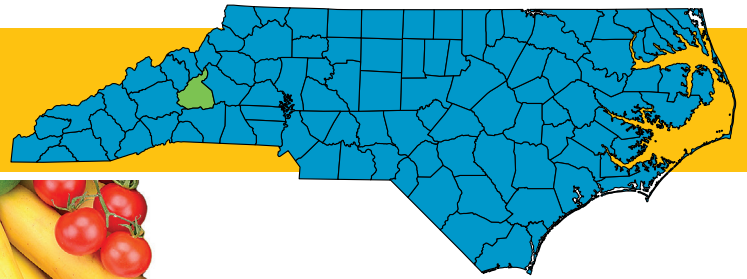




EFNEP
EXPANDED FOOD AND NUTRITION
EDUCATION PROGRAM



2016 NC Cooperative Extension McDowell County Report

North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 4** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **30%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **7th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **18th** highest rate of diabetes and the **11th** highest rate of hypertension.

Supporting North Carolina's Families with Greatest Needs Since 1969

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

- Peer-to-peer, hands-on education in the community
- Healthy, low-cost recipes
- Simple strategies to help families move more together



EFNEP Reaches Diverse Audiences in McDowell County

In 2016: **36** families enrolled in EFNEP
861 participated in 4-H EFNEP
89% of EFNEP participants enrolled in one or more food assistance programs.

WHAT IS EFNEP?

EFNEP serves limited-resource families with young children, school-age youth, and pregnant teens through a series of lessons offered by paraprofessionals and volunteers, many of whom are indigenous to the population. In 2016, EFNEP served 45 counties in North Carolina. Participants learned how to:

- Make wise food choices
- Increase daily physical activity
- Manage food resources
- Practice food safety

EFNEP Makes a Real Difference in McDowell County



93% of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.



47% now practice daily physical activity.



86% practice better food resource management.



79% have improved their food safety habits.

Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2016, **44** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



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McDowell County
EFNEP programs obtained

\$26,125

in funding and support
from local efforts.

EFNEP SUCCESS



First Grader Inspires Healthier Behaviors for Entire Family



An excited EFNEP first-grade participant excitedly shared with her mom healthy behaviors she learned in EFNEP after each lesson. To reinforce the positive changes she was seeing in her daughter's diet, the mother requested the list of healthy snacks EFNEP had provided in class. She wanted to make those snacks not just for her daughter, but for the entire family. It seemed, to her surprise, her daughter had inspired everyone to become more cognizant of the food choices they were making. She had even motivated her family to become more physically active. Everyone was taking nightly walks around the neighborhood now instead of sitting in front of the television after dinner!

The mother credited EFNEP for not only broadening her daughter's horizons, but being the catalyst that spurred the entire family into eating healthier and becoming more physically active.



Building a Healthy Foundation

At 72.8%, McDowell County has the highest rate of overweight and obese adults in the state. The McDowell County Community Assessment attributes poor nutritional choice and an absence of physical activity with the root of the problem as being a culture that finds poor behaviors to be the norm.¹

Currently, McDowell County is trying to improve the norm by providing educational opportunities that promote healthy living behaviors. Through a Kate B. Reynolds grant, the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service offers the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) to limited income families and their children. Through a series of basic nutrition and meal preparation classes, EFNEP equips these families with the knowledge and skills needed to improve their diets and physical activity levels.

Recently, EFNEP met with a Head Start *Circle of Parents* group at a local elementary school. The mothers attended the series of twelve lessons in which they were introduced to the concept of meal planning, using the Nutrition Facts Label to make wise food choices when shopping and ways to save money at the grocery store. They learned how to keep their food safe when storing and preparing it for their families at home. They also participated in hands-on food preparation and physical activity experiences in class, hoping the skills learned would encourage healthy behaviors at home.

At the first lesson, the *Circle of Parents* participants prepared a fruit salad snack. The EFNEP educator explained that fruit was a healthier alternative to eating a high fat, high-sugar snack because it could provide every member of the family, especially growing children, with important vitamins, minerals and fiber needed to maintain overall good health. Upon leaving for the day, participants were given the main ingredients so they could recreate the fruit salad at home for their families.

Several weeks later one of the participants approached the EFNEP educator. Her family of picky eaters had a sweet tooth and very poor eating habits. However, seeing how they had enjoyed EFNEP's fruit salad made her realize healthier food options could satisfy their sweet tooth and improve their eating behaviors at the same time. So she had been duplicating at home some of the EFNEP recipes made in class. The new recipes peaked their interest in tasty food and now her children were helping her plan the family meals and asking her to buy fruits, vegetables and whole grains instead of high fat and sugar junk foods when grocery shopping!

The participant continued sharing how, with a little planning and forethought, she had begun setting aside quality physical activity time as part of her children's outdoor play. While hunting treasures, and playing games of kickball or hide and seek, her children were running, jumping, skipping and cartwheeling throughout the yard. She confided her goal was to establish a foundation that would support a physically active life. She was working diligently to achieve that goal for her children's sake.

This family proved that McDowell County's efforts to positively change the norm were paying off. Because of EFNEP, each member of this family was on the way to experiencing a new and healthy lifestyle.

Reference:

1. <http://www.rpmhd.org/images/forms/1000/1120/cha/2016/RPM1120.001.2016-M.pdf>

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