Earlier formative research (presented at SNEB 2022) conducted with training providers, resource (foster) caregivers, and former foster youth determined that caregivers lack clear and stress-relieving guidance on how to healthfully feed children.

Foster and kinship caregivers who want to provide a nourishing environment for foster children.

Funded by USDA SNAP, an equal opportunity provider and employer. www.CalFreshHealthyLiving.org for healthy tips.

SUMMARY

- A three-session, 3-hour Zoom or In-Person training
- Instruction in self-care practices, such as movement and emotional regulation
- Guidelines for creating a holistically nourishing environment for children where positive habits are modeled
- Optional at home resource guides (printed and digital versions)

Program Description

To evaluate the implementation of Fostering Nourished Families, a nutrition training for resource (foster) parents designed to build caregiver literacy and confidence in supporting both the immediate and long-term socio-emotional and nutritional well-being of foster children.

OBJECTIVE

A non-experimental, mixed-methods evaluation design using pre- and post-digitially administered surveys and Zoom interviews. Pilot and data collection took place August-December 2023.

METHODS

Data showed a statistically significant increase in caregivers’ healthy values (modeling healthy eating, p=0.009), healthy habits (eating fruit, p=0.029), involvement of children in food resource management (grocery shopping, p=0.048), in the adoption of emotionally positive/non-controlling feeding practices (child portion choices, p=0.046), and significant decrease in emotionally controlling feeding (food in exchange for behavior, p=0.029).

Findings suggest that caregivers exhibited high levels of prior knowledge and confidence in caring for the health and nourishment of their children. Notwithstanding, the curriculum:

1. Afforded a form of validation and reinforcement to caregivers.
2. Created new knowledge and new lived experiences supportive of caregivers’ inner wisdom and confidence.
3. Created a novel platform for learning using acceptance of and generosity with oneself as a starting point.

The statistically significant and encouraging findings indicate that the Fostering Nourished Families curriculum has the potential to help resource caregivers provide healthier, more nutritious, and more emotionally-regulated environments for their children. It offers a much needed tool to provide meaningful nutrition education and to incorporate trauma-informed nutrition practices (flexible, responsive, relational) into the resource family system.

CONCLUSION