A Feasibility Trial of an Asynchronous Web-based Infant Feeding Course for Child and Adult Care Food Program Providers

Objective

To describe the development and implementation of an asynchronous virtual training course aiming to improve infant feeding practices of Child Care providers and report program outcomes.

Study Design and Setting

This study was a single group pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. A three-module course was developed and virtually implemented through a partnership between the Maryland State Department of Education and the University of Maryland Extension.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis

Self-confidence and knowledge related to infant feeding practice were major program outcomes. Recommended changes were also assessed qualitatively. Descriptive statistics and a marginal homogeneity test were used for analysis. Providers completed pre-survey (n=51) and/or post-survey (n=57), respectively. Participants (n=32) who completed both were included for analysis.

Results

Approximately 37% of participants were teachers and 24% were center directors or owners. And the other 39% includes cooks, specialists, field monitors, etc.

After the course, participants’ self-confidence significantly improved in describing appropriate breast milk storage (p=0.001), infant transitioning from a bottle to a cup (p<0.001), and infants transition to eating solid foods (p<0.001). Also, participants significantly improved their knowledge of infant feeding (p<0.001) in understanding safe breastmilk storage, regulation of reimbursable meals, etc. The participants also emphasized the importance of educating staff to correctly feed infants, proving refresher training, and posting signage about key infant feeding practices in the classroom.

Conclusion

An asynchronous virtual training course implemented through the Extension was feasible and effective for improving self-efficacy and knowledge related to infant feeding practice.

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