

## INTERVENTION

### VERB™ Scorecard

The Lexington Fayette County Health Department in partnership with the Florida Prevention Research Center and the Kentucky Department for Public Health



## INTENT OF THE INTERVENTION

VERB™ Scorecard is a practice-based intervention designed to increase activity levels of tweens (9-13 year olds) through a community-wide campaign effort. This includes promoting physical activity opportunities and utilizing a “passport” (scorecard) system of tracking physical activity during a designated time period.

This is a community level environmental change intervention that targets individual behavior.

## OVERVIEW

The national VERB campaign, launched in June 2002, was the foundation for VERB Summer Scorecard in Kentucky. The national campaign, which came to a close September 2006, provided a widely recognized “brand”, an identified audience, and resources for the local communities to reinforce the national messages.

The summer months (after Memorial Day to August 1<sup>st</sup>) is the designated time period in Lexington Fayette County, but implementation is not limited to this time period; it can be implemented over holiday breaks, summer, or all year long, depending on available resources.

VERB Scorecard is designed to promote increased physical activity participation of youth ages 9-13 years by using a community-based prevention marketing model (which combines the grass roots knowledge and support of a community coalition with the effective tools of social marketing) developed by the Florida Prevention Research Center. Primarily, the intervention includes:

- Creating a coalition of community agencies and organizations who plan and implement the program
- Providing a monitoring tool (the scorecard) for tweens to document and track their physical activity
- Providing incentives for completed hours of activity
- Inviting businesses and recreation facilities to provide free and reduced-priced admission for tween participants at their establishments
- Holding community events to promote physical activity in a fun, creative manner
- Increasing parents' awareness of the options for their children to be physically active, as well as how often their children are physically active

The state's public-private Partnership for a Fit Kentucky collaborated with the Lexington Fayette County Health Department to develop the scorecard initiative.

Using a community coalition and led by a program champion, the VERB Scorecard program works with physical activity-oriented organizations in the community to offer free or discounted admission to tweens. Sites include facilities such as swimming pools, bowling alleys, YMCA, etc. At the heart of the intervention is the “scorecard”, a 24-unit recording tool

that encourages tweens to participate in 24 1-hour physical activity sessions at an organized facility or at home. Parents verify participation for activities performed at home or in the community by initialing an actual scorecard or verifying it with an online web tracking system. There are activities throughout the Scorecard time frame such as group skating, paintball, tae kwon do, etc. for tweens to participate in, but they can also complete activities at home. It is an incentive-based program and the more activity logged, the greater the chances are of winning one of the grand prizes. The tweens enter to win a prize for every 12 hours of activity. There is a grand finale at the end of the program and prizes include items such as Wii Fit, skateboards, helmets, bikes, gym memberships, etc. There are also organized group events in the local communities for tweens, such as the “Longest Day of Play.”

**Intended Population:** Tweens (youth ages 9-13 years)

Definitions of tweens vary and communities typically prefer to allow the broadest age range of children to participate so they do not have to exclude a lot of interested children. However, the intervention is not appropriate for adolescents and participation of younger children may lead to a lower rate of tween participation.

**Setting:** Community-wide

**Length of time in the field:** Since Summer 2004

## HEALTH EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

VERB™ Scorecard is designed to increase activity levels of tweens (9-13 year olds) through a community-wide campaign effort. This includes promoting physical activity opportunities and utilizing a “passport” (scorecard) system of tracking physical activity during a designated time period. VERB Scorecard was evaluated in a community-wide pilot project in Lexington–Fayette County, Kentucky. Since the conclusion of the pilot study, VERB Scorecard has been adopted in other communities in Kentucky and in other states, each project adapting it to their local data, resources and needs.

Print materials are an important part of the intervention and new adopters will need to culturally adapt them and translate them into Spanish or other languages.

## CORE ELEMENTS

*This section outlines the aspects of an intervention that are central to its theory and logic and that are thought to be responsible for the intervention’s effectiveness. Core elements are critical features of the intervention’s intent and design and should be kept intact when the intervention is implemented or adapted.*

1. **Community-Driven:** Build a coalition of representatives from community agencies and organizations who plan and implement the program.
2. **Marketing Plan:** It is essential that the program is guided by the marketing plan. The marketing plan should address what motivates tweens and provide program activities designed to meet their needs guided by the four P’s of social marketing: Product, Pricing, Placement, and Promotional Strategies (see Table 1 of Marketing Plan Document).
3. **Access to/Opportunities for Physical Activity:** Offer free or reduced cost entry into a variety of physical activity outlets or opportunities for tweens. These outlets/opportunities must comply with the marketing plan (e.g. be fun, allow youth to try new things, be safe

and accessible, and minimize competition and the chance for failure and embarrassment).

4. **Self-monitoring:** Use some method (i.e., “scorecard” or “passport”) to encourage tweens to monitor their physical activity during a designated period of time.
5. **Incentives:** Incentives are provided to stimulate interest and maintain participation. Routine incentives such as backpacks, beach towels or phlat balls (unique sports toy that transforms from a disk to a ball when thrown) are provided for every participant. In addition, youth get to put their name in for the grand prize drawing of their choice for every 12 hours of activity they log. Grand prizes include higher ticket items such as YMCA memberships, Wii Fit, tae kwon do class series, scooters, tennis shoes, etc. These types of incentives would be awarded at the completion of the program. However, it may be possible to use recognition or awards as a substitute for tangible prizes.

## RESOURCES REQUIRED

**Staff:** A lead agency should be identified, in addition to other agencies and community involvement, to support the effort. In Kentucky, a local health department serves as the lead agency and there are several team members instrumental to the implementation of the program. The following full-time equivalents are required for one complete implementation of VERB Scorecard during the summer:

Program organizer:	.35 FTE for 6 months
Community organizer:	.50 FTE for 4 months
Marketing specialist:	.25 FTE for 4 months
Grand Finale coordinator:	.35 FTE for 3 months

**Training:** Communities interested in implementing this intervention may benefit from training in marketing principles that guide the program. Minimally, they need to understand the importance of adhering to the developed marketing plan and how it guides programmatic decision-making. (See the Training and Technical Assistance section of the template for training opportunities.)

**Materials:** The cost of materials can be minimal, but this will depend on what community partners donate and how promotional materials are secured. Budgets for community campaigns have ranged from \$100 - \$35,000. The primary materials include:

- Scorecard (hardcopy)
  - Communities can adapt the scorecards developed by Kentucky and provide as a hard copy, a downloadable PDF from a web site or both.
  - Printing costs are dependent upon features (glossy card stock, perforation, accordion fold) and volume. Costs have ranged from \$0.10/card to .70/card.

Note: Implementation of the hardcopy version is what was reviewed for this document, but the intervention has transitioned to an online format. There is a web-based version of the scorecard made available by the Lexington-Fayette County Health Department. Communities can tailor the website for their own communities. An outside web designer may charge \$500-\$2000 for adaptations.

- Incentives
  - Incentives may be donated or purchased, so this cost varies depending on the items used for incentives and how they are procured.

- The incentives that each participant receives have averaged \$6.00/child the five years the program has been held.
- Grand Finale prizes can be donated from the YMCA, martial arts studios, sporting good stores, scouting organizations, orthodontic offices, banks, etc.
- Promotional Materials for the National VERB campaign are provided for free by the CDC. The three planning guides (Scorecard, Tween-centric Event, and Event Logistics) are available for ordering or downloading in PDF format. Download any of the three guides from the following location:  
<http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/partners/planning.htm>

The following link provides access to order the three guides (scroll down to the bottom of the page to the VERB section). There are also VERB Activator CDs, Native American Posters and copies of the AJPM special issue available from this order form:

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/dash.aspx>

### **Other Costs:**

- Discounts are provided by community businesses and organizations to provide structured physical activity opportunities, e.g. basketball, karate, paintball, etc. for tweens. Providers choose the discount level: free, two for one, second game free, \$3.00 discount, etc.
- The costs of special events such as Longest Day of Play and the Grand Finale depend on the complexity, size and level of community cooperation. They can be simple events such as free swimming at a public pool or include a variety of physical activity stations (climbing walls, laser tag, water games, Dance Dance Revolution, etc.). Costs include staff time, promotion, signage and any activities that are not donated (such as renting inflatable slides).
- If the program is used in communities with large Latino audiences, it may be necessary to translate the card and materials into Spanish. If staff is not available to complete this task, translation services may be required.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

Though some communities have organized a VERB Scorecard campaign in three months, it is recommended that groups allow at least six months prior to the kick-off date. Nine to 12 months lead time is even better. It's better to have ample time to pre-test your campaign, design materials, promote the campaign and, if included in your evaluation design, collect baseline survey data.

As previously noted, this intervention was originally designed as an extension of the national VERB campaign, which ended in 2006. However, the Florida Prevention Research Center is currently rebranding the program and modifying it for implementation year round.

Note: VERB Summer Scorecard transitioned to an online format in summer 2007.

### **How It Works:**

#### *Infrastructure Development*

- Identify a lead agency and the source of funding that will support your campaign. One agency directing the campaign assures that there is specified leadership.
- Develop partnerships and organize planning team. Include a youth advisory group on your planning team to gain input from tweens.
- Recruit local businesses and non-profit agencies as VERB Scorecard campaign vendors to offer discounts on services, host special events and contribute prizes.

#### *Formative Work*

- Identify your target audience within the tween population. Segmenting your tween audience focuses the design of your campaign model, keeps your planning team on strategy and enables your campaign to have the most direct and measurable impact.
- Identify the behavioral goal, i.e. how many squares do tweens have to complete and what do the squares represent (1/2 hour or full hour) and the rules for participation, i.e. will you allow activities at home to count or only activities at participating sites?
- Establish the time frame for your campaign (e.g. school year, summer, etc.)
- Design and test your campaign materials, particularly the actual scorecard. It is very important to test your materials with your community, which may involve focus groups and/or intercept interviews.

#### *Campaign/Activities*

- Promote your campaign heavily and be creative. Distribute your scorecards everywhere and utilize various channels such as television, radio, newspaper, billboards, school events, a website, etc. to promote your VERB Scorecard campaign. Use emails to parents and youth as an inexpensive channel.
- Offer physical activity opportunities in a variety of community action outlets, such as bowling alleys, skating rinks, etc.
- Provide incentives for participation in the campaign. It is important to keep the campaign exciting and prizes help motivate tweens. Incentives can either be donated or purchased, and you will need to decide how often to provide incentives. Most campaigns have offered small prizes for all tween participants and significant grand prizes for some participants in drawings.
- Evaluate the campaign.

#### **Keys to Success:**

- A program champion will increase the likelihood for success. This person would ideally work for the lead agency and have adequate time and resources to commit to the program and see it through completion.
- Promote physical activity as a way to have fun. The health benefits of physical activity do not resonate with tweens, so this is not the appropriate message to engage tweens.
- Recruit high school students to be involved in the planning process and as part of the team. Tweens look up to them and view them as role models.
- Promote campaign/messages in multiple venues and many times - your campaign will need to be continuously re-energized.
- While you do not want the incentives to become the primary focus, it is important to identify incentives/prizes that are “cool” and motivating to tweens. This will help to keep tweens engaged and interested in meeting the behavioral goals to be eligible for prizes.

## Barriers to Implementation:

- Transportation to action outlet sites was a barrier for many sites and is likely to be a barrier in other communities. This is why it's important to provide activities where tweens are already naturally gathered or you will need to be resourceful as exemplified by one community in Kentucky. They collaborated with public transportation to allow the scorecard to serve as bus fare for participating tweens.
- There may be a potential barrier in reaching Latino children due to the involvement of the health department in activities and the "government" may be perceived as a "risk" to some segments of this population due to immigrations issues.
- Parents complain about other children (non-tweens) not being able to participate in activities, but it is important to address your target audience and focus the delivery of the intervention. If younger children become involved in the program, it is seen as "uncool" and less desirable by the tween-aged target audience.

## EVIDENCE REVIEW SUMMARY

**Underlying Theory:** Social marketing is a primary guiding framework for VERB Scorecard, as well Social Cognitive Theory constructs, including observational learning, self-efficacy, behavioral capability, environment, reinforcement, and reciprocal determinism.

**Strategies Used<sup>1</sup>:** VERB Scorecard includes the following evidence-based strategies for physical activity:

- **Increasing access to and number of places for physical activity** by recruiting businesses and organizations to provide low-cost or free activities at their sites, and
- Implementing a **community-wide campaign to promote physical activity** through media promotions, physical activity events, increased support of community businesses and organizations where youth engage in physical activity, and targeting individual behavior change.
- Encouraging **social support for physical activity** by offering community events and group activities such as paintball and group skating.

## Research Findings and Evaluation Outcomes:

VERB Summer Scorecard was developed and evaluated in the field as a practice-based intervention. Program awareness and participation increased with each subsequent year of implementation:

### Program Awareness and Completion

	2004 N=4049	2006 N=2623	2007 N=2966
Awareness of VERB Summer Scorecard	35%	62%	79%
Receipt of Scorecard <sup>a</sup>	44%	59%	53%
Number of Scorecards submitted	355	878	1720
Completion of Scorecard <sup>a</sup>	25%	37%	30%

<sup>1</sup> Among those who had heard of VERB Summer Scorecard

Note: Data were not collected in 2005.

<sup>1</sup> A full description of the intervention strategies used can be found on the [Center TRT website](#) with references to the sources of evidence to support the strategies.

Data regarding activity levels available at the time of review were from surveys administered to elementary and middle school students in Lexington-Fayette County in 2006. Positive differences in activity level were observed for those tweens who recalled VERB Summer Scorecard versus those who did not; however, caution should be used in the application of these findings due to concerns of selectivity bias (i.e. more physically active youth being attracted to the program).

Lexington Fayette County Data (2006):

Lexington Fayette County Data (2006)		
Number of Schools Surveyed	Total Number of Students	Number of Students Who Responded to Survey
25 elementary schools (21 public and 4 private)	~ 8,300 students	2,674 (2,518 surveys included in data analysis)
12 middle schools (8 public and 4 private)	According to 05-06 state non-fiscal survey, there were 5,932 students in the 8 public schools	2,623 (2,499 surveys included in data analysis)

*Program awareness*

- Over half (58.7%) of the elementary school students surveyed reported having seen, read, or heard something about VERB Summer Scorecard.
- Over half (61%) of the middle school students surveyed reported having seen, read, or heard something about VERB Summer Scorecard.

*Self-monitoring*

- 41.7% of the elementary school students exposed to VERB Summer Scorecard filled out all or part of a Scorecard.
- 37% of the middle school students exposed to VERB Summer Scorecard filled out all or part of a Scorecard.

*Physical Activity*

- Students (elementary and middle) who participated in the VERB Summer Scorecard program were more likely to have played the previous day than those who had not participated.
- Students (elementary and middle) who participated in the VERB Summer Scorecard program were more likely to have tried a new activity than those who had not participated.
- The mean number of days of vigorous activity and play, not including PE, was also significantly higher among students (elementary and middle) who had filled out all or part of a card as compared to those who had not.

**POTENTIAL PUBLIC HEALTH IMPACT**

**Reach:** The chart below shows the number of Scorecards turned in by youth in Lexington, KY (population 250,000) in the five years the program has been implemented. The large increase in participation between 2006 and 2007 was due to allowing online registration and tracking.



Number of Scorecards turned in / Lexington

- 2004: 355
- 2005: 838 (236% ↑)
- 2006: 878 (5%↑)
- 2007: 1719 (96% ↑)
- 2008: 2194 (28% ↑)

**Effectiveness:** Data available at the time of the review suggest that the intervention has the potential to increase awareness of the program and the data indicate positive differences in activity level for those tweens who recalled VERB Summer Scorecard versus those who did not. However, caution should be used when interpreting these results.

**Adoption:** The intervention has been adopted/adapted by several other communities in Kentucky, including: Ashland, Bowling Green, Clay County, Hazard, Henderson, Somerset, Winchester, Wolfe County, Nicholasville, Danville, Versailles, Richmond, and Lawrenceburg. It has also been adopted/adapted in several other states, including: Greely, CO; Nebraska Health and Human Services System; Sarasota, FL; Sebring, FL; Story County, IA; and Tampa, FL.

**Implementation:** The intervention is generally easy to implement at a relatively low cost (though cost can vary). The intervention has been replicated in other states. It seems reasonable to expect that the intervention could be implemented as intended (with fidelity) in similar settings with similar infrastructure.

With each passing year, the cost per physical activity hour (number of physical activity hours collectively turned in by tweens divided by program budget) was reduced as the program elements were developed and implementation became more efficient.

Cost per PA hour / Lexington

- 2004: \$3.52/ hour
- 2005: .67/hour
- 2006: .58/hour
- 2008: .45/hour

**Maintenance:** Lexington-Fayette County, Kentucky maintained the program every summer for five years and increased awareness and participation over the five years (see Research Findings and Evaluation Outcomes). The program has transitioned to a less resource intensive web-based format that has the potential to enhance sustainability.

## INTERVENTION MATERIALS

Intervention materials can be found on the [Center TRT website](#):

VERB Scorecard primarily uses promotional materials as part of the campaign and the actual scorecard for documentation of physical activity, which were last updated in summer 2007. Many of the materials are available in English and Spanish.

There are several intervention materials to assist with replication of VERB Scorecard, which include:

- Two versions of VERB Scorecard tool
- “Designing A Successful VERB Scorecard Campaign in Your Community “
- Marketing Plan Components and Questions to Consider



In addition, there is a complete CD-ROM with many campaign materials. Materials from the complete CD-ROM are made available for download, but a condensed version of the CD-ROM materials provides the most essential elements to assist with implementing a campaign in your community. The condensed version of materials includes:

- “Physical Activity in Community Settings: A Strategy Formation Workbook”
- Research and Evaluation Tools
  - Focus Group Guides
  - Interview Guides
  - Surveys
  - Vendor Monitoring Forms
- VERB Logo Terms and Conditions for Non-Profits
- Partners and Vendor Recruitment Forms
- Graphics, Radio Spots and Video Clips
- “Having a Successful Physical Activity Event: Your guide to making physical activity appealing to 9 to 13 year olds”
- “Event Logistics Guide: Planning a Community-Wide VERB Activity Zone Event”

## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Attendance at the University of South Florida Social Marketing conference and field schools, a selection of courses offered in an intensive five-day format, would be extremely helpful with respect to understanding marketing principles. The Florida Prevention Research Center at the University of South Florida provided this training in Kentucky. Training in social marketing from other sources may also prove helpful.

- The University of South Florida provides a biannual training on social marketing in partnership with the Academy for Educational Development.
- The Florida Prevention Research Center provides training opportunities in social marketing, listed at: <http://health.usf.edu/nocms/publichealth/prc/>
- The CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity has social marketing resources, including a web-based training for public health professionals about how to use social marketing to plan nutrition, physical activity, and obesity prevention programs.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/socialmarketing/index.htm>

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Program Contact(s):

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### Related Resources:

VERB website: <http://www.cdc.gov/YouthCampaign/>. This site contains very useful information and materials to supplement a scorecard implementation, such as marketing materials, evaluation tools, planning guides, reports, etc.

American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Volume 34, Issue 6, Supplement (June 2008). *The VERB™ Campaign Not About Health, All About Fun: Marketing Physical Activity to Children*. Edited by Faye L. Wong, Marian Huhman, Judy M. Berkowitz, Nick Cavill, Ed Maibach, American College of Preventive Medicine, Association for Prevention Teaching and Research. (entire journal supplement dedicated to articles on the VERB campaign)

**Publications:**

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