

KOA FAMILY

Wholehearted living touches every aspect of life, from eating nourishing foods, to enjoying enough physical activity, to having support of family and friends in good and challenging times, to joining together with neighbors to stand up for positive changes, and more. Unfortunately, for many low-income Californians, the idea of wholehearted living is an aspiration and not a reality. *Koa Family: Strong, Healthy, Whole* is an approach designed to make wholehearted living available for all.

The Approach

Koa Family is a 6-month journey to establish “micro-communities” of mothers supporting one another in healthy, wholehearted living. The foundation of this approach is a new, custom-designed Whole Health Program (WHP) that addresses mind, body, and spirit. Low-income mothers living in the same community will meet weekly to experience how to cultivate wholehearted living through healthful eating, physical activity, mindfulness and meditation, coping with stress, connecting to local resources, building a growth mindset, and more. The goal is to support healthier and more resilient, mindful, and empowered mothers. The weekly experiences will provide a safe place and touchstone for mothers to navigate their journeys.

Mothers in the WHP will receive additional encouragement and access to local resources through a text messaging campaign. A secure Facebook group will serve as a virtual huddle platform for mothers to continue their journeys beyond the weekly meetings. Finally, mothers will be invited to take part in a neighborhood tree planting campaign to create real, long-lasting, healthy changes to the environment in which they live.

The Study

Koa Family, with WHP at its core, is the product of extensive formative research both nationally and within low-income California communities

<http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/formsandpubs/publications/Pages/Obesity-Prevention-Project.aspx>.

Koa Family will be introduced in the Mack Road neighborhood of Sacramento and the City of Woodland in January 2020. It will be evaluated for effectiveness among 160 low-income, SNAP-Ed eligible mothers using a randomized, controlled trial study design, the gold standard of evidence. Outcomes include changes in Body Mass Index, diet, physical activity, and quality of life, measured at 3, 6, 9, and 12 months from baseline. An economic analysis will assess the cost-effectiveness of *Koa Family*, while qualitative methods will identify mediating factors related to the study outcomes.

The Potential

Koa Family is a project of the University of California, Davis Institute for Population Health Improvement, in collaboration with the California Department of Health Care Services. Funding is provided by the United States Department of Agriculture Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program—Education and CALFIRE. Research is being conducted in partnership with Westat, Inc., a global full-service research and evaluation firm.

These partner agencies have a common stake in ensuring that all Californians have the resources and experiences they need to improve their health and quality of life. *Koa Family*, with its comprehensive approach developed through extensive formative research, will reshape the way we approach health.