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Sustainability via active garden education (SAGE): Enhancing the social return on investment from school programming

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Purpose: The Ecologic Model of Physical Activity (EMPA) suggests that actions in one micro-environment, like early care and education centers (ECEC), may influence actions in other micro-environments, like the home via dynamic exo-environmental linkages. This collection of studies explored how experiences that children have at ECEC may influence parent behavior and the home environment.

Method: Over three controlled experiments (SAGE 1: N=9; SAGE 2: N=11; SAGE 3: N=13), Sustainability via Active Garden Education (SAGE) was developed and tested as a 12-session, garden-based physical activity and fruit and vegetable promotion program for children age 3-5 years delivered in ECEC. SAGE uses the plant lifecycle as a metaphor for human development. Children learn how to plant, water, weed, harvest and do simple food preparation along with active learning songs, games, science experiments, mindful eating exercises and interactive discussions. In SAGE 2 and 3, parents received weekly newsletters linked to the curriculum and local resources and events. Newsletters were developed using nominal group technique (SAGE

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