

Exploring Healthy Eating Practices in Universal School-based Early Childhood Program in Nova Scotia, Canada

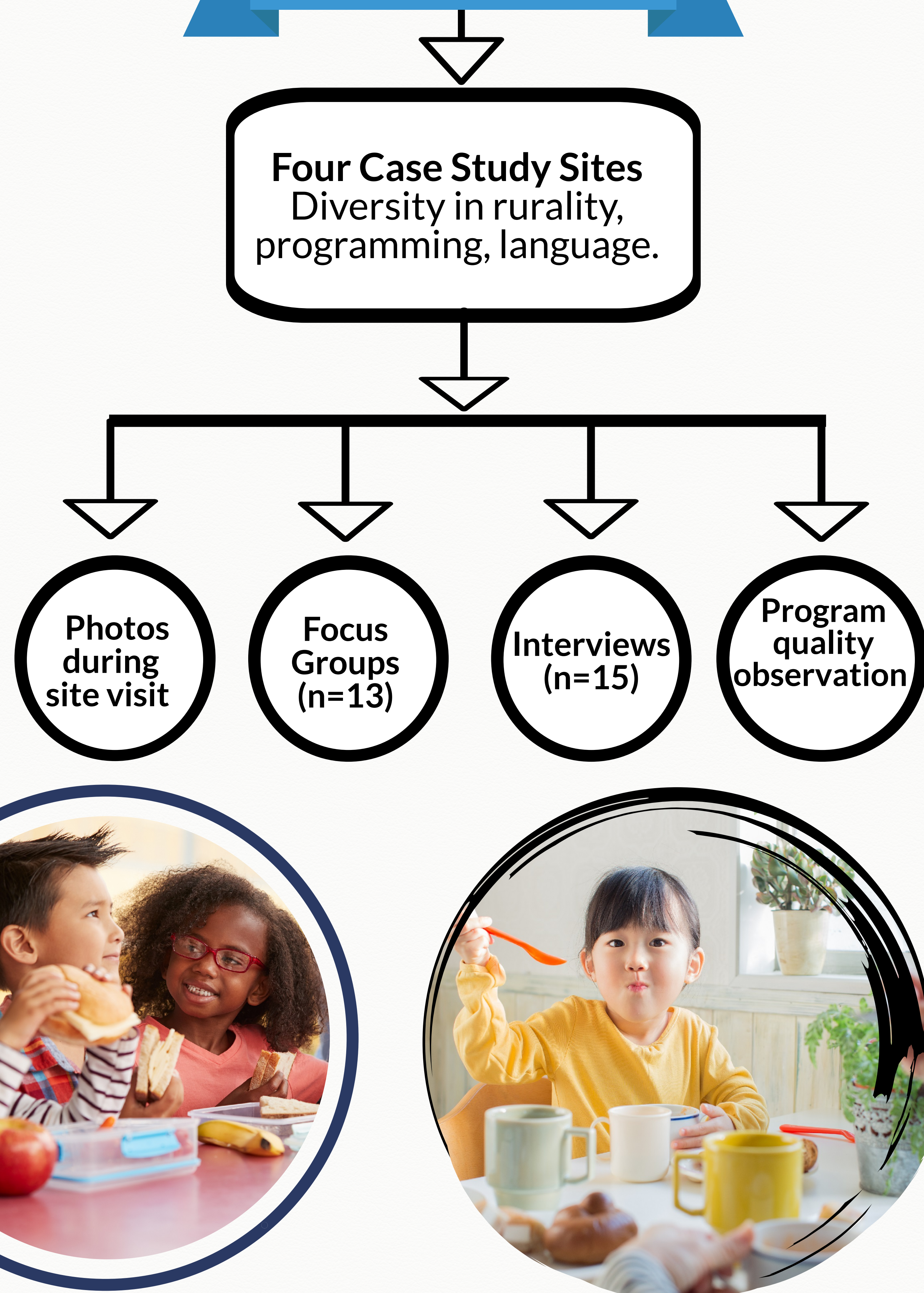
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Objectives

- Early healthy eating behaviours are important for childhood development and well-being.
- The east-coast province of Nova Scotia (Canada) is implementing a universal, no-fee, play-based, Pre-primary Program (PPP) for four-year children.
- The school-based program is child-centred and offers opportunities to support healthy eating.
- Understanding current healthy eating practices in PPP can inform the development of policy resources.



Methods



Results

- Two snacks were provided guided by the Nova Scotia Manual for Food and Nutrition in Regulated Child Care .
- Typically, the lead ECE procured the food. Snacks were prepared by the ECEs with some child involvement.
- An 'open snack' model was used, allowing children to choose when and how much to eat.
- Families provided their child(ren) with lunches.
- A 'family style' dining approach to lunchtime was used in which ECEs sit with the children during lunch.

Conclusions

- A survey is currently in progress to identify ECE opportunities and challenges of supporting healthy eating practices.
- Results are helping to inform ongoing research to identify policy strategies to support ECEs in the creation of healthy eating environments for young children.