

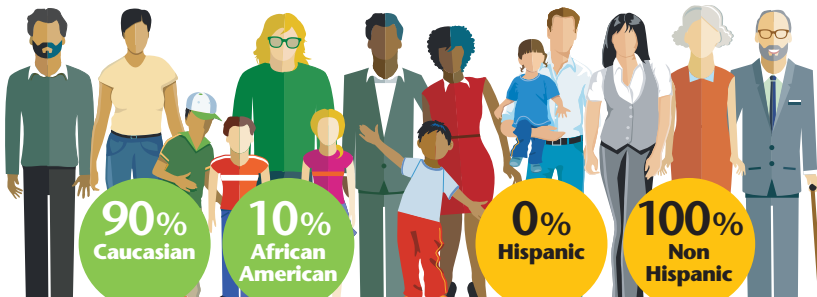
# NC Cooperative Extension 2019 REPORT

## Ashe County

### 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 Ashe County

In 2019: **52** families enrolled in EFNEP      **843** participated in 4-H EFNEP

**42%** 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 2019, 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 Ashe County

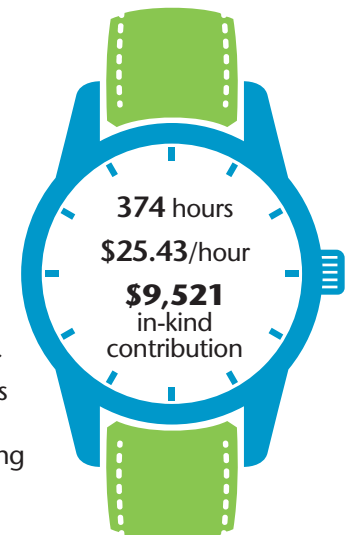
- 92%** of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.
- 76%** now practice daily physical activity.
- 72%** practice better food resource management.
- 74%** have improved their food safety habits.

### North Carolina's Challenges

- In North Carolina, **1 in 5** children live in poverty.
- North Carolina's adult obesity rate is currently **32%**.
- **15.2%** of 2- to 4-year-olds from low-income families are obese. This makes us the **16th** most obese state.
- North Carolina has the **15th** highest rate of diabetes and the **11th** highest rate of hypertension.

### Volunteers Strengthen EFNEP

In 2019, **60** adults and youth donated time to EFNEP, making a difference in their own communities and contributing to EFNEP's ongoing success.



# 2019 NC Cooperative Extension Ashe County Report

Ashe County  
EFNEP programs obtained

\$18,514

in funding and support  
from local efforts.

## EFNEP SUCCESS



### Healthy Habits

Developing healthy habits early helps to sustain healthy habits throughout life. Recognizing a need to encourage healthy eating and physical activity in youth, Ashe County Schools asked North Carolina Cooperative Extension's EFNEP Educator to offer a series of nutrition education classes to all sixth graders. 256 children participated in the program.

During the series, students learned the recommendations for healthy living using MyPlate as a guide. To encourage healthy behaviors, the EFNEP Educator challenged teachers, staff, and students to develop a list of healthy behaviors they would try to achieve. They adopted this list as their pledge to health. Each week they were asked to focus on one MyPlate pledge they had made. Pledges were simplified so the challenge could be easily accomplished and measured. Examples of specific pledges were to read the ingredient list to make sure they were eating whole grains for breakfast, eat at least a half cup more fruit or vegetables each day, drink water or milk with dinner instead of sugary drinks or juice, or get 10 minutes extra physical activity each day.

Over the six-week period 90% of students and teachers reported they were successful in accomplishing their challenges, thus meeting their pledge to better health. As the series came to a close, the students and teachers were challenged to continue their pledge to make healthier choices for a reduced risk of chronic disease and a better quality of life.



### Head Start Teachers Lead by Example

Head Start teachers in the Sizemore Catchment are leading by example through modeling healthy behaviors to students. These teachers participated in North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Ashe County Center's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) that was developed just for Head Start programs. Sizemore Head Start and EFNEP teamed up to enroll 48 Head Start teachers in EFNEP classes this year. Teachers were challenged to learn and practice ways to model new healthy behaviors for themselves and for the young children in their care. This is particularly important since young children learn healthy behaviors through observation and education.

Targeted behavior changes were measured using pre and post evaluations and analyzed using WebNEERS, the national reporting system for EFNEP. The program with Head Start teachers had the following impacts:

**47 out of 48** participants showed improvement in one or more diet quality behaviors, (i.e. eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking less soda, cooking dinner at home).

**39 out of 48** participants reported making one or more improvements in physical activity (i.e. exercising for at least 30 minutes, doing workouts to build and strengthen muscles or making small changes to be more active).

**37 out of 48** reported improvement in one or more food resource management practices, (i.e. compare food prices, plan meals before shopping, look in the refrigerator or cupboard before shopping or make a list before shopping).

**38 out of 48** participants showed improvement in one or more areas of food safety practices in the home especially using a meat thermometer and not thawing frozen food at room temperature.

The personal behavior changes made by the teachers mean they have taken steps to decrease their risk of developing chronic diseases. In addition, the teachers embraced their role as models of healthy behaviors with the children in their care. They are serving as positive role models to encourage children to try new fruits and vegetables and be active, therefore helping these young children develop healthier habits early in life for a brighter and healthier future.

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