



NUTRITION BEST

(Better Education, Skills and Training)

Program Highlights

Nutrition BEST provided 96 Early Head Start families a box of produce from a local farm. Families received a copy of the Bountiful Harvest cookbook to help them prepare and cook the produce they receive.

Over 110 Early Head Start families participated in a tour of the local farm that provides the box of local produce. They met the farmer, toured the farm, picked potatoes, planted a seed, and sampled local produce.

96 Early Head Start families received gardening education, seeds, plant starts, and planters to start their own gardens. They received a *Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide* to help them start their gardens.

Nutrition BEST provided 5,500 farmers' market vouchers that were redeemed for a total of \$11,000 in produce by Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) families.

Nutrition BEST (Better Education, Skills and Training) supports opportunities for children and families in Placer County to access fresh fruits and vegetables and embrace healthy dietary behaviors by providing educational experiences. With support from First 5 Placer County and in collaboration with other agencies and organizations, **Nutrition BEST** seeks to improve the diets of children throughout the county.

As public concern regarding childhood obesity, fruit and vegetable consumption, and food security continues to surmount, **Nutrition BEST** provides research-based nutrition education, outreach, and resources to equip families, children, and providers with the knowledge and skills necessary to address the health-related issues in the community. In order to effectively address these issues, **Nutrition BEST** focuses attention on families with children 0-5 years old and early childhood care providers by providing nutrition education trainings, nutrition newsletters, trainings on vegetable gardening and composting, and opportunities to explore local farmers' markets and taste fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers.



COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROJECT

ISSUE

On average, Californians only consume 1.8 servings of vegetables per day. Several of the key nutrients found in fruits and vegetables include fiber, vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium. The limited number of servings consumed on average means many people are not getting all of the nutrients they need to be healthy. Providing multiple opportunities for children to try new fruits and vegetables increases the likelihood that they will enjoy those foods later on and continue getting the nutrients they need to live healthy lives.

WHAT WAS DONE

In collaboration with Early Head Start (EHS) families of Placer County and the Natural Trading Company farm, CSA produce boxes were provided to 96 families weekly for 6-11 weeks during the summer. Families received a tasting from one of the recipes in the Bountiful Harvest Cookbook that highlighted produce they were receiving in their box that week, in addition to nutrition information. The families were invited to attend a farm tour at Natural Trading Company to learn about the farm they had been receiving produce from and how the produce is grown.



IMPACT

Families who received CSA produce boxes reported eating more fruits and vegetables, and trying new produce with their children. A downloadable version of the Bountiful Harvest Cookbook was posted on the **Nutrition BEST** website in both English and Spanish as an additional resource. The farm tour was a great success with a record attendance and anticipation for the following year's tour. Children and their families picked potatoes and participated in gardening activities in collaboration with the UC Master Gardener's Program.





NUTRITION EDUCATION



ISSUE

Childhood obesity remains an issue today, with more children suffering from disease and poor health as a result. Nutrition education, including gaining knowledge about healthy food choices as well as the skills to prepare healthy foods, is related to adoption of healthy behaviors and diets. Since parents often make decisions about food for their children, it is critical for parents to participate in educational trainings so they can better understand what foods supply important nutrients to support their children's growing minds and bodies.

WHAT WAS DONE

This year **Nutrition BEST** provided nutrition education to Placer County families on a variety of nutrition-related topics. Those who attended the nutrition education lessons included teen parents from Chana and Adelante High Schools, new mothers from the Sutter Mother's Outlet support group, and families from the Kids First family resource center. **Nutrition BEST** also worked in collaboration with the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program to provide nutrition education, food demonstrations and tastings, and local farmers' market vouchers to the Placer County WIC (Women, Infants and Children) and CoRR (Community Recovery Resources) Mothers in Recovery programs.



IMPACT

As part of the teen parent nutrition education lessons this year, the benefits of consuming fruits and vegetables was discussed. As part of the lesson the attendees were going to take a field trip to the local farmers market. Initially the teens were not interested. At the following lesson fresh peaches were sliced and prepared for tasting as part of the nutrition discussion. The teen parents were shocked at how much they enjoyed the taste of the local fresh peaches and were eager to walk to the farmers' market to use their market vouchers to purchase the delicious peaches. The teens also received the [Bountiful Harvest Cookbook](#) to carry out their enthusiasm at home by preparing the recipes with the local produce they purchase.





GARDEN EDUCATION



ISSUE

This year a Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide was developed to provide families with a resource to encourage planting their own container garden at home. The Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide describes a variety of container gardens, gardening basics, troubleshooting, and advice for planting a variety of vegetables based on seasonality. **Nutrition BEST** also provided education on worm composting to childcare providers through the Placer County Office of Education.

WHAT WAS DONE

Working with three Early Head Start (EHS) sites, **Nutrition BEST** has begun a new multi-pronged garden education program component for families and their children. A container vegetable garden at Auburn Alta Vista EHS was installed to provide fresh produce and hands-on gardening opportunities for children and families. Seed planting activities were held at three EHS sites, and gardening activities will continue through the summer and into the fall. The first issue of the **Nutrition BEST** gardening newsletter was produced and posted online on the new **Nutrition BEST** gardening web page and Facebook page. Other garden education publications have also been developed and are available in English and Spanish. **Nutrition BEST** gardening has also provided compost education to childcare providers through Placer County Office of Education Resource and Referral.

IMPACT

As a result of the worm composting training, all of the participants reported they agreed or strongly agreed that they gained knowledge and skills, found the information in the training useful, will use the information to better support children and family, and would recommend the training to others. It is anticipated that the release and distribution of the Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide will be a necessary resource to support resilient families in growing their own fruits and vegetables.

One participant from the worm compost training enthusiastically shared their experience: "Great workshop! We will use this worm bin in our preschool classroom. [We are] very excited!"