



**Nutrition
BEST**

NUTRITION BEST

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 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 25,000 visitors
- ◆ 142 parents and caregivers attended nutrition education trainings
- ◆ **Kid Food Newsletter** has over 900 subscribers
- ◆ Nutrition BEST distributed over 600 produce vouchers to families with young children
- ◆ 22 families received CSA produce boxes combined with nutrition and food preparation education



Parent Education



First Street parents learning about container gardens.

“Wonderful presentation. Excited to try a container garden at home.”
-First Street parent

Issue

Children need to be offered a variety of nutritious foods for optimal growth and development. As parents and caregivers are the primary decision makers when it comes to the foods offered to children it is important that they have sound understanding of nutrition.

What Was Done

This year, Nutrition BEST worked with a variety of community agencies to deliver nutrition education to parents of young children. We provided education to teen parents at Chana and Adalante High Schools, parents at First Street Preschool, mothers at Turning a New Leaf Counseling, mothers at Roseville Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS), and mothers at Sutter Mother's Outlet.

Impact

In Placer County 142 parents received nutrition education. The following story shows how Nutrition BEST can be a catalyst for healthy behavior change. A series of nutrition lessons were given to teen parents. At the first class a teen mom was emphatic about her dislike for vegetables. At the end of the fruit and vegetable lesson the teen parents were given produce vouchers for the local Foothills' Farmers Market, and the teacher arranged a field trip to the market during class the following week. After the trip the teen that disliked vegetables gave a short talk to the class on her trip to the market and how interesting it was. She also ate the class salad and said she is now willing to try more vegetables.



Community Supported Agriculture Project

One Lincoln WIC parent said, "I made the kale chips for my 2 year old son and 5 year old daughter and they both keep asking for more. They love them!"



WIC families sample carrots at the Natural Trading Company CSA.

Issue

The average American consumes about 3 cups of fruits and vegetables each day. The consumption of fruits and vegetables is even lower for low-income families who often cite barriers as high cost of produce, lack of preparation knowledge, and unfamiliarity of fruits and vegetables.

What Was Done

To help bridge the gap of low fruit and vegetable consumption among families and children, the University of California Cooperative Extension's Nutrition BEST program, Placer County WIC, and the Natural Trading Company, partnered to provide weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Produce Boxes.

WIC families in Lincoln, California, began receiving weekly produce boxes in May 2011, and will continue to receive the boxes through October 2011. Each box contains 6-8 different types of vegetables and one type of fruit each week.

Impact

- 44 WIC families in Placer County received produce boxes directly from the farm.
- Over 100 applications were received to participate in the project.
- One mother stated her husband is so intrigued by the variety of products that he now wants to start a family garden in their backyard.
- A farm tour of Natural Trading Company farm was held for participating WIC families in June.



Foodlines for Professionals / Kid Food



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.

***"I share the
information with
parents I work with."
- Foodlines for
Professionals
subscriber***

Impact

There are currently 600 mail subscribers to the *Kidfood* newsletter throughout Placer County and 388 online subscribers. There are currently 235 subscribers to *Foodlines for Professionals* in Placer County. Professionals receiving *Foodlines for Professionals*, including registered nurses, medical doctors, registered dietitians, and teachers reported finding the information useful or very useful and many of them share the information with families they serve.