



Nutrition BEST

(Better Education, Skills and Training)

Program Highlights

- Kid Food Newsletter has 559 families and 393 provider subscriptions.
- Foodlines for Professionals newsletter has 77 online subscribers.
- Nutrition BEST distributed 463 produce vouchers to Placer County families.
- Nutrition BEST website had over 2300 visits.

Nutrition 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 and other increased health risks formerly only seen in adults. 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, trainings on vegetable gardening, and an integrated program with local farmers and farmers' markets to promote increase intake of fruits and vegetables. Some program highlights are reflected in the following pages.





Parent Education



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 how nutritious foods help children grow and develop. It is also important for them to learn food preparation techniques that are quick and easy, yet do not sacrifice good nutrition.

WHAT WAS DONE

This year Nutrition BEST focused much of its parent education efforts on teen parents at Chana and Adelante Continuation High Schools. This year teens participated in monthly nutrition education lessons. Each lesson highlighted a different nutrition topic and included a healthy snack. Teens were also provided farmers' market produce vouchers. Teachers would drive them to the market to use the vouchers. Teens learned how to purchase and prepare the produce once they returned to school.



IMPACT

While the teens at Chana High School have always been pretty open to trying new fruits and vegetables and learning how they are prepared, Adelante teens have been more reluctant. At the beginning of this school year, we were finally able to get the Adelante teens to the farmers' market. They were hesitant at first, but after a short market introduction by the market manager and a tour around the market, they were able to use all their produce vouchers. They were enthusiastic once they learned how easy it was to shop the market and use the vouchers. The teens then went back to school, and with guidance from their teacher, prepared a lunch with produce they had purchased.





Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Project



Summer 2012 CSA Produce Box



Loomis Early Head Start Child and Teacher Tasting a sunflower shoot



ISSUE

The average American consumes less than 2.6 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. It has also been established that children who learn to like a variety of fruits and vegetables when they are young are more likely to enjoy those same foods throughout life.

WHAT WAS DONE

This year we worked in collaboration with Placer County Early Head Start and the Natural Trading Company farm to provide 44 families with weekly CSA produce boxes for 6-11 weeks during the summer. Families were provided nutrition information, recipes and tastings of the produce found in their boxes. This year Nutrition BEST also created a cookbook based on produce found throughout the season in the CSA boxes. The cookbook includes recipes that are featured at the weekly tastings.

IMPACT

During this period the families who received CSA produce reported eating and trying new fruits and vegetables because of the produce boxes. Families were excited each week to taste the recipe that was prepared and had many questions. It was nice to see families learning how simple and tasty preparing fresh produce can be. It is also encouraging for families to see their children willingly tasting the recipes prepared and in many instances coming back for more. Forty-eight families were given the Bountiful Harvest CSA cookbook.



Farm Tour



ISSUE

Healthy, sustainably grown food items are not marketed to children as effectively as fast food and other processed food items. Often families simply choose the quickest and simplest food option without understanding the negative effects of their choices. Therefore it is important that children and their families understand the difference between processed and whole foods in order to help them make healthier food choices. It is also important to educate them on the connections between land, food, community, and health.



WHAT WAS DONE

Families served over the past year were invited to participate in 2 farm tours at the Natural Trading Company during the summer months. There they met the farmer and learn about how fruits and vegetables are grown locally. Families also experienced other elements of farm life, including viewing the egg laying chickens, heritage turkeys, pigs, and goats.

IMPACT

A total of 134 parents, children and staff attended the 2 farm tours held at the Natural Trading Company, one on September 19, 2012 and the other on June 19, 2013. Families enjoyed walking the farm with the farmer and picking tomatoes, carrots, potatoes and onions out of the ground. After the tour everyone enjoyed tasting a variety of local produce. Based on comments from families and Early Head Start staff, the farm tours are a great learning experience for children. The most notable experience was seeing children who don't typically like tomatoes picking them at the farm and popping them in their mouths.





School Gardens

ISSUE



Family Garden Day

In the past decade, schools have become aware of the multiple benefits of school gardening for students, teachers, schools, and communities. Gardening offers hands-on, experiential learning opportunities in a wide array of disciplines. A school garden can deepen children's sense of connection with nature and can inspire environmental stewardship. There is also evidence that active learning in the garden is more likely to transform children's food attitudes and habits. This is especially true when school gardening is combined with a healthy lunch program or nutritional education.

WHAT WAS DONE

In collaboration with UCCE Placer County Master Gardener program Nutrition BEST has provided vegetable gardening education and support to Placer County Head Start, Early Head Start Programs and Placer families. These programs use the gardens as educational tools for the children they serve and also harvest the produce to supplement school meals. Master Gardeners were also able to provide sites with composting bins to help them recycle their garden waste. A training was held on vegetable gardening for Placer County Office of Education childcare providers, 40 providers attended. Nutrition BEST and Master Gardeners also held a Family Garden Day event to educate and encourage preschool families to garden at home.



Lincoln Early Head Start Site Supervisor with new plant starts

IMPACT

Nine Head Start and Early Head Start sites in Placer County are now actively using their worm bin composters to recycle plant waste created at the sites. Due to budget cuts Loomis Early Head Start and Lincoln Early Head Start sites were set to close for the summer and therefore did not plant their vegetable gardens. At the last minute it was decided these sites would stay open. Nutrition BEST was able to provide vegetable starts and soil so these sites could start their gardens right away and maintain the great interactive experience for their children. Vegetable starts were also given to families who attended Family Garden Day.



Foodlines for Professionals & Kid Food

ISSUE

Parent, childcare providers and health professionals want current and reliable nutrition information. With so much information readily available on the internet it can be difficult to determine if a source is credible and if information is research based.

WHAT WAS DONE

In order to provide credible information Nutrition BEST distributes two newsletters in Placer County, Kid Food and Foodlines for Professionals. Kid Food provides information on simple nutrition and feeding topics as it relates to young children and highlights seasonal foods and simple low-cost, kid friendly recipes. Foodlines for Professionals is offered to health professionals who work with families with young children. The newsletter highlights the latest research in the areas of nutrition, food, food policy, and food safety.

IMPACT

Throughout Placer County Kid Food Newsletter is received monthly by 611 mail subscribers and 340 online subscribers.

Currently Foodlines for Professionals is offered to online subscribers only. There are 77 current subscribers who receive this newsletter quarterly.

UC Cooperative Extension Placer and Nevada Counties

University of California
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Making a Difference for California

KidFood
Healthy Eating for Today's Kids

Nutrition Matters
April 2013

Kids in the Kitchen

Make Mini Pizzas with your children - perfect for their little hands.

1. Start with a loaf French Bread.
2. Slice the bread into 1/2 inch slices.
3. Place bread slices on a metal baking sheet.
4. Bake in a 400° oven for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn bread slices over once while cooking and toast on both sides.
5. Create Mini Pizzas with your kids:
 - Spread 1 tablespoon of pizza sauce on each slice of toast.
 - Sprinkle with a little shredded mozzarella or cheddar cheese.
 - Top with a variety of ingredients:

Veggies:

- sliced cherry tomatoes
- chopped spinach
- sliced mushrooms
- finely chopped red and green peppers

Protein Foods:

- chopped ham or turkey

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Making a Difference for California

Foodlines for Professionals
GET THE FACTS ON GOOD NUTRITION

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ACTIVE VIDEO GAMES DO THEY INCREASE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN CHILDREN?

Inside this issue:

1. *Active Video Games: Do They Increase Physical Activity in Children?*
2. *Regular Consumption of Sugary Beverages Linked to Increased Genetic Risk of Obesity*
3. *Researchers Identify Behaviors Associated with High Fruit and Vegetable Consumption in Children*

In a recent study, researchers found that just providing children with an active video game did not result in an increase in physical activity levels. The findings were published by researchers at the USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor College of Medicine in the journal *Pediatrics*.

"Simply having active video games available at home will not by itself contribute to increased physical activity," said Dr. Tom Baranowski, professor of pediatrics at BCM and first author of the report.

The study followed 78 children between

Children in the control group were asked to select one of five inactive video games at week one and week seven of the study. Researchers used sales data to be sure that both groups had popular games from which to choose. Participants were also provided with all the materials needed to play the games.

Using the accelerometer, researchers measured physical activity in both groups at week one, six, seven and 12 and found no difference in physical activity levels between the control and study groups.

"It's not clear whether those in the study