

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Congressional District 8

Serving Cabarrus, Cumberland, Mecklenburg, Scotland, Stanly
and Union counties



Students Enjoy Trying Healthy Recipes

The rates of obesity and overweight have steadily grown in recent years. In fact, compared to other states, North Carolina ranks 41st in obesity prevalence, and fewer adults are physically active (44.0% versus 49.5%). This trend is appearing in children as well; more than 3 out of 10 children between the ages of 2-18 in North Carolina are overweight or obese, placing them at increased risk for developing diseases such as type 2 diabetes or hypertension and making them more likely to face social discrimination and have low self-esteem.¹ In Scotland County, obesity is the number one health problem in children. According to the 2010 North Carolina Child Health Report Card (NCDHHS), the percentage of overweight children in Scotland County has increased 3.5% since 2005.

Overweight Children in Scotland County ²	
Age range	Percent overweight
2-4 years old	15.4%
5-11 years old	25.8%
12-18 years old	28.0%

This problem has serious consequences; schools and other agencies have seen the negative health implications associated with excessive weight in children and value prevention programs that promote healthy lifestyles.

Prolonged unhealthy eating and physical inactivity significantly contributes to chronic disease and obesity. These findings are especially alarming for children and youth because being overweight or obese increases the risk of chronic diseases. In order to address the childhood obesity epidemic, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Scotland County 4-H Expanded Foods and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) collaborated with Oxendine Elementary School to provide nutrition education classes. Each class received 6 lessons on healthy eating and the importance of physical

activity. While doing these classes, several students were able to make and taste foods that they had never eaten before. Some youth and teachers also stated that they made these foods at home for their families.

As a result of this collaboration, 100% of over 350 teachers and students have requested more healthy, kid friendly recipes. They also reported that they not only enjoyed trying new foods but also enjoyed participating in the physical activities.

Teacher Uses Skills Learned in EFNEP to Influence Her Students' Health

EFNEP taught a series of lessons with adults in the community. One participant, who is a teacher, shared that she has struggled with controlling the hyperactivity of one of her kindergarten students since the beginning of the school year. Upon learning how to read nutrition facts labels during an EFNEP class, the teacher taught her students how to do so as well in hopes that reducing his sugar intake would help improve his behavior. The class would go to the cafeteria together and read the labels on snacks and drinks to make healthy choices with less sugar. The lunchroom monitor, who is an EFNEP volunteer, stated that the particular student with hyperactivity has settled down and his teacher says his behavior and reading level has greatly improve. By educating teachers and adults the importance of good nutrition, this participant taught her student what she learned and he is now learning how to make healthy food and drink choices. This particular student has improved not only his health, but his ability to engage in the classroom and increase his learning potential.

EFNEP helps address the challenges limited resource families face when introducing healthy changes through nutrition education, cooking classes, exercise strategies, and shopping on a limited budget.

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overweight and obesity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/childhood/consequences.html>.

2. State of the County Health Report: Scotland County, North Carolina. (2011). <http://www.scotlandcounty.org/Data/Sites/1/sotchdocument2011.pdf>

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efnep@ncsu.edu • www.ncefne.org

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