



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 for 11 weeks. 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 boxes of local produce. They met the farmer, toured the farm, picked potatoes, planted seeds, and sampled local produce.

KidFood Newsletter has 305 families and 30 provider subscriptions.

Nutrition BEST provided 1,000 farmers' market voucher packets to Placer County 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 farms while being able to taste fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers.*





COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROJECT



ISSUE

On average, Californians do not consume enough fruits and vegetables, 82.3 percent do not meet the fruit recommendation and 87 percent do not meet the vegetable recommendation. Several key nutrients found in fruits and vegetables include fiber, vitamins A and C, iron and calcium. Many people are not getting all of the nutrients they need to be healthy. Providing families free local produce can be beneficial in developing healthy eating habits. By having multiple opportunities for children to try new fruits and vegetables it 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 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 a 16.7 percent change increase in trying new produce with their children, and a 24.4 percent change increase in the number of children helping to prepare meals at home. The farm tour was a great success with a little over 110 attendees. Children and their families picked potatoes, berries, and participated in gardening activities in collaboration with the UC Master Gardeners Program. Parents reported that they learned where their produce comes from and they learned about gardening.



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, Sierra College Foster Kinship, Placer County Office of Education Providers, and families from Placer County KidzKount. **Nutrition BEST** also worked in collaboration with the UC CalFresh Nutrition Education Program to provide nutrition education to Placer County WIC (Women, Infants and Children). **Nutrition BEST** provided food demonstrations and tastings, along with the distribution of local farmers' market vouchers to the Placer County WIC. **Nutrition BEST** continued educating the community through local events, like the Health and Safety Fair and Kids Day with interactive activities and games for the whole family.



IMPACT

As part of the teen parent nutrition education lessons this year, the teens received tools and resources to help them make healthier choices for themselves and their children. After a lesson on sugar, teens received reusable water bottles and sippy cups. At the next lesson they all came and showed off how they have been using their water bottles to drink water instead of soda.





GARDEN EDUCATION



ISSUE

In Placer County 20.3 percent of children are food insecure. Children that are food insecure are at a higher risk for obesity and chronic health problems, along with a higher rate of behavioral and social issues. Providing families and community groups with the resources to grow produce not only helps increase the availability of produce but also helps bring the community and family closer together. Gardening not only provides greater availability of produce, but is a great time to learn and be physically active.

WHAT WAS DONE

Working with three Early Head Start (EHS) sites, **Nutrition BEST** has continued the garden education component for families and their children. At Auburn Alta Vista EHS children had hands-on gardening opportunities planting starts in containers at their site. Children were able to watch the vegetables they planted grow and later on tried those vegetables. Seed planting, and worm composting activities were held at two other EHS sites. Gardening activities will continue through the summer and into the fall. A downloadable version of the [Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide](#) was posted on the **Nutrition BEST** website in both English and Spanish as an additional resource. **Nutrition BEST** gardening has also provided education on gardening with children, and provided resources and tools to childcare providers through Placer County Office of Education Resource and Referral. WIC families were also offered gardening classes in which they were able to take home cherry tomatoes in containers to grow at home.



IMPACT

As a result of the Placer County Office of Education gardening with children training, all of the participants reported they gained knowledge and skills to garden with children and found the information in the training useful. They will use the information to better support children and families. The [Bountiful Harvest Container Garden Guide](#) provides families with the necessary resources and support in growing their own fruits and vegetables.



One participant from the training enthusiastically shared their experience: "I feel more confident to start my raised beds."