



EFNEP—Helping Low Income Families Make Better Food Decisions

Impact Statement

The Issue:

Limited-resource families face many nutritional challenges. Adults buying and preparing meals may not have the skills needed to plan nutritious meals, and they may also need assistance in determining which foods provide the best value for their dollars. Healthy diets are vital to all Alabama citizens. People who eat healthy are less likely to suffer from chronic illness and disease.

What's Been Done:

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program began 30 years ago in Alabama when Extension educators developed a program to teach and promote healthy diets among limited-resource citizens in five counties. That effort now encompasses 31 counties, and EFNEP has been replicated across the country. In addition to organized lessons promoting sound nutritional practices, EFNEP program assistants reached many more through mall exhibits, health fairs and special countywide activities.

Why We Care:

Through EFNEP's four programs -- Today's Mom, 4-H Diet's Our Thing, Mom's Helper and Basic EFNEP—more than 5,000 client families encompassing more than 16,000 individuals were reached in Alabama during 2003.

The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in Alabama is designed to assist limited-resource audiences in acquiring the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior changes necessary for nutritionally sound diets.

The program's goal is to increase the number of healthy, well-nourished children, youth and families along with decreasing the number of babies with low birth weights born to Alabama's low income mothers.

EFNEP's success is evident in the changes participants make in their eating and shopping habits. After completing the program, more than 50 percent of participants were planning meals in advance more frequently. Fifty-seven percent were using the Nutrition Facts on food labels to make choices, and 36 percent said their children ate breakfast more frequently.

Ninety-one percent of the more than 1,000 mothers in the Today's Mom delivered babies weighing five and a half pounds or more. This weight is considered the minimum healthy birth weight.