

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2012 NC Cooperative Extension Watauga County



Families Replace TV Watching with More Exercise

Watauga County Head Start partnered with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service to deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to 12 parents of enrolled children. Besides teaching good nutrition and physical activity behaviors, EFNEP shared research-based information on the health risks associated with watching too much television, including overweight and obesity caused by making poor food choices, high blood pressure and elevated stress levels caused by physical inactivity, and how TV viewing can negatively affect their children's overall health.

After participating in EFNEP, one mother commented, "I have always allowed my children to watch as much TV as they wanted. They even have TVs in their rooms to sleep with at night." This mother added, "I never realized how too much TV could affect their weight and overall health. We will be watching less TV in the future and getting more exercise. We have already begun turning off the TV during mealtime and bedtime, and we're paying more attention to what the children are watching. Thank you, EFNEP, for helping us improve our children's health."

Students Gain Skills that Will Last a Lifetime

Wishing to decrease the spread of infectious disease causing germs at their facility, Watauga County Head Start Program partnered with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service to deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to their children. The administration knew that along with sharing healthy nutrition and physical activity concepts, EFNEP included information about proper hand washing in each lesson.

As part of its teaching strategy, EFNEP involved the children in hands-on activities. They played games, read books, and

sang songs that reinforced the importance of properly washing their hands. EFNEP also provided guided practice activities that taught the children where to scrub and for how long, and Glow Germ lotion brightened by a black light allowed them to see where germs that might be lingering behind if hands were not thoroughly washed with soap and water.

To demonstrate how to wash hands if soap and running water were not available, EFNEP showed the children how to properly use the hand sanitizer found in their classroom. The children squirted a dime-size amount of sanitizer on their hands and rubbed it in all over, under and around until it disappeared! The EFNEP Program Assistant emphasized to the children that using hand sanitizer is not as effective as washing soap and water, but it can help to control germs. To the teachers, she explained that classroom studies have shown hand sanitizers cut absenteeism due to infection by almost 20 percent.¹

After completing the EFNEP series one teacher wrote to the EFNEP Program Assistant, "Thank you so much for coming to teach our children. After working with your program the children are much more willing to wash their hands throughout the day. They remind each other that they need to wash and talk about how long they should wash. The children are still singing the song you taught them about hand washing." She continued by adding, "I truly feel that participating in your program will give my students hand washing skills that will last throughout their entire lives. Thank you for making a difference in the health of all children in Watauga County."

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. Hammond, B., Ali, Y., Fendler, E., Dolan, M., & Donovan, S. (2000) Effect of hand sanitizer use on elementary school absenteeism. American Journal of Infection Control, 28(5):340-346.

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EFNEP
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