



NC Cooperative Extension **2022 REPORT**

Pitt County

Supporting North Carolina's Families with Greatest Needs

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

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 2022, EFNEP served 40 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



91% of EFNEP participants improved dietary intake.



52% practice better food resource management.



59% have improved their food safety habits.



66% now practice daily physical activity.

269 family and youth participants were reached through direct programming.



Pitt County EFNEP Enrollment



Pitt County EFNEP programs obtained **\$40,327** in funding and support from local efforts.

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EFNEP SUCCESS



Instilling Body Confidence through Inclusivity

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) uses the Teen Cuisine curriculum to teach middle school students key concepts about nutrition, food preparation and cooking, food safety, and physical activity using approaches and strategies that enhance learning and behavior change among teens. Additionally, EFNEP educators receive training to create and support an inclusive environment during their programming and are acutely aware of the needs of this population.

The Pitt County EFNEP educator was faced with the challenge of teaching Teen Cuisine to a diverse group of 8th grade students who had differing lived experiences, attitudes and beliefs about being healthy, all of which impacted their willingness to positively engage during the classes. The educator used this opportunity to provide a variety of healthy eating examples and demonstrated physical activity movements that were tailored to students of all abilities and body types. These adaptations resonated with one student in particular who shared that because of their body type they had previously felt excluded from classroom conversations about health. They stated that the EFNEP educator changed their perception by using inclusive, body neutral language and by demonstrating that cooking healthy food can be fun and is accessible for everyone. The student said that they were excited to try the recipes and exercises taught during the classes.



Customizing Recipes Is a Winning Combination

A great way to introduce more vegetables to kids is through snacks. Offering multiple opportunities to try new, unfamiliar vegetables between meals can increase the likelihood that they will be accepted. The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) offers a wide array of healthy, vegetable-based snack recipes designed to teach kids how to prepare their own snacks and to get them excited about trying new foods.

While teaching EFNEP classes at a local Boys and Girls Club, the EFNEP educator shared the recipe for the following week which included fresh corn and tomatoes. "Yuck! I don't eat tomatoes!" a young girl at the front of the class exclaimed. Other students quickly joined in with similar responses. The EFNEP educator knew the recipe had been tested with kids and would win them over, so he stuck with the plan.

The following week the EFNEP educator prepared "Tomato, Corn, and Sweet Onion Salad" which was served with whole grain tortilla chips. He provided two options, a mild version and a spicy version with fresh chili peppers after learning that several students in the group enjoyed spicy foods. This proved to be a winning strategy as multiple kids asked for another serving, especially the spicy option. Once they realized that vegetable-based snacks could be flavorful and delicious, the students were eager to learn how to customize different recipes to their specific taste preferences and they brainstormed other vegetable-based snacks to try. This minor recipe adjustment made the difference in encouraging kids to readily try vegetables they were skeptical about eating and their positive feedback reflected their interest in making other flavorful vegetable recipes. As a result of the EFNEP classes, 45% of the students improved in their responses to increasing vegetable consumption.

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