



Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service

EFNEP - Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) is a unique program that currently operates in 776 counties throughout the 50 states and in the territories of American Samoa, Guam, Micronesia, Northern Marianas, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. It is designed to assist low-income audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and changed behavior necessary for nutritionally sound diets, and to contribute to their personal development and the improvement of the total family diet and nutritional well-being.

EFNEP targets two primary audiences: low-income youth and low-income families with young children. In Fiscal Year 2000, EFNEP reached 459,203 youth and 162,023 adults; approximately 599,279 family members were indirectly reached through the adult participant.

Who Are EFNEP Families?

- 76% of EFNEP families receive Federal food assistance at entry; EFNEP helps 10% more receive this assistance at exit.
- 35% of the enrolled families have income at or below 50% of the poverty level.
- As shown in figure 1, 65% of the families are from minority groups.

How Is EFNEP Taught?

EFNEP is delivered as a series of lessons, often over several months, by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of

Ethnicity of EFNEP Participants

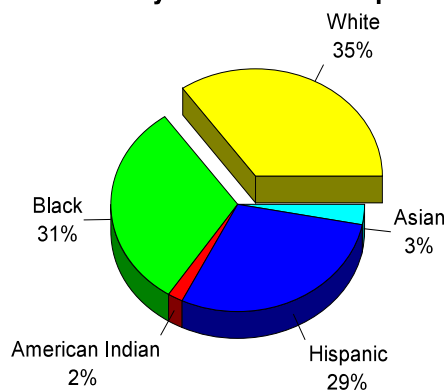


Figure 1

whom are indigenous to the target population.

The hands-on, learn-by-doing approach allows the participants to gain the practical skills necessary to make positive behavior changes. In 2000, 2,540 paraprofessionals along with 36,911 volunteers delivered an average of 9 lessons to EFNEP participants, with 67% of them completing the program, and 20% continuing the program in the year 2001. Through EFNEP, participants learn self-worth — that they have something to offer their families and society.

How Are Accomplishments Measured?

Data from the EFNEP Evaluation/Reporting System is used to measure food practice dietary intakes and dietary improvements.

Ten key food-related practices were measured at entry into EFNEP and upon graduation. These behavior changes translate into significant improvements in daily living skills.

Results measured from 73,663 participants show that:

- 82% improved in one or more food resource management practices (i.e., plans meals, compares prices, does not run out of food or uses grocery lists);
- 87% improved in one or more nutrition practices (i.e., makes healthy food choices, prepares foods without adding salt, plans meals, reads nutrition labels or has children eat breakfast);
- 66% improved in one or more of the food safety practices (i.e. thawing and storing foods properly).

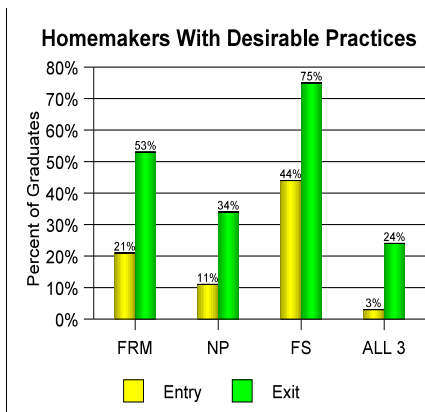


Figure 2

As figure 2 indicates, when participants first enrolled in the program, only 3% followed the acceptable practices for all indicators. At the end of the program, 24% had achieved this goal. These practices were measured based on entry and exit assessment

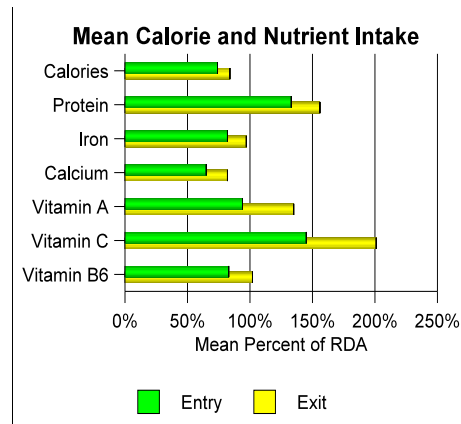


Figure 3

of four indicators of Food Resource Management (FRM), five indicators of Nutrition Practices (NP), and two indicators of Food Safety (FS).

The dietary intake of six key nutrients that are often limited in the diets of low-income audiences: protein, iron, calcium, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and Vitamin B₆ are also measured. As figure 3 illustrates, as a result of participation in EFNEP, intake levels for each nutrient increased.

There were also substantial improvements in the intake of food to meet the recommendations of the Food Guide Pyramid. At entry, only 18.1% of the 82,709 participants measured, had a diet that provided even half the recommended number of servings of breads and cereals and at least one serving from each of the other food groups. At exit, 44.5% of the participants had achieved this minimal level of intake. Ninety-two percent (92%) showed positive change in at least one food group at exit.

www.reeusda.gov/f4hn/efnep/efnep.htm

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