**Using Resources**

Some facilities used their funding to buy, create, or sponsor resources that would help increase physical activity and good food choices

1. **Resources from annual CACFP Wellness Conferences**

I am Moving I am Learning (IMIL) was one resource that was promoted at the annual Wellness conference. A CACFP sponsor, Penquis Community Action Program, was one of the sub-grantees. The following is how one of their teachers chose to use an activity in the IMIL Choosy Kids toolkit:

**Penquis CAP (Marilee Page, teacher)**

While searching for ideas about how to explain force in relation to physical activity to children I found a good activity in the Choosy Kids activity box.

The activity card said to spread out the small parachute and explain to the children the circle in the middle is a hole and then give children a ball and ask them to roll the ball and try getting it in the hole. The teacher would then talk with the children about how much force was used to move the ball; too much or not enough. The children would decide, based on whether the ball went past the hole or did not make it to the hole, if the child used “too much” force or “not enough”.

After doing this just a few times the children were able to determine if the force used was too much or not enough. Even children with less language skills than others were able to say “much” or “nuff” to let us know if it was too much or not enough. We then introduced a variety of balls in different sizes, textures, and weights. After discussing the different attributes of the balls each child was given two balls. We would let the child try to get the first ball in and then ask if they felt they would need to use more force or less force to get the next ball in based on the size, texture and weight of the ball. To our amazement the children were quite accurate in their predictions about how much force was needed for the second ball. For example if the child was given a light weight large ball the first time they might be asked if the heavier smaller ball would need more force or less force then the first ball to get in the hole. Most of the children were able to accurately predict how much force was needed for the second ball; more or less.
After doing this activity several of the children were able to use the terms too much force and not enough force to describe other actions and movements they observed at other points during the day.

We repeated this activity several weeks later and all of the children were able to recall how to play as well as accurately use the terms too much force, not enough force, more and less force.

The children loved this activity and it was a huge success! We will do it again.

2. **Mini-grants from Maine CACFP Sponsors’ Subgrants**

Another way for the sub-grantees to utilize the funding was to give mini-grants. ACAP awarded several mini-grants to individual childcare facilities. One teacher, Kristen Fitzherbert, explains how she used some of her funds to augment free resources and to build upon what had been done before:

**Kristen Fitzherbert, teacher**

I have purchased some physical activity items, such as hula hoops, badminton and ball sets, an obstacle course set (with cones, balls, bean bags, parachute, etc.), crawl tunnel, jump ropes, and some items to add to my musical movement collection (tambourines, maracas, dance wands). Once school gets out, I plan to start a MyPlate lesson plan. I purchased some activity books for the children. Parents will be included. When we start, I plan to give all parents an informational gift bag. I purchased some handouts, magnets, bookmarks, and a physical activity musical CD to include in these bags. I was able to get some free MyPlate materials to include in these gift bags. I have put up a large MyPlate poster in our dining room and this has resulted in many conversations with the kids (and parents as well). The CD that I purchased for everyone is wonderful and all the children love it. It gives us quite a work out....I was ready to collapse after we went through only six songs! And because of some of the past activities that you all have taught us in trainings, and at the CACFP Wellness Grant conferences, the older kids were quick to point out how fast their heart rates were after we made it through a few of the songs. I also purchased physical activity journals for the older kids. This will be a week long
project where they will be expected to track their meals and physical activity. The journals also include tips, recipes, and ideas to help them with the project.

**Beverly Edgecomb, teacher**

I purchased a few baskets of fruits and veggies (plastic). We talk about fruits and vegetables with the children and they understand why they are important to eat. I also bought food puzzles and have the children make up plates of healthy food. We purchased seeds and tomato plants for a garden which we planted and explained how food is grown and watched the seeds turn into food. We purchased some potting soil and the children planted flowers and decorated pots for Mother’s day. We planted the garden when the weather permitted.

To address physical activity, I purchased bikes, helmets, hula hoops, Frisbees, soccer balls, baby swings so we can enjoy the outside for all age levels. I purchased printer ink so I could print information from both Lets Go 5210 and USDA for the parents. I also purchased some copy paper for this purpose. Using local resources, I contacted the Maine Potato Board and they sent me some information for the parents and a little potato cook book. We planted corn, carrots, peas, string beans, potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, and onions. Once these were grown and picked the children helped weed and pick the veggies to take some home with them for their families.

**Jody Thompkins, teacher**

I used most of my money for equipment to promote physical activity and coordination giving the age group I have (mostly 2yr-olds). I purchased stepping stones from S & S warehouse. This is a great catalogue with some very sturdy equipment. I also purchased stilt cups, a hopscotch rug, and some 3-wheel scooters...man can they go on those! After using these for a while, I have noticed the kids are gaining coordinated movement. I also purchased rolling platforms; they sit on and hold the handles and scoot along. Fortunately, most of what I purchased can be used both inside and outside so that even on a rainy or snowy day, they can bring them inside and still be active, with the exception of the scooters, which are mostly outdoors. I have watched them learn even just how to coordinate body movement to make them go. I also bought a water and sand table to promote creativity and imagination. I purchased a shopping basket with healthy plastic foods in them. I was also able to purchase hula hoops for all of them. I have smaller ones
for the 2-year olds and larger ones for the older girls. It is fun watching them give it their best shot trying to make those work, and it keeps them active.

I also purchased a little wagon they use to move the stepping stones from one end of my deck to the other.