



# NUTRITION BEST

***N**utrition BEST (Better Education, Skills, and Training) is helping to ensure the healthy growth and development of children in Placer County through research-based nutrition education, outreach and resources for families with young children. With support from First 5—Placer County and in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, Nutrition BEST strives to improve the diets of children throughout the county.*

*As lifestyle habits have changed over time, nutrition and good health have become pressing issues. Children are of special concern as they are now beginning to suffer from diseases formerly only seen in adults and other increased health risks. It is now clear that these early health risks have far reaching impacts on children as they grow into adulthood.*

*To help combat these rising problems, Nutrition BEST focuses on educational messages and resources targeted at families with children 0-5 years old and other care providers. Areas of focus have been nutrition education trainings, nutrition newsletters, and an integrated program with local farmers to promote increased intake of fruits and vegetables. Some program highlights are reflected in the following pages.*



## *Program Highlights*

- ◆ **Nutrition BEST website** pages had over **17,000** visitors
- ◆ **21** WIC families and **45** Early Head Start families received weekly produce boxes
- ◆ **Kid Food Newsletter** has over **900** subscribers
- ◆ **Nutrition BEST** distributed over **310** produce vouchers to families with young children
- ◆ **80** Early Head Start families and children attended a farm tour at the Natural Trading Company



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## Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Project



### Issue

The average American consumes less than 3 cups of fruits and vegetables each day. The consumption is even lower for low-income families. Fruits and vegetables are especially important for young children as they provide many important nutrients for growth and support a lifetime of good eating.

### What Was Done

This year we worked in collaboration with Placer County Early Head Start and the Natural Trading Company farm to provide 45 families with weekly CSA produce boxes. Families were provided nutrition information, recipes and tastings of produce each week. Families also attended a farm tour at the Natural Trading Company. Children were encouraged to pick and taste produce at the farm and experience other elements of farm life, including viewing the chicken coops and the farm goats.

### Impact

During this period 45 families received CSA produce boxes containing a variety of organic local produce. Families reported eating more and trying new fruits and vegetables. On June 20th, there were 80 people at the Natural Trading Company Farm Tour. This was four times the attendance of last year's Farm Tour. Families enjoyed walking the farm with the farmer and picking carrots, potatoes and onions out of the ground. After the tour everyone enjoyed tasting a variety of local produce.

***“My daughter loved the farm tour and wanted to eat the carrots she picked right away”.***  
**—Parent**



# Parent Education

***“Our family prepares more meals together since we started getting produce and recipes”.***  
**—Parent**

## Issue

In today’s fast pace of life it is often all too easy for families to rely on heavily processed foods or “fast” food for meals and snacks. The ease and convenience of these foods often overshadow their unhealthy nature. As parents are the primary decision makers when it comes to the foods offered to children it is important that they have sound understanding of nutrition and have the skills to support it.

## What Was Done

This year Nutrition BEST focused much of its parent education efforts on teen parents at Chana and Adelante High Schools. Teens were provided monthly nutrition lessons, highlighting different nutrition topics and seasonal produce. Students learned and helped prepare a variety of recipes, including roasted root vegetables, kale chips, pesto pasta and a fruit and vegetable salad. Teens were also provided farmers’ market produce vouchers.

## Impact

While teens were always interested in the food preparation activities in the classroom they were not as willing to use the farmers’ market vouchers. Only 2 students came to the first market. The next lesson highlighted local tomatoes and peaches. By the end of the lesson the teens were asking if they could get vouchers to take to the market the next week. The following week all 8 teen parents went to the market and used produce vouchers to buy a variety of produce.





## Issue

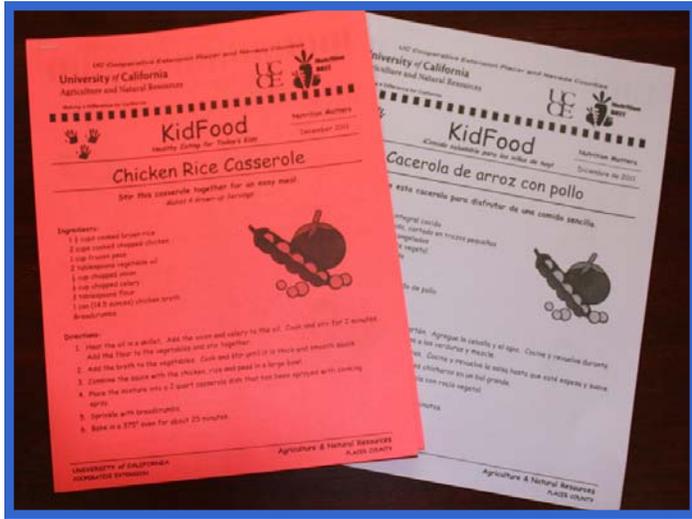
Parents, childcare providers, and health professionals want reliable nutrition information. With nutrition information readily available on the internet it can be difficult to determine credible sources. It is important for families and professionals to have a research-based source for their information.

## What Was Done

In order to provide credible information, Nutrition BEST distributes two newsletters, *Kidfood* and *Foodlines for Professionals*. *Kidfood* is offered to parents and childcare providers. *Kidfood* is available in English and Spanish and provides information on simple nutrition topics, highlights seasonal foods, and showcases simple nutritious kid-friendly recipes. *Foodlines for Professionals* is offered to health professionals who work with families and young children. The newsletter highlights the latest research in the areas of nutrition, food, food policy, and food safety.

## Impact

Throughout Placer County, the Kidfood Newsletter is received by 613 subscribers through the mail and 364 subscribers receive it online. There are currently 217 Foodlines for Professionals subscribers who receive their newsletter by mail and 83 who receive it online in Placer County. Professionals receiving Foodlines for Professionals reported finding the information useful or very useful and many of them share the information with families they serve.



**“New issue of the Kid Food Newsletter! Kid-friendly recipe for chicken lettuce wraps (yum!), ideas for fun outdoor activities, and more”.**

**—Facebook comment**