

Educating Parents on Early Childhood Nutrition and Healthy Living

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Introduction

Our mission was to promote healthy living and lessen childhood obesity by educating parents of toddlers on basic nutrition and exercise needed for their everyday lives. By partnering with NAM Children's' Clinic and the local branch of the Even Start program, we were able to provide this education to the many residents that NAM serves. A certified dietician was even available to help teach the classes at NAM for

“I never realized what I had been feeding my family, until this session”- Rosa

Project Format

The project centered on the distribution of a healthy living education packet and one on one counseling, given to parents of toddlers at risk at the NAM clinic. It also had twice monthly 2 hour long classes that were open to the local community. On one occasion, I was able to teach a session of the Even Start nutrition class that lasted for two hours.



Methods

Participants were recruited from the NAM clinic by talking to parents of toddlers seen at the clinic. They were asked to attend a two hour long group session with their toddler at a time convenient for them. Follow up was provided by contacting them over phone.

I was able to work with the Even Start program as well, which led to teaching a group of their parents for a two hour session. I led information sessions on basic early childhood interventions for healthy living and basic interventions for other age groups as needed. I was also able to put together packets of information to be distributed in clinic to parents of children at risk for childhood obesity and further adult obesity related problems.

Outcome

Overall, I was able to serve about 30 mothers through the group sessions and taught very basic nutritional education. I have also been asked to obtain some information handed outs for the Even Start program to distribute further. I have developed a packet of information to be distributed by the NAM Children's' Clinic when it is determined that they may be at risk for childhood obesity, and I hope to work with a student group at UT Houston to have other medical students interested volunteer their time to teach the sessions on a continuing basis.

Reflections

I have learned that the easiest way to reach out to many families is to catch them in clinic and their children are with them. It was easy to find parents interested in the information, but hard to recruit them to come in for the teaching sessions. I hope the packets of information distributed in clinic will be as useful as the information sessions and hope to recruit new students to carry on with the group sessions

“It is great to learn new ways to introduce vegetables to my daughter, hopefully I can get her to like them” - Anna

Acknowledgements

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Participants and Activities

Parents were given the new government sponsored healthy pyramids and walked through the calorie calculation for each member of their family. Just one of the many educational handouts.

