff arrive.”

In spite of these issues, it is important to note that when directors were asked to rate their satisfaction with the program, 40% gave the program a 10, being completely satisfied. The median satisfaction rate was 9 on the 10 point scale. Directors reported that all of the program components were important but the food provision was essential to the families and children served.

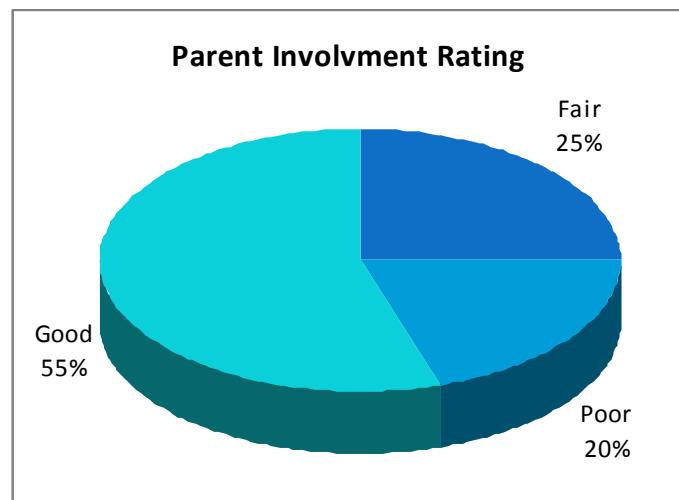


Parents and Volunteers

Volunteers, including parents, are vital to the success of the Kids Cafe program. Directors rated parents' involvement overall as fair to excellent. Only 20 % of directors rated parent participation as poor. This finding is consistent with previous years. Activities for parents included parent workshops and orientations, celebrations and programs, family dinners, parent advisory groups, and guest speakers. Eighty percent of the programs reported having an open invitation for parent involvement. It should be noted that parents tend to respond to explicit invitations; therefore having an open door policy may not provide the desired results.

Directors report that parents are working in collaboration with the program and sharing information. Twenty-one percent of programs report that parents have reported being concerned about their child's health. Of those parents, obesity and allergies are particularly of concern. On a more positive note, 53% directors responded that parents have reported improvements in their children's health. These directors listed parent reports of children engaging in more exercise, healthy eating (specifically eating less junk food), and having more energy. According to parental reports, these health outcomes have also translated into better academic and emotional outcomes.

All of the programs used at least two volunteers, and one program reported using as many as 150 over the course of the year. However, the median number of volunteers was 5 less than half of the 2009 median of 12 – 13. Volunteers continued to come from a wide range of backgrounds including:



- Area colleges, universities, and high schools (including retired teachers),
- Fraternal Organizations (e.g., IOTA Sorority, Eastern Star)
- Membership organizations and leisure clubs (e.g., motorcycle clubs),
- Local businesses (e.g., GlaxoWelcome, SAS, Cisco, United Insurance, and Jackson Beverage Company),
- Churches,
- Civic organizations (e.g., Rotary and Kiwanis Club),
- Local Health Departments and hospitals,
- NC Bar Association
- Police & fire departments,
- Cooperative Extension and 4H,
- Parks and Recreation departments

- Housing Authorities, and
- United Way

Additional comments:

When asked "If you could change your program, how would you change it" the responses were in one of three categories all of which focused on an aspect of program expansion (e.g., increased service capacity, resource improvements, and staff expansion). Consistent with previous years, more parent and community involvement were desired. Further, directors specifically wanted to be able to provide more staff for activities, field trips, and additional equipment. The comments were as follows:

- Increased service capacity
 - "I would change it by been able to offer it to more schools than what we have now."
 - "Increase the number of days per week to three from two."
- Resource improvements
 - "improve the computer lab; purchase a new bus"
 - "We need additional vehicles to transport more students to our facility"
 - "Having more food readily available at food banks"
 - "We would have more exercise equipment, more fruits and vegetables."
 - "Offer fresh fruits and vegetables - Implement a student garden"
 - "Provide a drink with the meals. We can sometimes obtain juice boxes at the Food Bank, but to stock up on 500 drinks a week (100 a day) going once a month is a lot of drinks that the Food Bank normally does not have."
- Staff expansion and compensation
 - "Raise staff salaries - some staff have not had raises in 5 years."
 - "...add more volunteers to the staff with experience in different areas of child development and youth role model"
 - "I would have someone that could actually run the program full time."

There were also comments regarding the food component. As with previous years, the variety of food was a concern in that directors were interested in providing more fruits and vegetables to be able to model appropriate food and nutrition. Additional funding was also mentioned as a way to expand access to the program.

When asked for final comments, directors mostly gave the program additional accolades. The comment "We thank the Food Bank for their hard work and dedication to the families and children of North Carolina." Is indicative of the general tone of the closing remarks. Other comments of note included:

"We are grateful for the Food Bank of CENC for all that they do to ensure that children are not going to bed hungry. Thanks again."

"The sponsors of the Kids Cafe [are] providing so much. There are so many kids that are not able to participate in the program because of transportation. If there were any way possible that we ... could obtain adequate transportation our program could meet the needs of so many more children."

"It's a pleasure to work with [Food Bank personnel]"

"Kids Cafe is a great program, and is the most important program we offer to our members at [our site]"

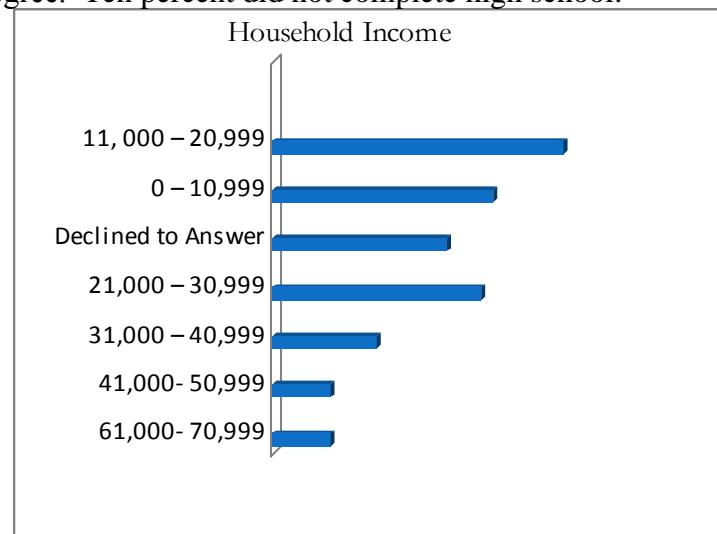
"Love the program would like to it expand to other under served communities. THANK YOU!"

Parent Data *

**There were an inordinate amount of no-opinion (neither agree nor disagree) responses in this year's survey often accounting for 20 – 25% of responses to a given question.*

In addition to data from directors, parents were given pen and paper surveys. The results are detailed below. The 271 parents that responded to the survey represented all 20 of the eligible Kids Cafe sites. Parent respondents were predominantly (79%) female and had a median of one child in the program (maximum of six). Like the program enrollment statistics, parents were predominantly African American (64%) and Caucasian (23%). Forty-one percent were single, 38 % were married and the remainder was separated (4%), divorced (11%), living with a partner (4%) or widowed (2%). Sixty-nine percent of parent respondents had graduated from high school or had obtained an Associate's degree. Ten percent did not complete high school.

Conversely another 10% had obtained an undergraduate degree. Parents were mostly employed (76%) However, most (86%) had an income of less than \$41,000, with the majority (62%) having incomes less than \$31,000. It is important to note that while 76% of the parents were employed, 65% of the child participants qualified for free and reduced lunch. This incongruence speaks to the low household incomes of working families.



Children's Health

The last two years, the survey queried parents about their children's overall health and if children had any specific health concerns. A small percentage of parents (7%) reported their child being obese. An even smaller percentage of children (3%) had difficulty sleeping at night and a lack of energy (4%). Only 2% reported that their children were always sleepy. Less than 1% of parents reported children having heartburn and none reported children having high blood pressure.

Eating Habits:

The majority of parents (74%) reported that their children chose healthier snacks at home, while an additional 71% agree that they provide healthier food choices for their children when grocery shopping as a result of children's enrollment in Kids Cafe. Additionally, 56% of parents said that they follow the food pyramid guidelines when preparing family meals. While 78% of parents reported having time to cook healthy meals, time (e.g., working late, fatigue, was the most often cited explanation why parents who did not cook healthy meals could not do so. Parents anecdotally reported that it was also difficult to prepare healthy foods due to the high cost of healthy foods.

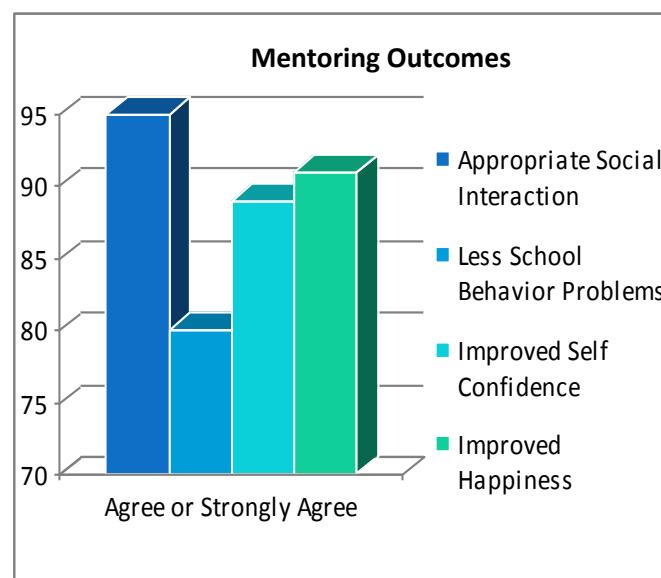
Physical Activity

Most parents (72%) exercise with their children and the majority did so at least weekly (80%). Exercise included a myriad of physical activities including walking (46%), basketball (31%), dancing (25%), running or jogging (23%), swimming (18%), football (16%), soccer (10%), skating (5%) with their children. Very few parents played tennis, did yoga, or went hiking with their children. Parents reported that they do not exercise because they did not have time (13%), were too tired (9%), or never thought about it (4%) or had an injury or illness that prohibited exercise (2%). Forty-six percent of the parents would like information or ideas about how to incorporate exercise for their children into activities of daily life.

Other parent/child activities included aerobics, baseball, cycling catch, kickball, and wrestling. Almost 2% of parents specified playing with Wii as a means of exercise.

Perceptions about Kids Cafe

Parents overall were satisfied that the program was accomplishing its goals. Eighty-one percent of parents felt that their children were learning about food safety. Similarly, parents felt that their

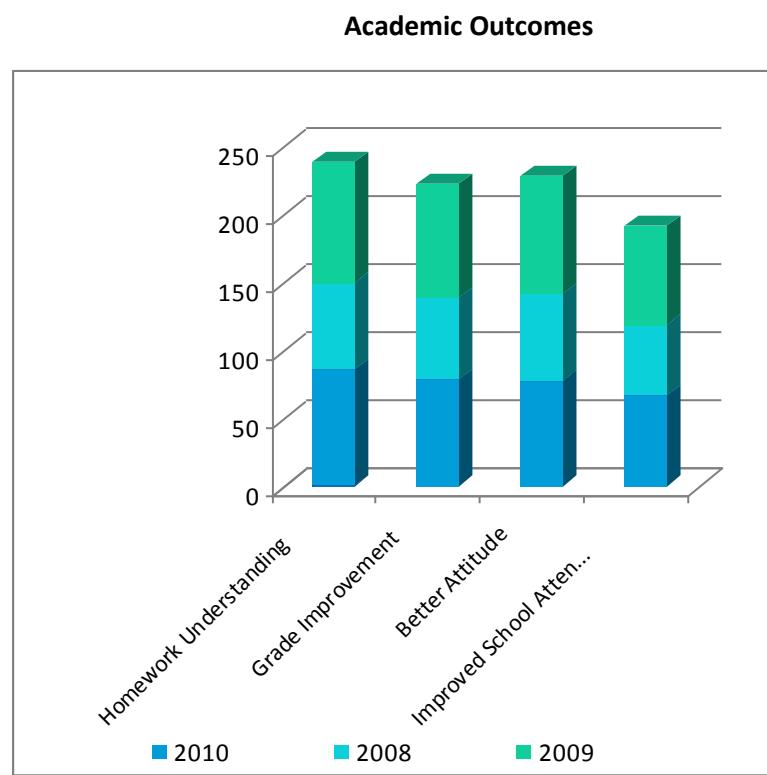


children were choosing foods that make a balanced diet (80%) but slightly fewer (74%) reported that their children were choosing snacks of fruits and vegetables over chips and candy.

Positively, 83 % of parents reported that there were improvements in their child's overall health and that their child's physical activity had increased since participating in Kids Cafe. Fewer parents, only 73% believed that children were learning how to prepare foods appropriately. The majority of parents (94%) rated Kids Cafe as good or very good.

Grades

Children's grades were generally good, with parents reporting 84 % received grades of B or better. Kids Cafe increased children's appreciation of school according to 78 % of parents and 67 % suggested that the program contributed to their child's improved school attendance although most children (86%) had been absent from school at least one day. The majority of parents (85%) suggested that Kids Cafe improved their child's ability to understand homework, concepts, and themes; improved interest in completing homework (82%); or improved grades (79%).



Quality and Satisfaction:

Parents rated the quality of the Kids Cafe program either good (31%) or very good (63%). The programs were easy to access (96%) and considered safe places for their children (97%). A full 98 % would recommend the program to other families. However, parental participation in program activities was limited. Thirty-one percent of parents reported having participated or attended the parent workshops. This finding is congruent with directors' assessment of parents' participation as fair overall. Although FBCENC has not sponsored parent workshops in the last two years, it appears the program sites independently sponsor workshops for parents under the auspices of the Kids Cafe program. This parent involvement activity suggests ownership and initiative by the program sites in garnering parental involvement. This level of parent satisfaction has been consistent over time.

Parental Satisfaction Outcomes

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Satisfied with Kids Cafe	93	90	92	94	98
Kept Informed of Activities	95	89	89	91	93
Participated in Events	36	50	40	35	31
Received Newsletter	60	60	61	54	39

Parents provided myriad comments about the program. Most of the parents provided unbridled praise of the program, the staff members, and the impacts on their children. Parents were asked to please tell us what you like most or least about this program. Some reported not knowing enough to comment on likes or dislikes. However most of the comments were extremely positive. Parents reported being satisfied with the program, appreciative of the work of staff and volunteers, impressed with the improvements in their children, and grateful for the assistance the program provides to parents.

Program Satisfaction

- " Good afterschool program .
- " I LIKE MOST THAT THEY HAVE A REWARD SYSTEM FOR CHILDREN WHO COMPLETES HOMEWORK TASK WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT & THAT IS A VERY SAFE & FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT! NO DISLIKES
- " I like the program. It gives the children something to do.

Appreciative of Teachers & Staff

- " [Staff member's] FOCUS ON EDUCATION & CHILDREN'S WELL BEING
- " The staff are great
- " The volunteers really care about the children.
- " Great program, like the staff the best
- " All the staff are extremely courteous and caring about all the children. The staff has a full line of communication with parents and work with parents as needed.
- " I am comfortable and pleased with the staff that is in charge.
- " I like the staff. They are concerned with my children's well being. It's a great group of people.
- " I like the staff at the Boy and Girls club They are concerned with my children's well being. It's a great group of people

Improvement in Child Outcomes

- " My child loves it.
- " MY CHILDREN LIKE IT AND LEARN ABOUT HEALTH AND IT'S IMPORTANCE
- " HER INTEREST, AWARENESS. SHE WILL SOMETIMES CHOOSE BETTER SNACKS.

"All the staff are extremely courteous and caring about all the children. The staff has a full line of communication with parents and work with parents as needed."

- " Well rounded program, allows kids to learn independence.
- " It's great for the kids.
- " My child is special needs (asperger's syndrome) this has been a god send. My daughter has been having a hard time at school this year and she was invited into the program at the right time!
- " ... that it has many opportunities, and she thinks more. Willing to do her homework, before she comes home, which helps me a lot.
- " I feel like they teach good nutritional values for early age children. This will help fight child obesity
- " I enjoy seeing the children get along well together on the must part meals
- " children have a safe place to go to
- " The children have fun and my son loves to do his work

Help with parenting

- " I like the program because without them my kids would be home alone or I would have to quit my job. I know they are safe and being fed a good meal.
- " Takes some of the pressure off me!
- " Convenient for me by me working late hours. Fees care low, They help with homework
- " I like the fact that the program helps with homework and that she's had a well balanced meal when I pick her up. Being a working single parent, it helps me a lot. I really depend on [the program] when it comes to the care of my child.
- " It gives my child a safe and affordable place to go after school, while I am at work.
- " balanced meals
- " My kids have fun and help with their homework... give[s] me a break.
- " I like to know that my child will be in a safe place and receive a good nutritional meal
- " I love the program it helps me to be able to get home from work and relax before I have to start dinner because I work out of town.
- " I believe it's a huge relief with homework - school, social, and overall a great support

A few parents reported that there were aspects of the program that could be improved. These things were represented by a few comments but were consistent with the directors comments and data from previous reports.

- " not enough volunteers for after-school tutoring
- " don't like too many students in one place
- " we don't have sufficient parent involvement.
- " The only thing I dislike is that a child can get away without doing homework if they lie about their assignment

"I like the program because without them my kids would be home alone or I would have to quit my job. I know they are safe and being fed a good meal."

When encouraged to add any final thoughts or additional comments, parents focused on parental involvement, making program recommendations, and giving additional accolades and pleas for program continuation.

Parental involvement

" WOULD LIKE TO BECOME MORE INVOLVED AS A PARENT!

Recommendations

- " I wish they would work on having the children wash there hands more.
- " WOULD LIKE EASIER ACCESS FOR SUMMER PROGRAM IN NEWPORT AREA (BUS)
- " I would like them to have a before school program

Accolades & Pleas to continue programming

- " It would have been very hard for me to get and keep a job without this service.
- " I cannot say enough about the Boys and Girls club and the programs available to the kids
- " Please continue with this program it is a very big help to me as a parent and other parents as well
- " Thank you for the program
- " glad for the program helping in our area
- " great program for the community
- " I believe the program is getting better
- " This [program] has blessed me beyond measure.
- " Please continue this program, it is a very big help
- " I couldn't do it without them. The staff is awesome and greatly appreciated!!!
- " The children get to learn how to become a strong man or woman [and that] no matter what their sex or race, that you can grow up and become somebody in life. I think that [it] is a very good after school program for our children.

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Child Participant responses

Among child participants, as in previous years, slightly fewer boys (49%) than girls (51%) responded to the survey. The median age of respondents was 10 years. The youngest respondent was 4 years old and the oldest was 17 years old. Of the 1,357 children enrolled at the time of the survey, 515 responded to the survey. As in previous years, African American children were the largest percentage of as survey respondents (67%). The majority (90%) of the children who responded to the survey were between the ages of 6 – 14 years in the 1st – 9th grades.

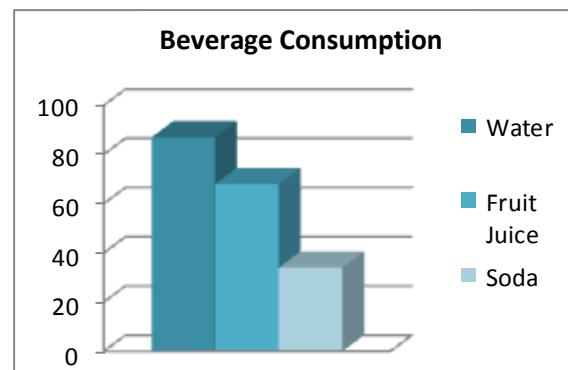
Nutrition Education, Food Preparation, and Food Choices

Of the student respondents, only 76% were confident that they could list the food groups although 89 % reported being taught about the food pyramid. Students were engaged in the food preparation and nutrition education aspect of the program although and 57% (up from 45% in 2009) reported having the opportunity to prepare meals or cook while at Kids Cafe. They learned about food safety (72%), how to prepare meals (57%), and how to make healthy food choices (83%). Further, 82 % reported that they translated that knowledge into making healthier food choices at home and school.

Nutrition Practices

Only 66% of the students responding to the survey reported eating breakfast daily, which is consistent with the previous two year's survey. However, 80 % of children reported feeling better in school after having breakfast. Regarding eating lunch and dinner, 89% and 91% of respondents respectively answered in the affirmative. Only 28 percent of the children reported eating a sandwich with lunch daily. This number could be reflective of the fact that only 25% of respondents bring a lunch, made by a parent or guardian, from home and 11% purchase lunch on the way to school. Lunches provided by the school often do not include a sandwich and therefore may be contributing to the low numbers and 67% of the respondents purchase lunch from school. It appears that most students (89%) eat lunch daily. Sixty-three percent (up from 58% in 2009 and 48% in 2008) of respondents have snacks with lunch and only 15% have French fries with lunch regularly. Many of the students, while using good eating practices, need additional education and training regarding their liquid diets. The majority (63%) drink low fat milk. However, 33% (down from 34% in 2009 and 45 % in 2008) still drink soda daily, with the median amount of sodas being two glasses. Fruit juice was also a favorite, with 65% drinking an average of two glasses per day. However, more favorable, 83% of respondents drank a median of four glasses of water per day.

Except for this year, over the last four years, children's nutrition education-related outcomes have improved overall. The rate of soda drinking declined while water consumption increased. There were minimal changes in milk drinking and knowledge of food safety. There were also fluctuations in whether children ate three meals per day, but children consistently reported eating healthier snacks.



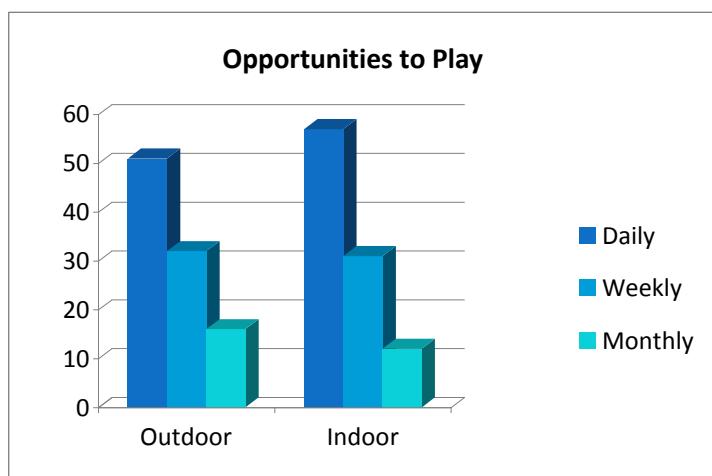
Nutrition Related Outcomes 06-10

	2007	2008	2009	2010
Healthier snacks	80	86	77	83
Eating 3 meals/day	63	65	70	66
Knowledge of Food Safety	85	83	82	72
Drink Milk	50	62	54	63
Drinking Water	90	90	87	83
Drink Soda	52	42	34	33

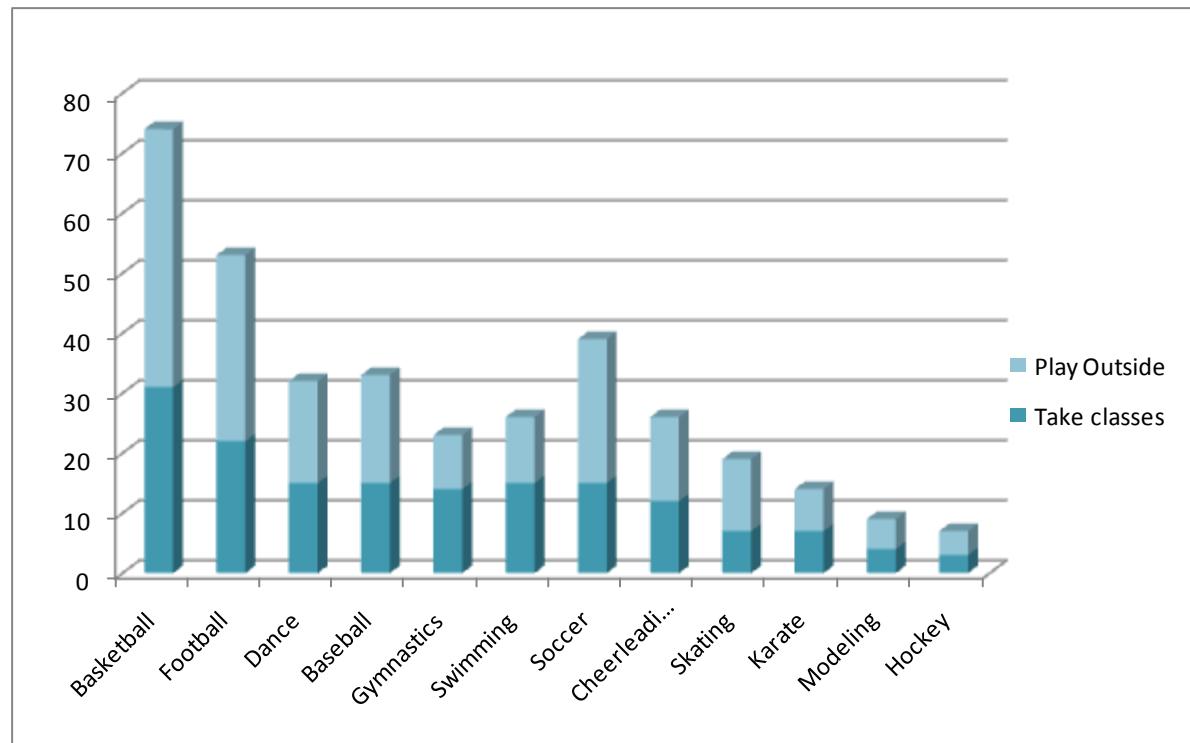
Physical Activity Opportunities

Children were asked about their opportunities to play and engage in physical activities at home. Most (68%) had a place to play both indoors and outdoors. The majority (92% up from 85% in 2009) also felt safe playing in their neighborhood.

While in Kids Cafe all child respondents reported their program offers outdoor activities at least monthly. The majority of child participants (85%) reported that they engage in daily outdoor activities. Regarding indoor physical activities, children report 67% occurring daily.

**Other Physical Activity**

The overwhelming majority (95%) of students have recess/gym class in school. However, only 67% participate in recess or physical education class daily. This finding may be influenced by participant age as high school students are not enrolled in a physical education class that meets on a daily basis throughout the school year. However, even if they do not have physical activity in school, children participate in a myriad of classes or structured physical activities. Consistent with last year's survey responses, the activities most often listed were basketball, football, dance, baseball, gymnastics, and swimming. Soccer increased in popularity from 15% to 24% from 2009 to 2010 respectively. The activities with the least participation included karate and hockey (although hockey gained in popularity by a small margin. Children also reported biking, kickball, jumping rope, and playing hide and seek as favorite outdoor games.

**Children's Activities
(Structured & Free Play)**

Other activities mentioned, but not listed in the table included singing, playing musical instruments, etc. While these are structured activities, they are not physical activities. Further, 91% of children report having time to play at home (both indoors and outdoors) at least sometimes. This statistic also suggests that the homework component of the Kids Cafe program may serve to structure time for children to have both academic and leisure time after school. When playing indoors youth engaged in a multitude of activities that utilized fine motor or cognitive skills. Playing video games (64%) was the most frequently reported indoor activity. Approximately half of the children reported watching television (52%) while 25% played board games. Watching videos (33%) was also a popular activity. Less than one-third of children chose to read. While 9% of children reported playing computer games, this number is drastically declined from 55% from 2008 reports.



Program satisfaction

Overall, participants were satisfied with the program. This finding has remained consistent over the last five years. In both the quantitative and qualitative responses, children have overwhelmingly enjoyed the activities of the program and the individuals who provide services. There is consistently a small percentage of respondents (24%) who found the program "boring" or didn't like "anything" that the program had to offer. This dissatisfaction may be attributed to the often contrary attitudes of youth in the target age group. Further, the cross-sectional research design will always capture responses of individuals who are disenchanted with the program that particular day, or may simply be a group of students who genuinely do not enjoy the afterschool program. However, children (84%) liked the Kids Cafe activities and recognized they would receive a nutritious meal (76%) and get help with homework (79%). Participants overwhelmingly reported that they liked the food (69%) or liked it at least some of the time (6%). Only 13% reported that they did not like the food served in the program.

Reasons for Attending Kids Cafe 2010

Yes, This is a reason	
There is nothing else to do after school in my neighborhood.	41%
My parents make me come to the program.	51%
Most of my friends are here.	65%
I get help doing my homework.	76%
I know I can get a nutritious meal.	76%
I like the activities we do.	84%
I like the opportunity to play and have fun.	90%
The people who run the Kids Cafe are helpful and nice.	85%

The children who responded to the survey reported several benefits of program participation. Almost 88% of the respondents felt safe while at the program site. The overwhelming majority (85%) asserted that they do fun things in the program.

Education Component

The education component of the program received favorable responses from the youth participants. Eighty-five percent of students acknowledged getting better grades as a result of Kids Cafe. Slightly fewer 80% respectively, reported that Kids Cafe program personnel has stressed the importance of good grades. Sixty-seven percent of students reported an increased happiness to go to school since being in the Kids Cafe program. This finding supports the theory that academic achievement (e.g., homework completion and increased learning) contributes to a better school experience overall.

Esteem/Mentoring/Behavior

Overall, the Kids Cafe had a positive impact on children's self-esteem. Eighty-six percent of respondents reported that they felt good about themselves while at Kids Cafe and 81% responded that they liked themselves more than they used to. The vast majority (88%) was able to get along and play nicely with others; however, there were several mentions of bullying behaviors. Some of the comments from children referring to the worst thing about Kids Cafe included comments like "the kids can be mean sometimes." and "when they try to pick on me." However, there is still work to be done in that slightly less than half of the students (46%) self-reported acting out in class and getting in trouble.

Mentoring Outcomes

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Social Interaction	85	92	87	87	88
Increased Self-Esteem	85	89	90	88	81
Cultural Diversity	85	87	87	87	87

Children's qualitative feedback

The thing I like about the Kids Cafe After School program is:

When asked about the thing they liked best about the Kids Cafe After School Program, several students reported that they liked either "everything" or "nothing." Others praised the food and meals. While by far there were more that praised the program than not, other participants provided a little more insight on the program's benefits. Most of the comments suggested that children liked the program because of the activities, socializing, and their awareness of the positive impact of the program.

The activities:

- "The cooking classes and the blocks, and my friends.
- "Is that we get to eat.
- "Activities, playground, gym.
- "We do a lot of fun things and we have good meals.
- "I get away from my boring house
- "There is always something to do.

Socializing and the opportunity to be with friends:

- "I get to play with my friends.
- "Being able to hang out" or "Hanging with friends."

“Playing with others, eating the different food
“My best friend goes too
“Get to hang out with my friends and play Wii
“YOU CAN MAKE NEW FRIENDS

Awareness of the positive impact of the program:

“They help you when you need something and they solve stuff right.
“Exercise, a healthy meal and all the nice
“The staff are helpful
“They teach us a lot of things
“We eat healthy sometime talk about good things.
“They teach me about losing weight and the food groups.
“I get my nutrition meals and I love the things we learn
“They teach us a lot about the world and etc...
“The people and how they help you out with different problems
“That it helps you understand things better than you would probably used to.

The overwhelming majority of children reported that they like everything about the program. The comment “There is really nothing that I disliked about the program” is indicative of the overall feeling of most children. Some children even said the worst thing about Kids Cafe was leaving or not “being there long enough.” However, there were some comments regarding dislikes or room for program improvement. These comments were often about the food quality or quantity, interactions with other children, and discipline.

Food:

“The food isn't all that good.”
“The food sometimes is nasty.”
“Not enough food”
“No snacks/drinks”
“Is that sometimes when the food is served cold”
“THE FOOD DOES NO[T] HAVE SEASON[INGS]”
“Sometimes [the food] is flavorless”
“SOMETIMES THE FOOD DOESN'T TASTE GOOD-NEEDS SALT”

Other participants and staff/volunteers were noted as dislikes. Interactions between the children were a source of displeasure. Some of the comments represented not wanted to be around, wait for, or deal with younger children as indicated by “Too many little kids” or “That it take too long to call 5-9 boys.” There were a host of comments about bullying and “mean” children “people fighting.” This is a consistent complaint from previous years. When responding to the query about what they did not like about Kids Cafe, children reported the following

“Rude people”
“when other members are mean to me”
“The little kids”
“Some of the kids are mean and pick on me.”
“Too much horse playing.”
“I do not like [a particular child].”
“When the other children don't play nice.”
“Too much drama.”
“There are some mean people that push me, hit me or pick on me.”
“That some people there are mean.”
“Kids acting bad.”
“FIGHTING!”
“They fight too much.”

Discipline

“Getting on the wall.”
“When I have to do laps or sentences.”
“I hate the rulz.”
“restriction.”
“WE GOT WRITE OFF.”
“THAT WE HAVE TIME OUT. WE DO LAPS.”

Conclusions & Implications

The purpose of this evaluation was to determine the effectiveness of The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina's Kids Cafe program. Based on the survey data collected, the Kids Cafe provides significant value to the children and parent participants. Consistent with previous evaluations, the Kids Cafe program has substantial value to children and their parents. Children were especially grateful for the opportunity to play outside with their friends and get assistance with homework. Parents were pleased with the activities in the outcomes of their children. Children and parents specifically commented on the quality of the volunteers and staff at the program. This feedback was unsolicited and provided in the comments section.

Further, the Kids Cafe has continued to meet its program goals of academic enrichment, mentoring, nutrition education, nutritious meals, physical activity, and parental empowerment. Each of these domains received favorable remarks. While the program did experience positive outcomes, there are potential areas for improvement.

Recommendations to the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina:

These recommendations are made with both optimal and current program delivery and resources in mind. As the FBCENC garners additional resources these recommendations may be more

feasible. However, they provide both aspirational and currently attainable suggestions for program improvement, facilitation of relationship with sites, and policy development.

The primary recommendation for the Kids Cafe program is for its continuation. The program provides a valuable and highly reputable service. Parents explicitly state the benefits of the program as being a safe environment that promotes healthy physical, mental, and academic development for children.

Other recommendations include:

Provide technical assistance to program sites

- Continue to develop and widely publicize a speakers bureau on a wide range of issues including, but not limited to, food and nutrition, exercise, violence, sex education, and adolescent development issues.
- Provide evidence informed practice information particularly in the area of nutrition education. Providing updated literature, activities, handouts, and manuals to sites.
- Enhance assistance with resource development and accountability (e.g., audits, employee and parent handbooks, and staffing). Programs express the need for additional staff for program maintenance and expansion. Therefore, resource development capacity building is essential to the sustainability of these programs.
- Introduce and institutionalize a curriculum module to include violence prevention, bullying reduction, and mediation.

Provide material resources to program sites, specifically fresh produce and physical activity equipment (e.g., balls, nets, jump ropes, etc.).

Enhance parental involvement. As stated in previous years while parents are overwhelmingly satisfied with the program, participation remains low. Strategies to enhance parental and other volunteer participation include specific invitations, calls to homes, and incentives. While many parents explicitly state they are very busy with jobs, care giving, or have health issues, many of the parents were quite interested in active engagement with Kids Cafe.

Conclusion:

Over the last six years the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina's Kids Cafe program has proved to be a valuable contribution to the community. The program consistently provides exemplary services. Parents, children, and Kids Cafe program directors invariably rate the program's activities highly favorable. The goal of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina's Kids Cafe program is to provide children, who are at risk for hunger, access to nutritious meals in addition to academic and health education in a safe, well-supervised, and easily accessed environment. Based on the evaluation responses, the program is reaching and even exceeding its stated goals. The program's growth and sustainability are signs of its value and usefulness to the communities of North Carolina.