



Memorandum

#11-159

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Linda Brumble, Unit Manager
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: December 23, 2011

SUBJECT: Guidelines for Self-Paced Lessons

Several local agencies have requested approval to use self-paced (SP) lessons as a form of nutrition education (NE). The following guidelines were developed to assist local agencies in their usage of SP lessons as a nutrition education contact. It is the local agency's option whether or not to use SP lessons.

Appropriate Use of Self-Paced Lessons

- In the event a group class is cancelled. In this instance, the participant should also be offered an opportunity to reschedule for their original class topic.
- When a participant is late or misses a class, the participant may choose to complete a SP lesson rather than be rescheduled for class.
- When a participant's schedule conflicts with the class schedule.
- When a participant is sick and chooses not to attend a group class.
- When a participant is due for benefit issuance, but an appropriate class is not available.

Inappropriate Use of Self-Paced Lessons

- As a group class.
- In place of counseling at certification.
- To punish a participant who cannot stay for class.

Participants have the right to refuse all nutrition education and should not be denied benefit issuance if they cannot or will not complete a self-paced lesson. If the participant does not receive NE, then an NE code **should not** be entered at benefit issuance.

Guidelines for Self-Paced Lessons

The following guidelines must be met in order for the self-paced lessons to count as a nutrition education contact.

1. All SP lessons **not** developed by a registered dietitian must be reviewed and approved by the local agency's NE liaison at the State Agency (SA).
2. The SP lesson should be appropriate for the participant's category or general enough in nature that it is relevant to all WIC participants.
3. When a SP lesson is used, the appropriate NE code provided by the SA must be entered into the computer.
4. A qualified WIC staff member (numbers 5 and 6 below) must be available to assist the participant. Staff should be sensitive to the fact that low-literate participants may require more assistance in order to complete the lesson.
5. If the SP lesson is on a basic nutrition topic, the WIC staff member assisting the participant must have completed at least the basic nutrition module (*Policy TR:03.0 Required Local Agency Training/Summary*).
6. If the topic covered is specific to a category, infant feeding for example, the WIC staff member assisting the participant must have completed the basic nutrition module and the module covering the information presented in the SP lesson (*Policy TR:03.0*).
7. The WIC Director or NE Coordinator should decide the specific local agency procedures/criteria for using SP lessons within their agency. This includes who decides when to offer SP lessons to participants, where participants should complete the lessons, and how benefits will be issued following the completion of a lesson.
8. SP lessons must contain an evaluation component such as an interactive worksheet.
9. When using SP lessons as a nutrition education contact, *Policy NE:01.0 Standards for Nutrition Education Contacts* must be met. After a participant has finished the interactive section of the lesson, a qualified assisting WIC staff member should review the evaluation component with the participant.
10. Give each participant the same self-paced lesson only once.

Self-paced lessons should be designed as self-guided, interactive learning tools. Remember to get the participant involved in the subject when writing SP lessons.

If you have any questions or require additional information about the guidelines, please contact your State NE Liaison or Debbie Lehman, Nutrition Education Consultant, Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit, at (512) 341-4517 or Debbie.Lehman@dshs.state.tx.us.