

Title of Intervention: Classroom-Based Experience with Low-Fat Foods

Intervention Strategies: Group Education, Environments and Policies

Purpose of the Intervention: Increase children's acceptance of low-fat foods served in the school's lunch program

Population: Kindergarten through fourth grade students

Setting: Cafeteria and classrooms at an elementary school in upstate New York; school-based

Partners: School district

Intervention Description:

- **Group Education:** During class time, children learned about the history and tradition of nutritious, plant-based foods. Children also prepared foods from other cultures. Recipes required minimal cooking equipment. In addition to preparing foods from other cultures, children often listened to music and studied cultural artifacts related to the food being cooked. With all activities, the children kept food journals and composted any scraps of foods that were not cooked. All lessons were integrated with science, mathematics, and social studies concepts.
- **Environments and Policies:** Within one week of a new food experience in the intervention classrooms, the same foods were served in the lunch program.

Theory: Social Cognitive Theory

Resources Required:

- **Staff/Volunteers:** Teachers, cafeteria staff
- **Training:** Not mentioned
- **Technology:** Not mentioned
- **Space:** Classroom
- **Budget:** Not mentioned
- **Intervention:** Food for recipes, cooking equipment, cultural music and artifacts, food journals, scrap composts, education curriculum
- **Evaluation:** Scales, trained interviewers

Evaluation:

- **Design:** Quasi-experimental
- **Methods and Measures:**
 - Calculated the difference between the weight of a new food before and after a child ate it
 - Intervention classroom totals were compared to non-intervention classroom totals
 - Children completed interviews about their experiences

Outcomes:

- **Short Term Impact:** Not measured
- **Long Term Impact:** Children in the intervention group ate significantly more of the new foods when they were offered in the lunch program.

Maintenance: Not mentioned

Lessons Learned: Children are more likely to eat new foods when they are educated about unfamiliar foods in a manner that is fun and engages their senses. In addition, food education can be successfully included into classroom activities.

Citation(s):

Demas, A. (1998). "Low-fat school lunch programs: achieving acceptance." *Am J Cardiol* 82(10B): 80T-82T.