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Identifying the Education Needs and Conveying Related Information on Nutrition Topics for Pre-School Age Children by Educating Parents Through Writing and Media Communication.

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Name: *Melissa Lichtman*

Title: Identifying education needs and conveying related information on nutrition topics for pre-school age children by educating parents through written communication.

Abstract

As nutrition topics continue to gain media attention the general public is increasingly exposed to nutrition recommendations. The mass communication of health information presents increased education opportunity to promote implementation of healthy habits. In contrast, this increased presence also presents a risk of increased communication of information unsupported by scientific evidence. As these unreliable recommendations are communicated with frequency through popular sources it is the responsibility of healthcare professionals to provide the public with accurate and scientifically supported information. This information must be presented in a clear and appealing way in order to gain the attention of the public, helping to educate and make recommendations to support healthy habits that are realistic and maintainable.

Young children grow and learn in an environment constantly surrounded by these forms of mass communication, making education vital to instill healthy habits that can be maintained as they grow up. This project provided a healthy foundation for pre-school age children by educating their parents through a series of newsletters providing information on topics related to nutrition for pre-school aged children.

Newsletter topics were chosen to reflect the education needs of parents as were identified through a focus group. This focus group was hosted at Oakland Beach School, in Warwick RI, and was composed of eight parents of pre-school age children. The evidence collected through the focus group reflected the need for information on many nutrition-related topics. Strong focus-group evidence and additional research further identified the need for education in the specific areas chosen as the newsletter topics. The topics chosen included: Overcoming picky eating, consuming more fruits and vegetables, and planning meals in advance.

Research on these topics was gathered and presented through printed newsletters that were designed to be fun and easy to understand. These newsletters included information, helpful tips, healthy recipes, and activities intended to educate both parents and children. The development of these newsletters required scientific facts to be interpreted and communicated at an 8th grade reading level, which is recommended for education of the general public. These newsletters also included activities for the parents to complete with their children, allowing them to learn and work together. The presentation of the information and activities was designed to draw in the reader and create a clear understanding of the topics conveyed. By educating parents through these newsletters they will have tools to educate and empower their children to make healthy choices throughout their lives.

Introduction

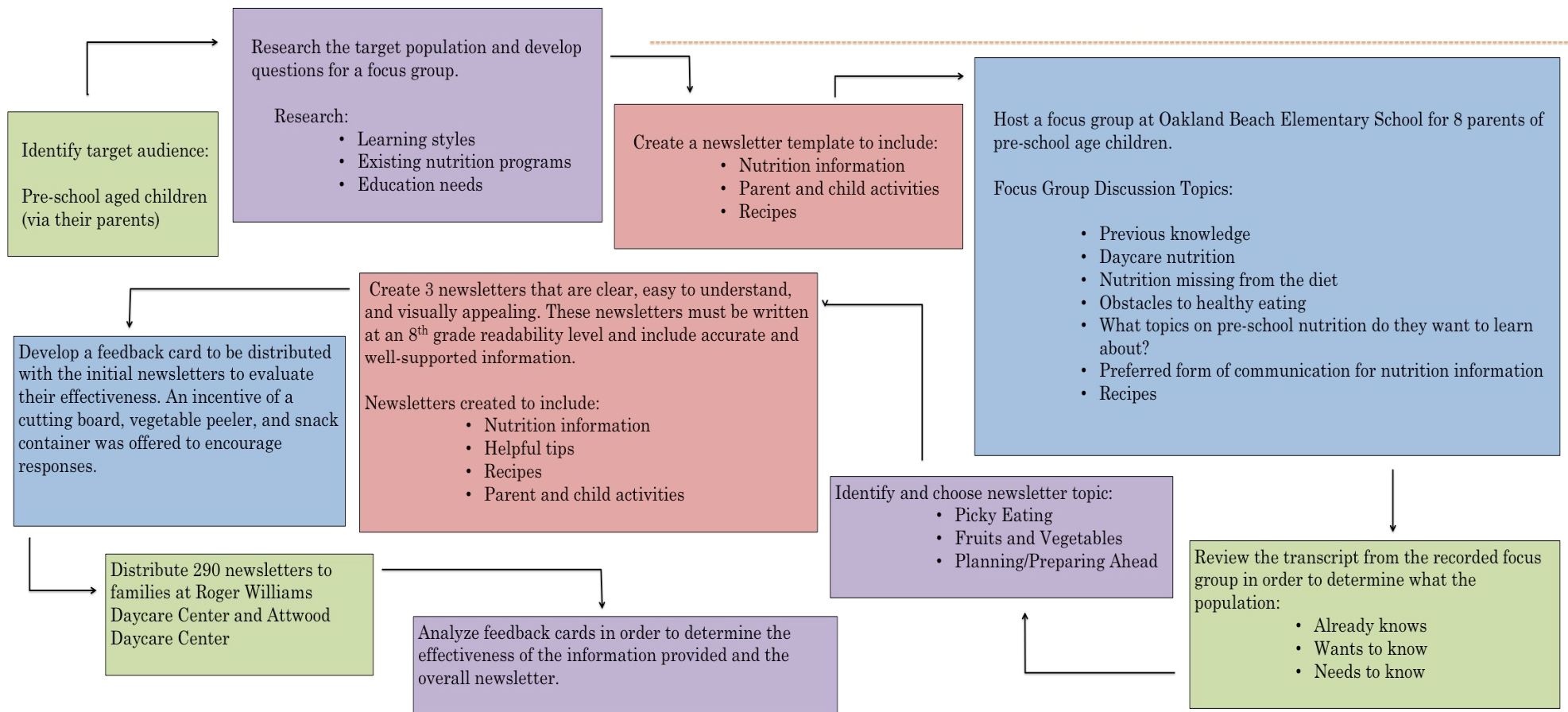
My goal through this project was to gain further understanding on effective ways to convey nutrition information to the public through written communication. This project specifically targeted pre-school aged children by educating parents on nutrition information, enabling them to educate their children and empower them to maintain a healthy lifestyle as they grow up.

As nutrition topics continue to gain media attention the general public is increasingly exposed to nutrition recommendations. The public's exposure to mass communication presents increased opportunity for unreliable sources to promote health information unsupported by scientific evidence. The ability for increased communication with the public creates an environment that has the *potential* to support health education that promotes a healthy lifestyle. It is the responsibility of healthcare professionals to provide the public with accurate and scientifically supported information. This project, hosted at the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (*SNAP Ed.*), worked to promote healthy habits for pre-school age children by communicating nutrition information through a series of newsletters. Information was provided based on population needs as were determined through a parent focus group. Newsletters were

designed to educate both parents and children by providing information and activities in a clear and appealing way, promoting habits and education that foster a healthy lifestyle.

Materials and Methods

Newsletter Development Process



Materials and Methods: Outline of Focus Group

Daycare Parent Focus Group Discussion Outline and Questions

Oakland Beach School, Warwick RI

October 14th 2014

Introduction:

- Introduce self:
 - From the University of RI SNAP-Ed program
 - Explain: SNAP-Ed provides nutrition education for people who are eligible for SNAP benefits, it is actually one of the benefits of SNAP
- Explain the goal of this interview session/focus group
 - The reason we are here today is to learn more about what you, as parents of daycare age children, would like to know about child feeding and improving the nutritional quality of your child's diet.
 - Your feedback will provide us with ideas for topics for our daycare nutrition newsletter.

Discussion:

1. Previous Knowledge:

- Has anyone ever heard of us (SNAP-Ed?) before?
 - If yes, how?
 - Child's school/after-school/ summer program?
 - Community centers or events
 - Social media/marketing?
 - Do any of you recall seeing any posters, signs, displays, or handouts with our program name on it?
 - Have you seen any DVD programs on community agency or health center TV screens
 - If so how many times over the past year?
 - If you have not heard of us that is OK.

2. Daycare:

- Do you provide your child's food at daycare, or does the provider?
- How well do you think your child eats while at day care?

- Do you talk about how well your child ate during the day or get any feedback from your provider about things like fussy eating, trying new foods, etc.

3. In terms of nutrition, do you feel there is anything missing from your child's diet?

4. What obstacles do you feel get in the way of healthy eating for you and your family? In other words, what are the things that make it hard for you to feed your family healthy food?

5. What topics about nutrition for pre-school aged children would you most like to learn more about?

a. (Mention only if needed)

- Healthy snack and on-the-go ideas for kids
- Preparing healthy meals that don't take a lot of time
- Shopping for healthy kid-friendly foods on a budget
- Reading food labels to look for healthier options
- Adding more plant-based foods into your child's diet
 - Like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
 - Importance? Ideas on how to consume more?
- Help with teaching your child about healthy eating
 - Parent-child relationship with food
- Beverage choices
- Portion sizes
 - How much juice?
- Picky eating

b. How about physical activity?

6. In terms of communication: How do you prefer to receive information on nutrition?

- Newsletters/other info mailed to your home
- Flyers and public reading materials that you can take from local community centers
- Outdoor signs and displays in the community
- Video programs shown at state or community agencies
 - for example while you are waiting
- Radio ads

- Email newsletters
- Text messages
- Website
- Social media like Facebook
- Social Media/Technology
 - Do you or anyone in your family have access to social media? Describe
 - If yes do you use it as a source of information?
 - What type(s) of social media do you use most?
 - Twitter
 - Instagram
 - Facebook
 - Pinterest

7. Further Participation:

- How interested would you be in participating in a nutrition education program offered by the University of Rhode Island?
- What would motivate you to participate in these free nutrition education classes? (or what would you hope to get out of...?)
- What would be a reasonable amount of time for the class?
- For how many weeks in a row would you be able to come to the class? (3,4,6?)
- What time of day would be best for you to attend a nutrition education class?

8. What kind of recipe ideas would you find most helpful to receive?

- What foods would you like to know how to incorporate into easy to make, healthy meals
- Breakfast? Lunch? Dinner? Snacks?
- Things you can freeze?

9. Are there other topics we haven't mentioned that you are interested in?

- Activities to do with whole family
- Alternatives to being in front of a TV/computer/video game screen?
- Growing your own food / container gardening
- Other?

Data and Feedback
Parts of Focus Group Transcript

Daycare Parent Focus Group
Tuesday October 14th
Oakland Beach School, Warwick RI

Q: “In terms of nutrition, like the variety of foods that your kids eat and that kind of stuff, do you feel there is anything missing from their diet, or that you’d like to know how to incorporate more, or like them to get more of?”

“Vegetables. My family is such a big bread family. Like my husband, if he had it his way, we’d have pasta every night.”

“Right. Well I mean more like when I’m at home and I’m cooking the meals, it’s usually healthy. But on the nights that I have work or, like I have to get out of the house too so I do a lot of theatre and stuff like that so”

“You can always like pre-prepare or do crock pot meals on that night and then that way dinner’s done he doesn’t have to worry about, if he doesn’t like it he can eat something else but the kids you know”

“I would imagine a helpful thing for the education too is like teaching how to cook in bulk. And like set aside. Make, if you’re gonna do a thing of lasagna, do like three things of lasagna and freeze them. Or one day a week that you’re not working if you can set aside two hours to prepare meals for the week.”

“That’s what I do.”

“If it’s like chopping vegetables and putting them in a bag so you can just like throw them in the skillet for a stir fry.”

“What about time-saving techniques”

“It’s so hard. I find that, I mean it takes so much time to do healthy.”

“I feel like meal plan is really helpful to prep to prepare. If you plan what your meal is ahead of time.”

“I depend on carrots highly. I depend on carrots so much. Cause they’re so easy and we do them raw. And I just I wash them and I just peel them and cut them up and that’s our veggie a lot.”

“I also do the sneaking, like sneaking foods into tomato sauces I do a lot of veggie purees and hide them in things. And you can do macaroni and cheese. Like Annie’s macaroni and cheese. My son will eat macaroni and cheese all day long so if I pure like a little bit of spinach and mix it

in with the cheese sauce...like you can do three different vegetables that are really healthy like you can put vegetables they don't want to eat you can just put them in a puree and put it into like tomato sauces..."

Q: "Going along with this idea of how to get these vegetables and nutrients into your kids food, what other obstacles do you think get in the way, like you're saying pickiness and time and bulk foods and ideas like that, are there any other obstacles that you think get in the way of certain nutrients getting into your child's diet?"

"I just don't know how to make it."

"Fruits an issue with my daughter...Vegetables not an issue its just fruit that I have an issue with her."

"I just make my Andre sit there until he eats it. I tell him no snack."

"This is like one of the main things that my husband and I, like my husband and I are on the same team for everything except for nutrition."

"Yeah we go back and forth with it too"

"He is like such a junk food junkie like to the point like where his fingers are stained with processed cheese I'm like that's disgusting"

"Well he's not that way but my husbands just like, I actually just, I had to sit down with him and I had to talk to him about eating vegetables. Because he doesn't want to eat vegetables. And it's like; okay you're his father and, carrot john, john carrot. You got to eat it period, this is your son and you have to do this, this is the example, because we are their example."

"...And I continually tell my husband that and he was supper picky and now he like, he wouldn't eat any vegetables and then I started making fajitas and then he wanted them at least once a week. And now peppers are his favorite thing. You know like"

"My son hates peppers that's the only vegetable..."

"And sometimes you can use like a dip like hummus, you put the hummus on the pepper and they'll eat the pepper and sometimes you have to like let ranch dressing slide."

"I do find with kids, my kids, they love vegetables, like I don't have an issue they'll eat anything. Dip though makes it magic. I know I don't care what dip you use, like one time I ran out of dip, I won't tell you what they used but, and you can make your own like healthy, you don't have to buy, say ranch dip on the shelf, you can make your own. But umm"

"That stuff can be expensive though"

And I also found we, as crazy as it sounds, I ordered from amazon a set of mini metal cookie cutters, different shapes, it's like a package. I cut pretty much any vegetable, any fruit that you can think of into shapes, my kids are obsessed. It's not that I have to but I go that extra mile just to make it more fun and more interesting and to keep it, like I don't want them, we don't eat peanut butter and jelly anymore, all of a sudden that's obsolete in our family like they won't eat it. I think they just got sick of it, so I don't want them to, same with any food I don't want them to get sick of carrots or, so I keep it fun."

"I guess another obstacle would be how to introduce vegetables, or other things that they don't like to eat creatively to get them to eat it. Something more fun."

"Like make a smiley face on their plate or something."

"Ants on a log"

"Like I try to reduce the amount of, instead having sandwiches all the time for lunch she'll have a peanut butter apple sandwich. So you do the apple core and then slice it so it's like a like two pieces of bread with peanut butter and it's more fun as something different to."

"Or a wrap too. We've recently gotten into wraps we use wraps."

"I do crackers too sometimes."

"(Her child) likes Eggrolls too and it's really easy to make a bunch. That's something you can make a bunch and freeze and just stuff it with vegetables or whatever you want. And bake it, don't fry it. But they're a perfect little size."

"It's so cool that as he grows he's like 'I want to try that, and I wanna try that' like stuff that he refused before. Not only do I add stuff to his plate but he's like, 'oh let me try that, let me try that'. As he grows it's like he wants to try. It's cool."

"My kids won't eat tuna fish. They won't eat any fish, well we don't do fish. Once in a great while ill buy, as healthy as I can find, fishsticks, just to have them but they don't eat them. We don't really do fish."

"I can't stand the smell, I can't touch fish. I can't even look at; I have such an issue, even though I'm not completely vegetarian, I have such an issue with seeing the fish at the market. I can't even go over to that section."

"Like the ones that still have their heads on or a filet of fish?"

"Just all of them, all of them but my kids are like I wanna see the lobsters"

"Oh my god my kids do that too"

"I have such an issue with just meat in general"

“I just think that sometimes some barriers that parents have with introducing their children to things is they might not like it themselves or they have a mental challenge with that particular thing or how to do it and they think that their kids won’t like it unless they do it a certain way or whatever.”

“Yeah that’s true, that’s 90% of our issues at home. I would eat healthier if my husband would eat healthier. Do you know what I mean like.”

“Yeah meal planning”

Q: “Pinterest is great and that’s something else that I definitely want to know about. Like, what forms of media communication, because that is so big now, would you guys like to be able to find this kind of information on? How to overcome picky eating, meal planning all that stuff.”

“There’s a lot of great stuff on Facebook. Cause you just like a page and then you see it on your newsfeed. Like you can make an apple look like Mickey Mouse yayyy or whatever. You just see it quickly and then, oh boy so many of our science experiments happen that way. Then I realize we should invest in safety glasses”

“I have like a million cookbooks and I’m like oh I wanna make all this stuff and then I end up like never looking at them cause I like just google a recipe.”

“See I don’t have internet, I collect recipes.”

“I google recipes like food network.com”

Q: Other than internet sources, like you mentioned limited access to internet, what other ways do you look for recipes. Is there like any community centers or anything that have recipes or flyers?

Q: “Do you like the idea, like you were mentioning a group, so a group that would meet and discuss these things so you guys could all share with each other. Verses just flyers or recipe handouts that you could take?”

“Or like recipes that are ways to add in new things that people wouldn’t typically try.”

“ I’m just not creative.”

“You need someone to give you the idea sometime.”

“I need like people to give me ideas. That’s why I like Pinterest, like I can do it I just don’t think of it and then I’m like oh yeah that’s genius”

“Going back to the being full. Maybe information on how like certain food groups tend to make people feel more full then others like with the carbs that can give you a spike in blood sugar so you’ll be more hungry once that blood sugar goes down. And how protein makes you feel full

longer. So maybe some education on that so to help them know like what can make them feel more full.”

“It’s hard to step out and try something new especially when you’re busy working and..”

“Yeah, yeah”

in them. And you just look at it as a carb because it’s a vegetable but.”

“Yeah I have no idea like if I see a vegetable I don’t know what’s in it. You know what I mean like I don’t know the breakdown of like spinach. Other than okay I can get iron from this, but that’s like the extent of it but you know what I mean, but besides spinach where else can you get the iron from where can you get the protein from?”

“So like alternatives for protein. Like non-traditional protein, non-traditional iron that people might not be aware of”

Data and Feedback Formative Evaluation Cards

Each of the 290 sample newsletters that were distributed to families at two local daycare centers was attached to a newsletter evaluation card. Families were encouraged to return these evaluations for the reward of a free gift provided by SNAP-Ed.

Feedback Card:

1. Is the information in this newsletter helpful to you and your family?
a) Very helpful b) Somewhat helpful c) Not very helpful to me
2. Is this newsletter clear and easy to understand?
a) Yes b) Somewhat c) Not really
3. What new information did you learn? _____

4. What nutrition topics would you like to see in future newsletters?

5. Please provide your name and mailing address for the free gift:



Free gift for
your feedback!



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for better diet. To find out more, contact your local HHS office, or call the URI SNAP-Ed nutrition program at 1-877-Food-URI (1-877-366-3874). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Only slightly over 1% of the cards distributed were returned, information was provided as follows:

- Everyone responded that the newsletter was clear and easy to understand
- Everyone responded that the newsletter was either very helpful or somewhat helpful.
- Readers reported learning to let their children make their own choices and to introduce new foods early in the meal.

Final Product Newsletter 1



Nutrition Newsletter for Early Childhood

December
2014

Planning Ahead Helps Busy Parents

Why Plan a Meal?

- Saves time! When you plan meals, no time is wasted deciding what to cook for dinner each night. This allows you to spend more time enjoying the meal with your family!!
- Saves money! Planning helps create a clear shopping list, which saves money at the grocery store by avoiding last-minute purchases!!!
- Leads to healthy choices! By planning meals and snacks ahead, you will have healthy choices ready to cook and eat. This can help your family avoid unhealthy processed foods that are high in fats, sugars, and sodium!!

Tips for Successful Meal Planning

- ✍ **Save some for later!** If you are making one of your family's favorite meals, double the recipe and freeze some for later. Freezer meals give you quick healthy options for busy times!!
- ✍ **Plan a Meal Plan!** Write out a meal plan every few days or every week. Plan as many meals as you can. Include breakfast, lunch, dinner, and even snacks!
- ✍ **Deals for the week!** Check weekly mailers for coupons and sales at your local grocery store that you can plan your meals around!!
- ✍ **Involve the whole family!** Plan the week's meals together in order to include a variety of meals that everyone enjoys. This is a great opportunity for your whole family to learn about healthy food choices together.
- ✍ **Focus on Healthy Choices!** Try to plan healthy meals by using MyPlate recommendations. Use ingredients from the different food groups including fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy!!

Take a Look At Your Grocery List

Dairy

Choose foods high in calcium to keep growing bones strong.

TRY:

2% Milk

Low-fat yogurt

Low-fat cheese

Grains

Are at least half of my grains whole?

TRY:

Whole-Wheat Bread

Brown Rice

Oat meal

Protein

Are these lean sources of protein?

TRY:

Skinless Chicken Breasts

Salmon

Black Beans

Vegetables

Are there different color veggies on this list?

TRY:

Carrots

Bell Peppers

Broccoli

Cucumbers

Fruits

Are these good on-the-go snacks?

TRY:

Apples

Bananas

Oranges

Keep these ideas in mind when creating your meal plan and grocery to help choose healthy foods for your family.

Tips for Freezing

- 🍏 Add the flavor later- Some spices can lose or change their flavor when frozen. Leave spices out during preparation and add them in when you defrost and heat the meal to eat.
- 🍏 Keep defrosting easy- Pack frozen meals in serving size or meal size portions so you only thaw what you will be eating.
- 🍏 Know what you have - Label foods when you freeze them identifying the type of food it is and the date of preparation. This will help you keep track of what foods you have available and how long they have been frozen for.



Black Bean Chili (Serves 6, total time 35 minutes)

Ingredients:

2 cups chopped onion
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ cup water
1 tablespoon ground cumin
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 cup prepared tomato salsa
2 red or green bell peppers, chopped
2 15-ounce cans of black beans, drained and rinsed
1 28-ounce can whole tomato's with juice
2 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
Salt, to taste
Tabasco or other hot sauce to taste

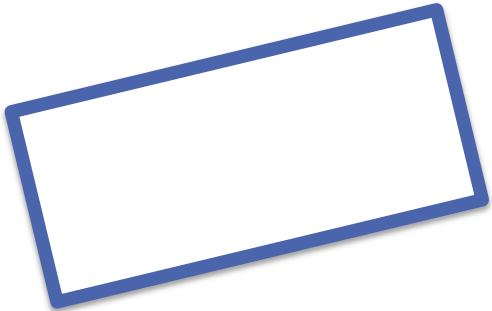
Directions:

1. In a covered soup pot, cook the onions and garlic in the water on high heat, stirring frequently for about 5 minutes
2. Add the cumin and coriander and stir on high heat for a minute. Stir the salsa and bell peppers, lower the heat, cover and simmer for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally
3. Add the black beans and tomatoes; simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Add the corn and continue to cook for 10 minutes.
5. Add salt and Tabasco to taste. Stir in cilantro if desired



This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – SNAP. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DHS office, or call the URI SNAP-Ed nutrition program at 1-877-Food-URI (1-877-366-3874). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Final Product
Newsletter 2**



Nutrition Newsletter for Early Childhood

January
2015

Is Your Child a Picky Eater?

Understanding Picky Eating

!!!!!!Were YOU picky as a child? Picky eating is also common among young children. As toddlers and pre-school age kids learn to feed themselves they can become selective and fussy about what they eat. At these young ages children learn to beware of hunger and fullness and choose food for themselves!!

!!!!!!When feeding your children, know that parent and child each have different roles. These roles in feeding are known as "division of responsibility."!

!!!!!!Following these roles can help make meals and snack times less stressful!

One other way to reduce stress? Don't make meal time a battle!! If your child is growing and energetic he or she is most likely getting enough to eat!!

Division of Responsibility for Feeding

Parent Decides:

What healthy food options the child will be served.

When the child will eat by planning meal and snack times.

Where the child will eat by picking meal location (ex home or restaurant).

Child Decides:

What they will choose to eat from the options provided.

How much food they will eat.

For more information visit:
www.ellenstaterinstitute.org

New e-book for Kindle: "From Picky to Powerful" by Maryanne Jacobsen

Count How Many Different Foods You See!!



Answer: 6

Overcoming Picky Eating

When you have a child who is a picky eater it can be a challenge. It is important to encourage but not force. Here are a few tips to help.

- **Be a good example**—Children’s eating preferences are influenced by their parents. Eating healthy, different foods with your child helps encourage them to try new things. If they see you enjoying vegetables, they will too with time.
- **Enjoy meal time**—Create a comfortable environment at meal times. To keep your child focused on the meal, avoid television and toys while eating. Compliment your child on good behavior at the table.
- **Start with new foods**—Introduce new foods early in the meal. This is when your child will be most hungry and more willing to accept the new food. And don’t worry if this takes a few tries.
- **Prepare your child for meal time**—Let kids know 10 minutes before dinner is ready that it’s almost time to eat. This will help them shift focus from their activity to the

Meet the Playful Peas!

We grow from the ground and are small, round, and green.

We have a sweet taste and are very healthy!

We like to play hide and seek in macaroni and fried rice!

Kids are more likely to try a new food that is familiar. Talk about new foods and make them available to your child several times so they can feel comfortable trying them when they are ready.



Apple Smiles (1 serving, 6 smiles)



Ingredients:

- 1 small red apple
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter (or sunflower seed butter)
- 1 tablespoon of raisins

Directions:

1. Wash, core, and cut apple in half.
2. Cut each apple half into 6 slices.
3. Spread peanut butter on one side of each apple slice.
4. Place 3 or 4 raisins on top of peanut butter on one apple slice. Top with another slice and press together to make one “smile.”
5. Repeat with remaining ingredients. If there is a peanut allergy, sunflower seed butter can also be used.



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Final Product Newsletter 3



Nutrition Newsletter for Early Childhood

March
2014

Eating More Fruits Vegetables

Why is it Important?

Fruits and vegetables should be included as part of the daily diet. They have a lot of vitamins and minerals that are needed in the body. Fruits and vegetables are also high in fiber, which is an important nutrient.

It is common for kids to reject these healthy foods at first. You can help your child eat more fruits and vegetables by making them

a familiar part of meals.

MyPlate recommends that half of the plate should be made up of fruits and vegetables. This is a good guideline to keep in mind when planning meals and snacks.

By including fruits and vegetables in your child's diet you will be helping them develop healthy habits for the future!

Tips to Help You Feed Your Child More Fruits and Vegetables

- * Encourage your child to eat as many different colors as they can.
- * Try cutting fruits and vegetables into fun shapes like squares and triangles.
- * Use healthy dips like hummus and nut butters
- * Get your child involved by letting them help wash fruits and vegetables and mix salads.

What's in Your Fruits and Veggies?

Not all fruits and vegetables are the same. Each one has different vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that keep your body healthy. Below is a list of the vitamins, minerals, and nutrients that are found in some fruits and vegetables. All of the following are fat free, cholesterol-free, and sodium free.

Vegetables

Asparagus- Vitamin C, Iron, and Fiber
Avocado- Vitamins C and E, Potassium, Magnesium, Folate, and Fiber
Bell Peppers- Vitamins C and A
Broccoli- Vitamin A, Folate, Iron, Calcium, and Fiber
Carrots- Vitamin A and Fiber
Cauliflower- Vitamin C, Folate, and Fiber
Lettuce- Vitamin C, Folate, and Fiber
Spinach- Vitamins C and A, Iron, Potassium, Calcium, and Fiber
Sweet Potatoes- Vitamins C and A, Calcium, Iron, Potassium and Fiber

Fruits

Apples- Good source of Vitamin C and Fiber
Bananas- High in Vitamins C and A, and Potassium
Cantaloupe – Good source of Vitamins C and A and Potassium
Grapes- Good Source of Vitamin C, Potassium, and Fiber,
Oranges- Vitamin C, Folate, and Potassium
Pears- Potassium, Vitamin C, and Fiber
Strawberries- Vitamin C and Fiber



Meet Mrs. Banana!

I am a fruit, I grow on a tree, and I have a bright yellow peel!

Try eating me with peanut butter or in a bowl of cereal!

I have a sweet flavor and am very filling!

Fruits

(It is recommended that young children eat 1- 1½ cups of fruits every day. With your child, look at the pictures below and have them circle the fruits they like or might want to try.)



Apples



Bananas



Oranges



Strawberries



Grapes



Pears



Pineapple



Blueberries

Vegetables

(It is recommended that young children eat 1- 1½ cups of vegetables every day. With your child, look at the pictures below and have them circle the vegetables they like or might want to try.)



Broccoli



Carrots



Tomatoes



Cucumbers



Peppers



Lettuce



Celery



Corn



Honey Yogurt Dip (8 servings, 2 tablespoons each)

Ingredients:

1 cup low fat plain yogurt
2 Tablespoons honey
½ teaspoon cinnamon
Fruit slices or chunks, for dipping
(like apple, banana, or peach)

Directions:

1. In a small bowl, combine yogurt, honey, and cinnamon. Mix Well.
2. Serve with fruit slices or chunks. Use any of your favorite fruits!

Discussion

My goal through this project was to effectively convey nutrition information through written communication. Providing the public with accurate, well-supported nutrition education is important to enable the pursuit of a healthy lifestyle. By creating educational and interactive newsletters I was able to communicate information on childhood nutrition to the parents of pre-school age children. Working with this population gave me the opportunity to equip parents with the education and tools they need to empower their children to learn healthy habits at a young age.

In order to create the most effective newsletters possible I researched my target population by reading existing literature and hosting a one-time focus group. Through my focus group I was able to lead a parent conversation on pre-school nutrition. This conversation allowed me to assess what these parents already knew, what they needed to know, and what they wanted to know. Some of the topics discussed included: barriers to healthy eating, foods they felt were missing from their child's diet, and family meal routines. The results of this focus group helped to identify newsletter topics that would be most helpful to this population.

Newsletters were developed to include nutrition information, interactive activities for parents and children, and recipe suggestions. The newsletter focused on overcoming picky eating was distributed to 290 families at 2 different daycare programs along with a feedback card to be mailed back for assessment of the newsletters effectiveness. The feedback cards returned reported that the newsletters were clear and easy to understand in addition to being either very helpful or somewhat helpful. Parents commented that they learned to introduce new foods to their child at the beginning of a meal and to allow their children to help make their own food choices. Through this project I learned how to identify population needs and communicate healthy nutrition information in an appealing way. It is important to make accurate and reliable information on nutrition available to the public so they have the opportunity to make healthy choices for both themselves and their families.