P66 Preschool Children of Eating Competent Parents Have Higher Quality of Life and Lower Nutrition Risk

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Objective: Examine if nutrition risk or quality of life (QoL) in preschool children is associated with parent eating competence (EC).

Design, Setting and Participants: Cross-sectional online survey of preschool parents recruited from low-income venues. Parents ($n=117$) were female, 82% white, resource-constrained (62% reported social service program participation), mean age 32.2 ± 7.8 y; 51% were EC. Low socioeconomic position (SEP) was defined by worrying about money for food and social service program participation; 28% had a low SEP. Mean preschool age was 3.4 ± 1.0 y. NutriSTEP identified 25% at nutrition risk. Pediatric QoL was below the 80th percentile for 6%.

Outcome Measures and Analysis: EC measured with ecSI 2.0; parent behaviors assessed with Three-Factor Eating Questionnaire-18, General Health Questionnaire, Child Feeding Styles Questionnaire, Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Inventory, self-report height/weight/worry about money for food. Child health examined with Pediatric QoL Inventory (PedsQL) and NutriSTEP. NutriSTEP and PedsQL scores were compared between EC and non-EC parents using GLM controlling for SEP.

Results: EC parent health, sleep, weight, stress were better with less emotional and uncontrolled eating. NutriSTEP and PedsQL were associated with EC ($r = .29, p=.002$; $r=.22, p=.02$ respectively). NutriSTEP indicated lower nutrition risk ($P=.002$), PedsQL revealed better quality of life ($P=.07$) for children of EC parents, also after controlling for SEP (16.4 ± 1.0 vs. $19.3 \pm .8, p=.03$; 99.0 ± 1.6 vs. $95 \pm 1.2, p=.044$ respectively). Child nutrition risk was lower with EC parents when controlling for program use ($15.5 \pm .8$ vs. $18.7 \pm .9$; $P=.008$).

Conclusions and Implications: Interventions designed to enhance preschool parent EC may benefit child nutrition status.

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P67 Farmers' Market Incentives and Nutrition Education: A Qualitative Study

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Objective: Despite the evidence that a diet rich in fruits and vegetables reduces the risk for obesity and chronic diseases, low-income Americans do not consume recommended intakes. Farmers' market incentives and nutrition education through SNAP-Ed have been promoted as effective intervention strategies to decrease perceived barriers associated with poor intake of fruits and vegetables in this population. This study investigated how the combina-

tion of farmers' market incentives and SNAP-Ed nutrition education influences the beliefs, values, and experiences among participants.

Design, Setting and Participants: Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted until theoretical saturation was reached. Fourteen low-income individuals receiving farmers' market incentives and SNAP-Ed nutrition education were interviewed.

Outcome Measures and Analysis: Interviews were transcribed, coded, and themes were developed using grounded theory.

Results: Participants reported that farmers' market incentives decreased barriers associated with consuming fruits and vegetables such as cost, availability, and accessibility. Participating in SNAP-Ed education sessions was also found to reduce barriers such as a lack of knowledge and self-efficacy about how to prepare, store, and cook produce. Participants reported consuming a greater amount and larger variety of fruits and vegetables when they received incentives to use at the farmers' market. Furthermore, participants indicated the incentives allowed them to provide their families with fruits and vegetables that they wouldn't typically be able to afford.

Conclusions and Implications: Farmers' market incentives coupled with nutrition education reduced common barriers to fruit and vegetable intake among SNAP participants. This combination of interventions may be an effective way to increase fruit and vegetable consumption.

Funding: Utah State University.

P68 Perceptions and Concerns Related to Healthy Eating Among Low-Income African American Mothers of Preschoolers

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Objective: The purpose of this study was to explore perceptions of and perceived barriers to healthier eating among low-income African American mothers of preschoolers. The second purpose was to explore factors that motivate mothers to select certain foods and beverages for their children.

Design, Setting and Participants: Mothers of 3-5 year old children enrolled in two Head Start Programs in North Carolina were recruited for this qualitative study. Participants took part in focus groups/interviews and completed a parent questionnaire (e.g., demographic, anthropometric).

Outcome Measures and Analysis: Social Cognitive Theory guided the structured discussions to capture parental perceptions and concerns related to healthy eating. Common themes were extracted from verbatim transcripts utilizing content analysis.

Results: Five focus groups/interviews were conducted with a total of 11 mothers (mean age = 35). Three overarching themes regarding maternal perceptions of healthy

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eating were found. Healthy eating is represented by a home-cooked meal with meat, vegetables and starch. The primary motivation to eat healthier was in response to immediate family members' disease (i.e. obesity, diabetes) and eating habits/attitudes of older siblings/other family members were perceived as the biggest barriers to encouraging their preschoolers to eat healthy.

Conclusions and Implications: Mothers are aware of the importance of healthy eating and make effort to make home-cooked meals for their preschoolers. However, nutrition educators should provide specific strategies for reducing barriers to healthy eating at both individual and family level are needed.

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P69 Adopting Healthy Habits: Nutrition Educators Expand Roles to Include Policy, Systems, and Environmental Change

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Objective: To identify programmatic supports necessary for professional and paraprofessional nutrition educators to expand beyond direct education and engage in policy, systems, and environmental (PSE) changes that make healthy choices easier in environments where children and adults live, learn, work, and play.

Design, Setting and Participants: Adopting Healthy Habits (AHH), a formative, community-based participatory research study, supported 16 existing Cooperative Extension staff in seven diverse counties across New York. AHH staff translated statewide strategies (staff development, worksite wellness programs in their own and partner organizations, and engagement in local coalitions) into site-based efforts driven by local needs and opportunities.

Outcome Measures and Analysis: Output and outcome data were collected through yearly work plans, periodic focus groups and interviews with staff and partners, community readiness and other needs assessments, and monthly documentation of activities. Data analysis identified successes and challenges and programmatic supports and resources required for adoption of expanded roles.

Results: With guidance, dedicated time, and skill development, nutrition educators can expand their roles and become agents of PSE changes. Results documented best practices for work with partners in primary sectors, i.e. schools, community organizations, and coalitions. Specific successes and challenges elucidated additional needs regarding effective evaluation tools, resources to support dedicated time for PSEs, and staff training relevant to multiple community roles undertaken by professional and paraprofessional staff.

Conclusions and Implications: AHH outcomes illuminate opportunities within current partnerships to engage in and implement PSEs. Site-specific case studies detail contextual variation and serve as roadmaps for PSE initia-

tion. Challenges remain and additional research is needed to develop sensitive and effective evaluation tools.

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P70 Messages to Parents of Middle-School Children: Choosing Effective Strategies to Support Healthy Food and Drink Choices

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Objective: To develop effective electronic messages for parents to encourage changes that will support middle school children's healthy food and drink choices at home and school.

Design, Setting and Participants: Food and nutrition messages addressing parenting skills and core nutrition practices (fruit, vegetable, low-fat dairy, sweetened beverage intake) were developed following formative focus groups (n=7) with mixed income parents (n=46) of middle school students in urban and rural settings. Complementary parenting strategies for use in the home were also developed. Researchers conducted additional interviews (n=17) to rank messages in order of preference and relevance, and to select strategies based on feasibility.

Outcome Measures and Analysis: Message ranking and strategy selections were analyzed for frequency, and field notes and transcripts were reviewed to understand parent choices and edit content based on participant suggestions.

Results: Top vegetable and fruit messages promoted variety and recognized the importance of role modeling – themes also evident in popular strategies. Top drink messages and strategies highlighted water as a preferred beverage. Also popular was pairing healthful eating and supportive parenting efforts, for example messages promoting family meals and healthy food in the home. Parents selected strategies that engaged children in food selection and preparation and that incorporated healthful foods at snack- and meal times.

Conclusions and Implications: Parents preferred simple, direct messages and strategies that reinforced and supported parenting roles. Data help fill an important gap in the literature and will be used in an upcoming pilot; parents of middle-school students will receive electronic messages and select strategies to try with their families.

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P71 Maternal Perception of Weight and Child Actual Weight Across Time

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