

**ExCEL After School Programs- San Francisco Unified School District's
Student Support Services Department
ER Taylor Elementary School - Healthy Behaviors Learning Center**
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The mission of ExCEL (Expanded Collaborative in Excellence in Learning) After School Programs is to create and sustain safe havens at public schools where students and community members can access expanded learning opportunities and integrated education, health, social service and cultural programs. ER Taylor is one of 90 ExCEL sites in San Francisco.

About ER Taylor

A National Blue Ribbon School, ER Taylor is one of the largest elementary schools in San Francisco Unified School District, serving 630 students and their families. The enrollment reflects the diversity of the surrounding neighborhood—50 percent Chinese, 27 percent Latino, 12 percent other non-white, 7 percent African American and 3 percent Filipino, with 75 percent qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

ER Taylor's staff, parents and students share a vision that all students will graduate from high school and be qualified to go to college if they choose. To help students reach this goal, the school offers a variety of support services, including a comprehensive after school program. ER Taylor's After School Program is committed to providing a seamless day for the students and reflected through the program staff. Over half of the after school staff also work during the regular school day as para-professionals, garden coordinator and yard staff. Staff placement is intentional at ER Taylor, and much effort goes into placing staff based on interest and aptitudes, resulting in staff retention and satisfaction. The staff meets quarterly to share a healthy meal and program successes.

Program Overview

The 120 students enrolled in ER Taylor's After School Program participate in homework assistance and rich daily enrichment activities that include performing arts, physical activity, nutrition, healthy cooking and gardening. ER Taylor staff is provided with on-going training in order to implement the Sports, Play and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK) curriculum. At Taylor, students are not only provided a daily opportunity to learn about being healthy, but they are also provided with the opportunity to put their



learning into practice. The program is funded by the After School Education and Safety (ASES) program.

Nutrition Education and Healthy Cooking. When Gabby Guinea was hired to be Taylor’s ExCEL Site Coordinator in 2007, she noticed that many of the students in the program were not eating the snack and that many seemed hungry. Coming from the food-service industry, her mission was to resolve this issue. By working with SFUSD’s Nutrition Education Program (NEP), budgeting creatively to purchase cooking supplies and collaborating with the SF Food Bank, healthy eating and cooking became a foundation of the program. In partnership with the NEP last year, the students from after school served as Nutrition Ambassadors, distributing *Harvest of the Month* during the regular school day. Curriculum from the CA Dairy Council and the *Network for a Healthy California’s Children’s Power Play* support student nutrition education.

Physical Activity. ER Taylor is one of 14 sites participating in ExCEL’s Carol M. White Physical Activity Grant (PEP), which was awarded to ExCEL After School Programs in 2008. Because of ER Taylor’s participation in this grant, this program has been able to enhance the delivery of physical activity. Staff receives on-site SPARK training and other resources and supports such as equipment and technical assistance from the ExCEL PEP Coordinator. Each month, 4th and 5th grade physical activity classes are observed using SOFIT (System for Observing Fitness Instruction Time). The data from these observations offer program staff ongoing feedback and ideas for increasing moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA), which resulted in an increase of minutes that students engage in MVPA. For example, Taylor students participated in 16 more minutes of MPVA in March than in January 2010.

Food Pantry. When the school-run food pantry was going to be closed because of logistical issues, the principal suggested that the students in after school run the pantry, and the rest is history. Now in year three, this student-run pantry provides fresh fruits and vegetables for nearly 150 families each week.

School Garden. Over the past four years, ER Taylor’s garden has blossomed after connecting the school’s garden coordinator to after school and staff attending trainings at Occidental Arts & Ecology. The growing cycle is now more intentional, and the harvested food can be used for the cooking activities. The garden also provides students with an opportunity to learn about composting and the environment.

America SCORES Enrichment. America SCORES–Bay Area offers 3rd through 5th grade students with opportunities to play soccer, write poetry and engage in community service projects. Last year, Taylor piloted Junior SCORES, expanding the program model to 1st and 2nd grade students. Not only do students have access to being active during

after school time, but they also play in weekly Saturday soccer games that encourage family attendance. The SCORES poetry slam is also a big event for the students, and an ER Taylor student was selected to participate in the National SCORES Poetry Slam in New York City.

Connecting to Families.

Because ER Taylor’s After School Program is such an integral component of the school community, there are a variety of family events that happen throughout the year. No matter the event, healthy eating options are always part of the activities.

Advocacy

ER Taylor has been recognized as a Healthy Behaviors Learning Center since 2009 and serves as a model site for ExCEL. The site plays host to other ExCEL sites and shares best practices with other after school program leaders, as well as at state and local conferences. As part of the annual PATHSTAR Alcatraz Swim/Cultural Exchange Program, Taylor hosted participants, who helped students prepare a healthy meal that they shared.

Partnerships

ER Taylor partners with a diverse group of community based organizations to ensure that students have an opportunity to sample a variety of activities and learn new skills. Partners include the San Francisco Food Bank, Performing Arts Workshop, Street Side Stories, America SCORES–Bay Area, Playworks and the Presidio YMCA Bike Program. Taylor also partners with the SFUSD Nutrition Education Program to promote *Harvest of the Month* and healthy family nights.