INTRODUCTION

Programs that include cooking may be more effective in improving diet quality among children than nutrition education alone. Flint Kids Cook was created in October 2017 as a pilot cooking and nutrition program for children in Flint, Michigan. Unique in design, the program was co-facilitated by a chef and dietitian and offered inside a farmers’ market commercial kitchen. The current study assessed feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of Flint Kids Cook.

METHODS

This pre-post pilot study included six weekly sessions (90 minutes each) at a local farmers’ market. Children were recruited from partnering pediatric offices and community-based organizations in Flint. Sessions included 10-12 children (8-18 years) who actively prepared two dishes that highlighted a specific food group. The final session was a celebratory meal that children prepared for their families. Feasibility was assessed using retention rates. To evaluate effectiveness, baseline and exit scores related to attitude towards cooking and cooking self-efficacy were compared using paired samples t-tests. Attitude towards cooking scores ranged from 6-30 (lower scores indicated a more positive cooking attitude) and cooking self-efficacy from 8-40 (lower scores reflected greater cooking self-efficacy).

RESULTS

Of the 71 children who attended the program, (73%) completed at least 4 sessions. Most participants (mean age 10.8 ± 2.3 years) were African American (86%) and Flint residents (77%). Approximately half were female (51%). Among the 51 children who completed baseline and exit assessments, significant improvements (p=0.001) were observed in mean attitude towards cooking scores from baseline (8.75 ± 2.89) to program exit (7.87 ± 2.46). Mean cooking self-efficacy scores also improved significantly (p=0.002) from baseline (13.75 ± 4.50) to program exit (11.53 ± 3.88).

CONCLUSIONS

Flint Kids Cook could be modeled in similar communities to engage children and promote positive changes in cooking attitudes and self efficacy.

REFERENCES


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