

IMPACT

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Bannock County EFNEP helps a daycare provider save hundreds in food costs

The Situation

Recent increases in food prices impact limited income families by straining already fragile grocery budgets. As noted in the April 2008, *Journal of the American Dietetic Association*, food costs increased 4% in 2007, yielding the largest annual jump in 17 years. Limited income families felt the pressure as nutrient dense foods such as eggs, meats, and poultry all increased in cost. Of particular concern to the limited income family, is the price of fresh produce increasing dramatically since 2004. Meeting family members' nutrient needs becomes difficult in the face of higher healthy food costs.

Limited income families tend to spend a higher percentage of income on groceries than those in higher income brackets. This can be amplified for limited income child care providers seeking to maximize use of their Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) reimbursement funds.

Our Response

Bannock County EFNEP established a partnership with IdahoSTARS in 2008. IdahoSTARS is a statewide program to assist parents by offering child care referrals and information about quality child care settings and to assist child care providers with a variety of professional development opportunities and resources. Local IdahoSTARS staff recognized a need for training for their participants in areas of nutrition and meal planning. The IdahoSTARS staff met with the EFNEP Coordinator and paraprofessionals and they developed a professional development program where child care providers enrolled in the IdahoSTARS can receive approved continuing education credit if they participate in EFNEP lessons. The six hours of training are a portion of the continuing edu-



Creative Learning Center. Photo by LaRue Gregersen, EFNEP Nutrition Advisor. Clockwise from lower left: Maria Reynolds, Kori Riggot, Robert Hamann, Noah Adermann, Justa Kennedy, Bridger Barnes, female employee, Luis Gaytan, Robert Beazer, and Samantha Kennedy.

cation required for business licensing in Bannock County communities.

Idaho EFNEP uses the University of Florida curriculum, *Eat Right for Life*. IdahoSTARS clients who sign up for the program receive the five core lessons chosen by Bannock County EFNEP. These include "Be Active," "Keep Food Safe," "Meal Planning," "My Pyramid," "Saving Money on Meals," plus one additional optional lesson of their choice while earning their hours. Since the partnership began, EFNEP paraprofessionals have worked with 18 providers from ten facilities.

Here is just one example of the impact the program has had on IdahoSTARS clientele. One Bannock County IdahoSTARS participant chose to receive continuing education by enrolling in EFNEP. At pro-

gram entry the client was spending just over \$1000 a month for her family and the additional children under her care. This cost had risen due to increases in food costs. She expressed desire to learn to reduce her food expenditures through participation in EFNEP. Reduced food expenditures would allow her to maximize her CACFP reimbursement funds. The client attended all the core lessons described above. In addition to the lesson content, the client and program paraprofessional discussed coupon use, including internet sources for coupons.

Program Outcomes

Records show that EFNEP clients do typically reduce food expenditures from program entry to exit. For example, graduating clients reduced food costs on average from \$92.40 per person to \$78.70 (about 15%) in fiscal year 2008. The IdahoSTARS client exhibited motivation to apply what she had learned from her EFNEP lessons. Behavior change was documented by reduced food expenditures. At the end of the program she was spending 25% less for groceries (\$768 versus \$1029) each month. These savings of over \$3100.00 a year can be used elsewhere for this recently divorced and struggling mother of three.

The IdahoSTARS client exhibited motivation to apply what she learned from her EFNEP lessons. Behavior The current economic climate limited income EFNEP participants face will continue straining grocery budgets. In turn, Bannock County EFNEP will continue providing needed education to help program participants save money on meals.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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