



ENERGIZE YOUR LIFE!
EAT HEALTHY-BE ACTIVE

This newsletter is produced by the *Nutrition Education Network of Washington* to enhance communication and coordination among those who educate Washington families about nutrition and food. *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators* shares brief information about programs and materials that support healthful and enjoyable eating.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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To access past issues, go to <http://nutrition.wsu.edu/take5/index.html>.

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This material was funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your local DSHS Community Service Office.

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This Month's Focus:

Parents as Role Models for Healthful Eating

Parents sometimes underestimate how important they are as their child's nutritional teachers and role models. For *Energize* readers who have been parents ourselves, we know from personal experience that our kids don't necessarily do what we ask or what we would like them to do. And yet, it is true that kids observe what their parents eat and drink and, whether consciously or not, they adopt those behaviors. The same holds for physical activity. As nutrition educators, we can weave in messages about the value of being an effective role model in our work with parents. In this issue of *Energize Newsletter for Nutrition Educators*, we look at studies and parent educational tools that shine light on the importance of parents setting good examples.

Role Modeling – Who Says Parents Should Set Good Examples?

- The *2010 Dietary Guidelines* state that parents and caregivers serve as important role models for children, and are responsible for providing them with nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/DietaryGuidelines/2010/PolicyDoc/PolicyDoc.pdf (p 58).
- Parents and their kids in a focus group study said that parental modeling was an important element in helping their families eat more healthfully and be more physically active. For quotes from kids and parents, see JM Berge et al, "Healthful eating and physical activity in the home environment: Results from multifamily focus groups." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 44(2):123-131, 2012.
- Dads who take their kids to fast food outlets and in restaurants may be training their children to eat in those establishments. Researchers who studied parents and kids in 312 families say that fathers should be encouraged to model healthful food choices when they obtain food and to eat with children at home. (Source: A McIntosh et al, "Determinants of children's use of and time spent in fast-food and full-service restaurants." *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior*, 43(3):142-149, 2011.)
- Latino parents, when asked to identify the most important things that parents can do to help overweight children lose weight, said that having the parent setting a good example for the child was a priority. (G Flores et al, "Making tortillas without lard; Latino parents' perspectives on healthy eating, physical activity, and weight-management strategies for overweight Latino children." *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 112(1):81-89, January 2012.)



Photo courtesy of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) photo gallery

What Do Youth Think about Parents' as Role Models? Kids say they would eat more nutritiously if their parents ate healthier foods at home, according to 82% of Hispanic, 80% of Black, and 70% of white children aged 8 to 17. This comes from a 2010 survey by the American Dietetic Association Foundation, which also found that the children surveyed said that their mothers and fathers are the people whom they admire or want most to be like.

What about Grandparents? Grandparents can be agents of change in combating childhood obesity. When they engage in a nutrition education program or lessons encouraging eating more fruits and vegetables, their grandchildren followed their example by eating more healthfully. Children are increasingly living in homes with a grandparent present: at least 16% of the US population lives in multi-generational homes. Hispanic, Black, and Asian households are significantly more likely than white households to include a grandparent. (Source: MS Faith et al, "Evaluating parents and adult caregivers as "agents of change" for treating obese children: Evidence for parent behavior change strategies and research gaps: A scientific statement from the American Heart Association." *Circulation*, 125, March 2012.)

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Role Model Advice for Parents – In a handout, "Be a healthy role model for children", parents can read 10 simple tips for setting a good example for their children that also reinforce ChooseMyPlate. Parents can show by example that they enjoy munching on vegetables and fruits, and being physically active with their children. This free downloadable handout is part of the "10 Tips" nutrition education series by USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, and is available at <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/MyPlate/tip12RoleModel.pdf>.

Eating and Moving Together Sets a Good Example – When the Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics wanted to develop a handout on childhood obesity prevention, they knew that a key strategy was parental involvement in healthful behaviors. Instead of creating a list of do's and don'ts, they arrived at an upbeat, colorful poster called *Fit Kids = Happy Kids* that includes six steps, such as enjoying tasty fruit and veggie snacks together, drinking milk with meals and water with snacks, and eating family meals together. A two-page black-and-white reproducible master appears on the reverse side of the poster. Here, in Washington state, Montana's poster was adapted by Washington State Dairy Council, and was supported by the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, North Pacific Pediatric Society, Washington Action for Healthy Kids, Washington State WIC Nutrition Program, and the Nutrition Education Network of Washington. Poster is available at www.eatsmart.org/product/fit-kids-happy-kids for \$1.00; free downloadable handout available at www.eatsmart.org/client_images/qd2005217920261.pdf.

Do as I Do – A handout from Ohio State University Extension reinforces that children are copycats of their parents' eating behavior and encourages them to have a "Do as I do" parenting style instead of a "Do as I say" style. Free downloadable handout, on parents as nutritional role models, go to <http://ohioline.osu.edu/film03/FS07.pdf>.

Photo source: Herald (Everett/Snohomish County)



Summer Meals – When kids in low income communities are away from school on summer vacation, they also are away from the lunches and breakfasts that may have been part of their school day. The Summer Feeding Program helps to bridge nutrition gap by providing free meals in schools or other locations in low-areas where at least 50% of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The federal government reimburses the districts and other meals served. Any child 18 years or younger can have a free lunch and no income, citizenship, or address is required. To find a list of summer meal locations, go to <https://resources.parenthelp123.org/service/summer-meals> or use the hotline, 888-436-6392.

WASHINGTON GROWN

Fresh This Month – Is summer finally here?! Judging from farmers' markets, yes it is! Since the season was off to a somewhat late start, we can still find raspberries, tayberries, blueberries, loganberries, and even strawberries in some locations. Juicy and sweet nectarines and peaches are available, as are plums and apricots and their many varieties such as pluots and doughnut peaches. Some tomatoes are harvested now, such as cherry tomatoes and plum tomatoes – Sweet 100s and Early Girl are the common varieties grown by home gardeners. If you're looking for something green, you're in luck: kale, chard, green beans, snap peas, snow peas, pea vines, broccolini, and many different types of lettuce are in season.

OUR MISSION: *The Nutrition Education Network* coordinates nutrition education efforts to communicate consistent, positive and relevant messages to increase awareness of healthful and enjoyable eating among low-income families. *Energize* is one way that *the Network* shares information and resources to accomplish this mission.

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