NP25 Talking to Parents of Middle School Children About How to Support Healthful Food Choices at Home and at School

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Objective: To develop effective nutrition messages with complementary strategies for parents of middle school children that will positively impact children's food choices.

Description: Researchers conducted 7 focus groups with 46 mothers of middle school students in urban and rural settings. Utilizing card sorts, participants categorized nutrition behaviors and associated parenting skills by level of perceived importance. Ease or difficulty of putting behaviors into practice was assessed using open-ended questions. Results informed development of messages and strategies addressing parenting skills and core nutrition practices (increasing fruit, vegetable, and low-fat dairy intake, and decreasing sweetened beverage intake). Researchers then conducted semi-structured interviews, during which 24 parents ranked messages by preference and selected most relevant strategies to affect children's behaviors.

Evaluation: Focus group transcripts were open-coded to identify nutrition-related behaviors of concern and important parenting strategies. Message ranking and strategy selection were examined for frequency, while interview transcripts were reviewed to explain choices and edit content using participant suggestions.

Conclusions and Implications: Parents preferred simple, direct information that reinforced parenting roles. Highest ranked messages promoted fruit and vegetable variety, supported role modeling, and promoted water as a preferred beverage. Parents expressed interest in strategies for engaging children in food selection and preparation and strategies for healthful snacks and meals. These results provide valuable insight from parents of middle school students – an underrepresented group of adolescents in transition – and will inform future messaging to parents.

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NP26 Use of Engaging Online Videos in Conjunction With New Feeding Content to Enhance a Current EFNEP Program

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Objective: Researchers have posited that inclusion of the family may be necessary in childhood obesity prevention efforts. Parenting practices that thwart children's ability to pay attention to internal cues of hunger and

fullness may contribute to childhood obesity. The overall purpose of this study is to add parenting content to the widely used Eating Smart * Being Active Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. This will be accomplished by modifying previously developed videos for use in the parenting curriculum which will provide parents with appropriate tools to use in feeding their children.

Description: Participants will be mothers who are participating in the Eating Smart Being Active EFNEP nutrition program in the states of Colorado and Washington. Parenting curriculum will be delivered in addition to the nutrition program in one of two conditions – online versus in-person.

Evaluation: Currently, the parent curriculum is being developed along with the website and activities for use in the online condition and activities for the in-person condition. Modifications to the existing video recordings have been made and additional footage produced. Next steps will include piloting the program. Modifications will be made based on the pilot prior to commencing the randomized controlled trial. Evaluations to the program will take place at pre-, post-, at 6 and 12 months.

Conclusions: Childhood obesity prevention efforts have rarely been successful. Incorporating parents in prevention efforts may be a missing link in combatting childhood obesity.

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NP27 Children Eating Well (CHEW) Smartphone Application for WIC-Participating Families With Preschool Children

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Objective: The objective was to develop and evaluate a smartphone-based nutrition education intervention that is culturally appropriate for African American and Hispanic WIC participants with preschool children.

Description: Based on findings from the CHEW Nutrition Survey and input from the CHEW Community Advisory Board and WIC program, the team developed a smartphone application with two components: a WIC shopping tool to assist mothers with maximizing WIC vouchers, and nutrition education focused on healthy snacks and beverages targeted for ages 2-4. The goals of the smartphone intervention (English and Spanish) were to make the WIC shopping experience easier, maximize WIC voucher use, and improve parent snack feeding practices. The dietary targets for children were increased intake