

2012 WIC Obesity Prevention Mini Grant Project Summary

Local Agency Number and Name:

LA#21 Wichita Falls-Wichita County Public Health District

Title of OPMG Project:

Healthy Cooking – The Right ‘Weigh’

Contact Person:

Polly Tonemah, M.S., R.D.

Contact E-mail:

wic2100@wf.net

Project Overview

List target audience and number of participants seen:

- WIC Clients and their children
- Approximately 160 WIC clients (and their children) participated

List type of activities for this project (a group class, cooking class, physical activity, gardening, breastfeeding, other):

This was a group class with a cooking component.

Overall goal for this project:

The goal for this project was to promote healthier eating among WIC families.

Objectives for this project:

- WIC parents will be motivated to prepare more meals at home.
- WIC families will be more willing to let their child(ren) help with food preparation, in turn having the child(ren) be more likely to try new and healthier foods.
- WIC families will be introduced to cooking and preparing a wide variety of healthy, economical foods.
- WIC participants will learn new and healthier ways to prepare their WIC foods.

Project description:

- The project began January 2012 and ended September 2012. It was a Cooking class that was held during a ‘child’ group class time. The class was held twice monthly. The class was team-led

by the WIC Registered Dietitian and a WIC Nutritionist. We normally had 2-3 different recipes offered each month.

- We focused on preparing/cooking several ‘featured’ foods during each class, with the emphasis on foods that were low calorie, low fat, and low in price. Our ‘featured’ foods included whole grains, low fat dairy, and fresh vegetables and fruits. We chose foods that corresponded to each month’s theme (for example: January is National Soup/National Oatmeal Month; June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Month; September is National Breakfast Month, etc.).
- We placed emphasis on the ways children can help with preparation of the ‘featured’ foods for the month. We always focused on healthy substitutions (for example, ways to lower the fat content of the recipe).

List results and objectives met:

- Many class participants seemed unaware that they could purchase certain foods with their WIC benefits. After participating in the classes, approximately 90% of the respondents reported that they would be more likely to purchase (and prepare) WIC foods such as: whole wheat tortillas, brown rice, and fresh vegetables such as spinach, sugar snap peas, squash and zucchini.
- After participating in the cooking classes, and receiving copies of the locally-developed, simple recipes for the classes, approximately 85% indicated that they will attempt to prepare more easy meals at home for their family.
- Approximately 85% of the clients indicated that they are now more willing to allow their young children to help, in some capacity, with food preparation at home.
- Approximately 90% of the class participants demonstrated an understanding of methods to make recipes healthier for their family.

List curricula, kits or other educational materials used:

Recipes used in each class were taken from a variety of sources, including: Familyfun.com; Kraftrecipes.com; Pillsbury.com; Allrecipes.com; WIC Wellness Works; Recipefinder.nal.usda.gov; Kidshealth.org; Tasteofhome.com; Eatingwell.com; Food.com; “Pillsbury Fast & Healthy Meals for Kids”

List other resources used, if applicable:

- Flyers and other outreach materials developed locally with our cooking class ‘logo’
- Laminated sheet for refrigerator (locally developed) – “What Can Your Child Do to Help?”

List collaborating agencies or individuals, if applicable:

N/A

List the type of incentives that were given:

- Insulated Bags – or Tote Bags

- Apron
- Pillsbury “Fast & Easy Healthy Meals for Kids”
- “I Tried It” stickers for children
- Locally-developed cookbook – WIC Cooking Class Recipes! Healthy Cooking the Right “Weigh”
- Small items (fruit and vegetable cutting board, refrigerator dry-erase board; shopping lists, fruit or vegetable timer) that are given in each class for participants who answer fun questions on nutrition/cooking techniques during the actual cooking class.

Helpful ordering information for materials or incentives (if available):

- Produce for Better Health - www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org
- afrankli@wiley.com

Tips for Other Agencies

What worked well for this project?

- Great CCNE – and the classes are a lot of fun! Great teamwork between the RD and Nutritionist!
- Choices of recipes were very good! We could usually prepare one food while the other food was cooking. Recipes chosen were kid/family-friendly. Coordinated recipes with ‘themes’ and seasons, so that clients were usually quite interested in the foods we prepared.
- Having a ‘helper’ to pass out sample foods, any incentive items, and take photographs.
- Making time to ‘run through’ the recipes prior to class so instructors were more prepared.
- Allowing more preparation time (than in previous year) on cooking class day.
- Instructors wore chef hats to help keep hair out of food.
- Got a camera for recording the cooking classes, and to enable clients to watch food preparation more closely.
- Started having fun ‘questions’ in each class (food preparation trivia, nutrition facts, etc) to keep the participants interested.

What were the challenges?

- Class size is so unpredictable! Some classes are large, with many children present. Some classes are very small, so we sometimes plan for too many people.
- Getting clients to come to the classes they are scheduled to attend.

- Our cooking/prep area/classroom is a rather small area – we work around each other as best as we can.
- A few of the recipes were not as tasty as we thought they would be – or there was too much time involved with their preparation.

What changes would be made for next time, if any?

- Need to always contact class participants (mail or phone) to remind them to come to their scheduled cooking class, and to encourage them to bring their WIC children with them.