

iCooks: A Virtual Cooking School and Nutrition Education Program Delivered to SNAP-Ed Youth Participants in Arkansas



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PROGRAM DESCRIPTION: The University of Arkansas, Division of Agriculture, Cooperative Extension Service, SNAP-Ed Program conducted a virtual cooking school to reach SNAP-Ed youth during the COVID-19 pandemic. The iCooks cooking school was offered to students in the Lonoke School Systems, and 11 families with a combined total of 24 youth in grades 3-12 participated in the program. The iCooks cooking school consisted of five lessons delivered weekly. Each lesson included a demonstration video of the recipe, along with instruction and healthy eating and food safety information. Ingredients to prepare the recipes at home were provided to participants. The lessons also included a physical activity component and an eating together as a family activity. A private Facebook group was created for participants where they could post pictures of themselves cooking, comment on the recipes and share what they learned.

OBJECTIVE: To implement a virtual cooking school to promote healthy eating and teach youth basic cooking and food safety skills.



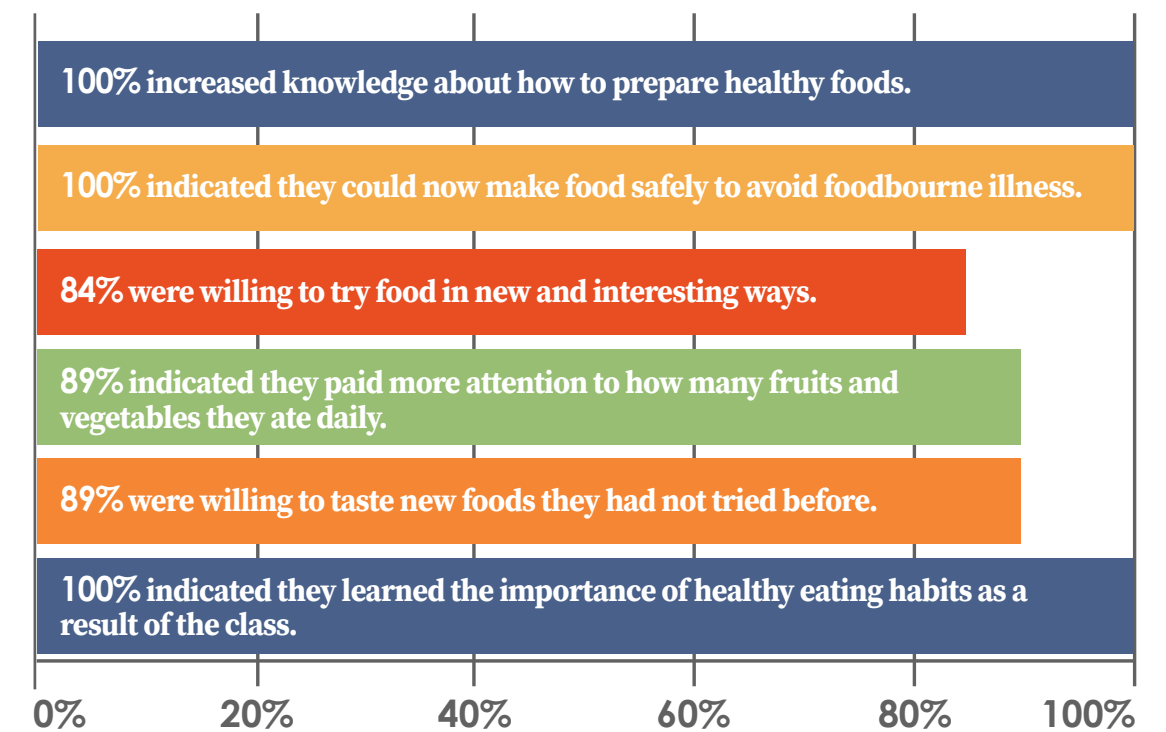
iCooks Mom
We enjoyed our healthy cooking class so much! This is our the first time making muffins, we will definitely make some more. ❤️😊

TARGET AUDIENCE: Students in SNAP-Ed eligible schools.

USE OF THEORY OR RESEARCH: Studies show cooking-related programs combined with nutrition education have the potential to improve children's diet quality and are associated with more positive food choices. Nutrition educator competencies addressed are Food Science 3.2; Physical Activity 4.3; Nutrition Education Program Design, Implementation, and Evaluation 8.2; and Written, Oral, and Social Media Communication 9.2.

EVALUATION METHODS: A pre/post survey for students was used to evaluate knowledge gained and changes in eating habits. Parents were surveyed to assess the effectiveness of the program.

RESULTS: Based on survey results of participants and parents:



CONCLUSIONS: As a result of participating in the iCooks virtual cooking school, youth increased knowledge about how to prepare healthy meals, improved food safety skills, and increased awareness of their fruit and vegetable intake.