



Program Highlights

- ◆ Over 2,755 low income Placer and Nevada school children received nutrition education
- ◆ Over 176 teachers trained in the Let's Eat Healthy! nutrition program
- ◆ Program representatives brought Let's Eat Healthy! to 32 preschool classrooms and 100 elementary school classrooms
- ◆ \$181,692 grant to provide FSNEP programs to low income Placer and Nevada Counties children and youth

FOOD STAMP NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

The vision of the Let's Eat Healthy! program (Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program in Placer/ Nevada Counties) is to educate food stamp eligible children and parents throughout Placer and Nevada Counties to lead healthier lives through wise food choices and physical activity.

The purpose of Let's Eat Healthy! is to promote healthy lifestyles as outlined in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. This program targets schools and community programs with large numbers of children from food stamp households. This is by teaching students about the importance of physical activity, healthy food choices and what these foods do for our bodies. Eligible schools receive UCCE nutrition curricula, resources and teacher trainings.



Preschooler at Union Hill Bearcats Discovery Center shows off her "sparkly eyes" after taking a bite of an apple.

This is extremely important in light of the fact that childhood obesity has tripled in the past three decades. One in three Americans, younger than 18 is overweight. The likelihood of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood cholesterol, and high blood pressure at rates that raise their heart disease risk are greatly increased in the overweight child. The rapid rise in childhood obesity, if left unchecked, could shorten life span by as much as five years.

Physical activity, good nutrition, and good education go hand in hand. Well-nourished children have higher test scores, better school attendance, and fewer classroom behavior problems. Research shows that knowledge and skills children learn today help them choose healthier foods tomorrow and into adulthood.



Let's Eat Healthy! - Makes a Difference in The Preschool Classroom

Issue

Children in preschool are learning about themselves and their environment. For some, the preschool experience is the first time away from home. During this time preschoolers are exploring their independence and forming food preferences and habits. When it comes to making healthy food choices research shows that these habits created early in childhood will last a lifetime.

What Was Done

Twenty-one qualifying preschools in Placer and Nevada Counties participated in the *Let's Eat Healthy!* program during the 2008-2009 school year.

Each classroom received an introductory lesson at the beginning of the school year. All lessons start with an introduction to MyPyramid, part of the USDA's food guidance system. The lesson also includes a movement and cooking activity. Each classroom chooses one of our preschool curricula, *GO Glow Grow* or *Happy Healthy Me...Moving, Munching and Reading Through MyPyramid*, to use throughout the year. In the spring a UCCE program representative returns for a review lesson which incorporates a book, movement, and cooking activity.

Teachers incorporated the lessons throughout the years. Many took the learning further with extended activities such as setting up a grocery store with healthy food and creating a vegetable mural of corn and pumpkins.

Impact

Teachers reported, as a result of this program, children rated highly in:

- Tried new foods
- Increased nutrition knowledge
- Made healthier food choices
- Developed positive attitudes toward food, good health, and nutrition
- Washed hands before eating
- Improved physical activity

Taking the learning home. One teacher shared the impact of this program on one of her students. *One mother told us about how her son tries and eats veggies at home now. He talks about "sparkly eyes".*



Extending the learning with a vegetable mural.



Eating Healthy From Farm to Fork... Kindergarten -2nd Grade Statewide Training

Issue

Knowing how and why to eat healthy is important, but knowledge alone does not enable children to adopt healthy eating behaviors. Research has shown cognitive-focused curricula on nutrition education typically results in gains in knowledge, but usually have little effect on behavior (Zeller & Jacobson, 1987; Bagby, Campbell & Achterberg, 1993; Contento, Kell, Keiley, & Corcoran, 1992; Weis & Kein, 1987). Strategies that actively involve the learner in using and applying the information are more effective.



Farm to Fork Training in San Diego.

What Was Done

Eating Healthy From Farm to Fork...Promoting School Wellness is a nutrition education curriculum that makes the connection between local food systems, garden-based learning, school food service, and the establishment of healthy habits.

Three Statewide curriculum trainings were presented during the 2008 summer on *Eating Healthy From Farm to Fork...Promoting School Wellness, Kindergarten—Second Grade Curricula*. These trainings were held at UC Davis and UC Cooperative Extension San Diego from July 22, 2008, through August 1, 2008. The participants at the trainings were FSNEP and EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) educators, school teachers, agency staff, 4-H volunteers, and 4-H teen youth.

These trainings offered fun, interactive, hands-on learning for participants. Participants will use the knowledge gained to train elementary and afterschool teachers and students.

Impact

An evaluation was given at the end of the training. When asked, *how likely are you to do the following as a result of the training?* Participants reported:

- 98% were likely to recommend the Farm to Fork curriculum or training to others.
- 91% were likely to include the *Eating Healthy From Farm to Fork* curriculum in their nutrition curriculum offerings for teachers, volunteers or other extenders.
- 94% were likely to implement some aspect of this training in the next six months.



Let's Eat Healthy!- Works with Hennessy Summer School Program

Issue

The majority of U.S. children do not eat enough fruits and vegetables. An analysis of data from a recent survey shows that children eat only 2.4 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. The Dietary Guidelines 2005 and MyPyramid recommend children eat 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups of vegetables; the equivalent of 9 servings per day.

What Was Done

Research shows that when children grow their own food they are more likely to eat it. It has also been shown that children are more likely to eat foods they have prepared themselves.

With this in mind, UCCE FSNEP Program Representatives visited the Grass Valley After School Program at Hennessy Elementary School. Program Representatives led separate nutrition lessons by age group; Kindergarten—2nd grade and 3rd grade—5th grade. Through these lessons children learned the importance of eating healthy foods and what these foods do for their bodies. They also learned that plants, like people, need water and nutrients to grow.

The children then got to make a tasty salsa. Through making salsa they learned:

- The importance of washing fresh produce.
- How to chop, dice, and slice food.
- How to measure ingredients using measuring spoons and cups.

Once the salsa was completed all enjoyed eating the finished product.

Teachers received a copy of *Farm to Fork...Promoting School Wellness* curriculum to continue lessons throughout the summer. UCCE supplied the Hennessy Summer School program with plants—tomato, onion and cilantro— so that the children could grow their own salsa garden.

Impact

Students were more willing to try the salsa because they had made it themselves. Many asked for the recipe to take home and make with their families. They were all excited to plant their salsa garden.

Quotes from students and teachers:

- I don't usually like salsa but the kind we made is great!
- This was fun. I'm going to make some more with my family.
- These plants are a great motivator to get us out in the garden.



Children learn cooking techniques by making salsa.



Let's Eat Healthy!—Makes a Difference In Elementary Schools



Students at Hennessy Elementary School work together on a food label reading activity.

Issue

The **Let's Eat Healthy!** program has been in Placer and Nevada Counties' schools since the fall of 2001. Does this nutrition education in schools make a difference?

What Was Done

Over the past eight years a UCCE FSNEP program representative has taught nutrition lessons and provided research-based hands-on curriculum to target schools in Placer and Nevada Counties. During the 2008-2009 school year six schools participated in the program.

Each classroom receives an introductory lesson at the beginning of the school year and a review lesson in the form of a game in the spring. Many fifth grade students have received lessons since they started preschool!

Impact

When asked how they have made nutrition a part of their teaching day, teachers say:

- I make sure to incorporate nutrition into other subject areas.
- Every week I have a lunch bunch. I bring fruits and vegetables to share.
- We now all wash our hands before snacks and lunch.
- The food bank donates food and we analyze it before eating.
- We make healthy choices for our party treats.
- I remind my students to make healthy choices at snack and lunch time.

What teachers say about the **Let's Eat Healthy!** Program:

- I integrate the program whenever I can.
- This program has made students aware of why we encourage healthy food choices.
- Students love the lessons.
- The program continues to be outstanding.
- This program supports our nutrition unit and physical activity program.

By working together with the schools, **Let's Eat Healthy!** is making a difference. As one teacher said, "My students and I love this program! Having the "Nutrition Lady" launch the program is encouraging. Having her come back ensures that I follow through with the lessons. We are all making better choices." Another said, "It's easier to talk about healthy food because we have a common language."



Let's Eat Healthy! Web Pages

Issue

Educators need access to sound, research based nutrition, and physical activity information. Many teachers are looking for information to enrich their classroom and help their students lead healthier lifestyles.

What Was Done

The internet is full of information on nutrition and physical activity, unfortunately not all this information is accurate. Our web pages are monitored on a regular basis and kept current with the latest research based information. The following links are available on the **Let's Eat Healthy** website:

- *Nutrition Nibbles*—newsletters for parents of young children.
- Childhood Obesity—defining the problem.
- Who Qualifies for the Let's Eat Healthy! Program?
- Curriculum—summaries of available curricula.
- Healthy Lunches & Snacks—menus, snack ideas, and more.
- Get Parents Involved—tips for teachers.
- News Releases.
- Newsletters—Preschool and School Age Nutrition information.
- Teacher Packet—all the information to get started.
- Photo Album—A visual of **Let's Eat Healthy!** in action.

Impact

As a result of the **Let's Eat Healthy!** webpage, from June 1, 2008, to June 1, 2009, there have been 72,112 total hits. We also have newsletter subscribers from all over the world. Those working in the nutrition education field have shown an increased interest in using our curriculum. Requests have come from educators across the United States.



Let's Eat Healthy! Web pages.