

EFNEP SUCCESS STORIES

2015 NC Cooperative Extension Macon County



Planning Helps Family Stretch Resources to be Food Secure

According to the results of a recent study, the Great Recession continues to impact America's children in the area of hunger and food insecurity. Although federal food programs like WIC and SNAP have helped to dull the recession's effects, 20% of American families with children continue to live in food insecure homes.

In Macon County, the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) partners with WIC to teach its recipients how to best use their food vouchers. Recently, one young mother admitted that she was extremely worried about how she could continue to feed her family nutritious meals on her family's extremely low food budget. Her husband and four children had been eating on \$60.00 a week for months, and that budget was shrinking. That week she had only \$30.00. She didn't know how she was going to stretch that money to meet the family's needs. She asked the EFNEP program assistant for help.

The program assistant started by asking the young mother to make a list of all the meat cuts in her freezer, canned goods in her pantry, and staple items such as pasta, spaghetti, rice, etc. in her cupboards. Then, she requested the mother add to that list the foods she would receive with her WIC vouchers. When the mother returned, she and the program assistant worked together to create simple meals based on her lists and the recipes found in the EFNEP Cookbook. By including fresh produce from local food pantries, they were able to plan breakfast, lunch and dinner menus for three weeks. Only a few items needed to be purchased at the grocery store to complete the three-week meal plan. The grocery items needed for that first week totaled \$12.00.

The guidance EFNEP had given not only saved this family money that budget-tight week, but for several weeks beyond. In subsequent visits to EFNEP, the young mother learned how to apply MyPlate's basic nutrition concepts to each meal plan and practice the Fight Bac techniques for keeping her family's food safe. Having this information ensured the meals she fed her family were both nutrient-rich and safe to eat. Plus, proper storage and preparation meant less waste, which in turn, allowed her to stretch her food budget even further.

Although the family budget was still tight, this young mother's children were no longer hungry and her household was no longer food insecure. Working with EFNEP had made the difference.

Resources:

Kids Five Years after the Recession: Smart Policies, Better Lives. Retrieved on-line at: <http://policylab.chop.edu/press-releases/kids-five-years-after-recession-smart-policies-better-lives> on March 2, 2015.

Hunger and Poverty Fact Sheet. Retrieved on-line at:

<http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/impact-of-hunger/hunger-and-poverty/hunger-and-poverty-fact-sheet.html?gclid=CI-75Y3dxsQCFUk2gQodIYAgg> on March 3, 2015.

Nutrition + Activity + Sleep = Magic Ingredients to Good Health

A Macon County third grader asked her PE coach, "Why am I always tired during P.E. class?" She couldn't understand why, at 10:30 in the morning, she didn't feel like participating in the physical activities her classmates were enjoying. Her coach responded by asking her two questions, "What time do you go to bed?" and "Do you eat breakfast?" The little girl openly shared with her coach that she went to her room at 8:30, but played on her iPad until 10:00 or 11:00pm. And, as for breakfast, she said she wasn't hungry at 6:30am, it was just too early. When the coach told her she needed to go to bed earlier and eat breakfast in the morning, she ignored him and sluggishly walked off to participate in class.

The following week, the coach introduced Cooperative Extension's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to his class. The EFNEP Program Assistant began teaching a six-lesson series to the children in which she led them in search of ways to become healthy and fit. Together they explored MyPlate and discovered that it held the secrets to choosing nutritious foods and staying physically active each day. They talked about breakfast being the most important meal of the day and learned that those who eat breakfast typically eat healthier overall and are more likely to enjoy participating in physical activities. Lastly, they discovered that getting a good night's sleep, together with making smart food choices and being physically active, were the magic ingredients needed to ensure a healthy body.

By the end of the EFNEP series, the third grader shared with the EFNEP program assistant the conversation she'd recently had with her PE teacher. She confessed that at the time she didn't understand why going to bed early and eating breakfast each morning played such important roles in ensuring she had a productive day at school. Nor did she know that getting eight hours of sleep, eating nutritious foods and being physically active worked together to ensure her body and mind stayed strong and healthy.

She said, "Because of EFNEP, I now eat breakfast, even if it's something I bring with me from home and eat when I get to school. My mom and I have been packing my breakfast and an afternoon snack at night so we're not hurried in the morning. That way, I don't have to get up early or eat when I'm not hungry." She said that going to sleep by 9:00pm, and eating breakfast in the morning gave her energy that lasted the entire day. She was now even enjoying PE! Lastly, she proudly shared that her teacher had noticed that her class work had improved. She was proud to say that all around she had become a much better student!

Resources:

Sleep for Kids—Teaching Kids the Importance of Sleep. Retrieved on-line at: <http://www.sleepforkids.org/html/habits.html> on April 2, 2015.

Breakfast Basics. Retrieved on-line at: http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_center/healthy_eating/breakfast.html on April 2, 2015.

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