

WNEP Education at Food Pantries recommendations October 2014

WNEP education can help individuals and families make healthier food choices and utilize the foods available through food pantries. Individuals who use food pantries vary in multiple ways such as age, employment status, health status and cultural background. Challenges to engage adults using food pantries in direct education include participants' lack of time when they are at the pantry and limited space to engage participants in a lesson at the pantry. Experienced WNEP Educators have found that when they are able to build trust with food pantry participants over time or through interactions in different settings such as WIC then it is easier to engage these participants in lessons at the pantry.

Direct education at food pantries is usually provided through mini lessons (10 to 15 minutes) because of time and space constraints. If there is an opportunity to do a single lesson, refer to the Parent Group educational project curriculum recommendations to find a lesson.

Recommended curricula and coordination with multi-level efforts

All WNEP education should use a recommended curriculum. However, at this time there is no "recommended curriculum" for mini lessons at food pantries. During FY15, WNEP will be working toward defining a mini lesson "curriculum" for FY16.

All WNEP education should be coordinated with at least one other obesity prevention effort. *Research indicates that an effective obesity prevention program takes a comprehensive approach* (2014 SNAP-Ed Toolkit). Examples of other collaborative efforts in which WNEP may be involved include:

- Efforts to get fresh produce and other healthy food options available at food pantries.
- Engaging food pantry operators in conversation or efforts related to making sure the food available is high quality and safe to consume.
- Working collaboratively to make food pantries more likely to meet the diverse needs of their users (food choices and selection, variety, etc.)

WNEP education at food pantries should focus on SNAP-Ed key behavioral outcomes:

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables, at least half your grains whole grains, and switch to low-fat milk and milk products.
- Increase physical activity and reduce time spent in sedentary behaviors as part of a healthy lifestyle; and,
- Balance food and physical activity.

Recommended resources for mini lessons

Teaching topic	“mini lessons”
a. Choosing healthful foods (and in general)	Healthy & Homemade displays+ (note that only 2014 are at The Learning Store site; contact Gayle Coleman for 2013 displays)
b. Portion awareness	Healthy & Homemade displays+ University of Missouri displays * (Supersizing of America) Balance Food and Physical Activity display
c. Grain foods and whole grains	A Guide to Whole Grain foods+, Penn State ne Frames Good for You Grains display Whole Grains display University of Missouri displays * (Whole Grains)
d-f. Fruits & vegetables	Good for You, You’ve Decided to Eat More Fruit! Flip chart+ Vegetables, Try a Bite! Flip chart+ Fruit and Veggies Solutions display Healthy & Homemade displays+ Fruit & Veggies under \$1 (mini display/poster) Wisconsin Fall Harvest Flip chart
g. Milk group and other calcium-rich foods	Move to Low-fat Milk flip chart University of Missouri displays * (Drink to Your Health)
h. Meat and beans group	Go Lean with Protein flip chart Spill the Beans flip chart Preparing beans display Healthy & Homemade displays+
i. Choosing beverages	Rethink Your Drink flip chart What’s in your drink? display University of Missouri displays (Drink to Your Health)
j-l. Foods with less solid fat, added sugar, salt	Food Label Lingo display
n. Being physically active	Balance Food and Physical Activity display
s. Family meals	Family Meal Times flip chart Mealtime is Family Time+, Penn State ne Frames
q. Feeding toddlers or preschoolers	Patience Works Better than Pressure display Do you have a choosy eater? Flip chart Healthy & Homemade displays+
z. Planning healthy meals and snacks	Healthy & Homemade displays+ University of Missouri displays * (Healthy Snacks)
aa. Shopping for food	University of Missouri displays * (Eating on a Budget)

+ Also available in Spanish, *Note – only select displays are recommended

Flip charts were originally developed for WIC and may be too long for mini lessons at food pantries. If using flip charts, remove information that does not seem useful for food pantry clients to shorten the flip chart lesson to 10 to 15 minutes.

Evaluation

The Informant Interviews with Regular/Returning Food Pantry Clients is recommended because it documents behavior change which is a stronger evaluation than intent to change behavior. Other state tools that could be used with mini lessons that document intent to change behavior are: mini-lesson evaluation tools related to whole grains, vary your veggies, focus on fruit, low-fat milk.

Educational reinforcements and food tasting

Educational reinforcement items might help learners implement a behavior or remind them of a behavior change. For example, an educator might provide an inexpensive measuring cup after a 30 minute lesson using the How Much? lesson in Loving Your Family, Feeding Their future to remind learners about portion awareness. However, educational reinforcement items should be appropriate for the intensity of the lesson and therefore it is not appropriate to provide educational reinforcements with mini lessons. If using educational reinforcement items remember that all items purchased for use in WNEP educational programming must be necessary and reasonable, and need to be obviously and directly related to the topic taught.

WNEP education at food pantries often focuses on using foods from the pantry that may be unfamiliar to pantry clients. Experienced Educators have found that adults who have an opportunity to taste a food and like the taste are more likely to take the food and use it. However, it might not be practical to offer food samples at a food pantry. For example, you may not be able to limit the samples to only the people who participate in your lesson. If you use food samples be sure to follow “Food Purchases in WNEP” guidelines, which can be found on the WNEP website.

Indirect education

It may be more practical to provide indirect education (“walk by” lessons) for individuals and families that use food pantries in some situations. For example, it may be more practical to provide indirect education if a WNEP Educator is not available to be at the pantry during all hours that it is open or if only a few people engage with the WNEP Educator during the time she/he is there. In these situations, WNEP staff may make the Food \$ense newsletter available to the agency for their clients or provide an unattended educational display (which would not be counted as indirect education) that could be used at the pantry. The displays listed in **Recommended resources for mini lessons** could be provided as an unattended educational display.