Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)

Program Overview

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) reaches English and Spanish speaking families with incomes at or below the poverty threshold, or families that qualify for federal food assistance programs (WIC, Food Stamps, TANF, Head Start, free or reduced school lunches) when these families have school-aged or younger children living at home. Pregnant women who qualify for WIC also qualify for EFNEP. The Nutrition Program Assistant is a trained paraprofessional who teaches basic nutrition, food preparation skills, food resource/budgeting, and food safety. The goal of EFNEP is to help families acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well being.

What Nutrition Program Assistants Do?

Nutrition Program Assistants (NPAs) are trained paraprofessionals who teach basic nutrition, food preparation skills, food resource/budgeting, and food safety. One important role of an NPA is to identify groups and individuals who are eligible for and would benefit from participation in EFNEP. The NPA then recruits and enrolls individuals or groups. Some of the agencies EFNEP is working with include the Health Department, WIC (prenatal moms), ACORN, Domestic Violence, Coastal Woman Pregnancy, Carteret OBGYN and Hope Mission.

Nutrition Program Assistants teach basic nutrition for healthy adults and children using the Eating Right Is Basic 3 (ERIB3) curriculum. Classes for small groups and individuals are taught in individual's homes and for groups in community sites. Nutrition Program Assistants work with clients to select the classes that will best fit their needs and interests. The ERIB 3 curriculum includes 18 lessons:

- Starting with the Basics
- The Food Guide Pyramid
- Understanding Food Labels
- Planning Makes the Difference
- Making the Most of Your Food Dollars
- Keeping Food Safe
- The Bread, Cereal, Rice and Pasta Group
- The Vegetable Group
- The Fruit Group
- The Milk, Yogurt and Cheese Group
- The Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs and Nuts Group
- Breakfast...A Healthy Way to Start the Day
- Choosing Healthy Snacks
- Eating Right for Two
- Feeding Your New Baby
- Feeding Infants and Children
- Eating Right and Light
Lessons include hands-on activities as well as food preparation and tasting. This approach makes the lessons interesting and practical. After completing a minimum of six lessons, EFNEP participants are eligible to graduate and receive a certificate of completion.

Nutrition Program Assistants are also responsible for evaluating the progress of EFNEP participants. Using two tools, a 24 Dietary Recall of the participants food intake and a Behavior Checklist, completed before and after participation in EFNEP, an assessment of changes in knowledge and behaviors can be measured.

What Participants Learn

Nutrition Program Assistants (trained paraprofessionals) teach enrolled participants nutrition education. The goal of EFNEP is to help families to acquire knowledge, skills, attitudes and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well being. EFNEP participants who take part in the hands-on program use the knowledge they gain to break the cycle of poverty for their families. Society at large benefits from reduced infant mortality, lower health care costs and the increased economic stability of families. The Nutrition Program Assistant utilizes the Eating Right Is Basic 3 (ERIB3) curriculum to teach small groups and individuals, both in the community and in their home. Participants learn to:

- save money at the grocery store
- cook from scratch
- prepare healthy and tasty meals for their families
- improve the diets of family members
- keep food safe, reducing waste and food-borne illness
- use leftovers

As a result of their EFNEP experience, adults:

- become better resource managers
- improve decision-making skills
- become more self-reliant

For more information about EFNEP

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Employment and program opportunities are offered to all people regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. In addition, the two Universities welcome all persons without regard to sexual orientation. North Carolina State University, North Carolina A&T State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and local governments cooperating.