

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2014 NC Cooperative Extension Craven County



Children No Longer Waste Fruits and Veggies Provided Through Grant

Alarmed that third graders attending a local elementary school were unable to identify basic fruits and vegetables prompted teaching staff to call Cooperative Extension and request a series of nutrition education classes through 4-H EFNEP. They said they were finding that as a result of not recognizing basic fruits and vegetables, the students were not choosing to eat these healthy foods at lunch or during the grant supported fruit and veggie snack period.

To provide a needed introduction to fruits and vegetables, 4-H EFNEP conducted a series of lessons in which MyPlate concepts were taught. A heavy emphasis was put on the benefits of eating foods from the fruits and vegetables groups. The students learned that a major nutrient found in fruits and vegetables is carbohydrates. Carbohydrates provided their bodies with the energy needed to think, play and grow. They also learned about the other nutrients found in fruits and vegetables—vitamins and minerals. These nutrients help their bodies use the energy provided by carbohydrates. They also help their cells grow and develop.

Recognizing the importance of eating fruits and vegetables, the students shared ways to incorporate these food groups into their everyday meals. They discussed breakfast and dinner options, lunch sides, and snack choices.

As a result of participating in 4-H EFNEP, the students began choosing more fruits and vegetables at lunch. They chose 100% fruit juice, fresh fruit instead of fruit flavored gummies, and were more willing to try a variety of vegetables instead of continually choosing french fries. One student shared that prior to her participation in EFNEP, vegetables were not always served with dinner. However, after sharing the importance of eating vegetables with her family, her parents began including a veggie option every night.

EFNEP Encourages Active Play at School

In today's age of computers, cell phones and other electronics devices, youth often choose to engage in a sedentary screen activity rather than one that involves physical activity. At one Craven County school, teachers became concerned as they watched their students choose to play inactive electronic games instead of physically active games during recess. As a result, the children were physically restless and mentally unfocused when they returned to class.

Hoping to help their 6th graders understand the benefits of being physically active, the teachers invited 4-H EFNEP to deliver a series of classes that focused on healthy lifestyle behaviors. During the series, the children learned that good health depended upon eating healthy foods and being physically active. To demonstrate how easy and fun it could be to meet the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity needed daily, 4-H EFNEP incorporated physically active games and mini moving breaks into each lesson.

As a result, the teachers began to see opportunities where physical activity could be incorporated into their daily teaching schedules. They now creatively use moving activities to get the children out of their seats during lessons and utilize workout videos during indoor breaks. At recess, the children no longer play games on their electronic devices. Instead, they actively play group games organized by the teachers. These efforts have shown the children that moving can be fun. And, now when returning to the classroom after recess, the children are focused and ready to learn.

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.

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