



**Family Living Focus**

EFNEP  
Supervising Agents  
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If the million dollar question was "What exactly is EFNEP?", would you know the answer?

EFNEP stands for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. It is a Federally funded program that is implemented in the states by Cooperative Extension. Counties that offer the program are chosen based on poverty statistics.

The EFNEP program teaches food preparation skills, budgeting food dollars, food safety and nutrition to economically challenged families. Working parents, single homemakers, pregnant women and teens, and youth are taught in small groups or individually by trained nutrition education advisors.

The program consists of a series of lessons on the various topics. Participants may meet in community centers, housing developments, schools, churches, or homes.

Eating a nutritious diet is difficult when little money is available for food and when food preparation skills and food safety knowledge are limited.

Poor diet leads to poor health and low work productivity.

Nutrition Education Advisors (NEA) are specially trained to assist clients to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary

to change their attitudes and behaviors thus improving the diets of themselves and their families. Topics may include but are not limited to using food stamps and other resources effectively; stretching food dollars; keeping food safe; selecting, planning and preparing food tasting and healthful meals; feeding babies and children, and reading food labels.

The EFNEP program can be delivered in various ways. These include:

- Individual home visit — Historically this was the basis of the EFNEP program. NEAs met one-on-one in the home with individual clients. Today this is done on a limited basis.

- Group — A more common educational method for EFNEP today is a small group. Participants may meet with the NEA in community centers, housing developments, schools, churches or homes.

- SuperCupboard — A collaborative effort between EFNEP and one or more community agencies. A NEA provides education in nutrition and food preparation to a group of individuals. The agencies provide foods for hands-on preparation during the classes and food to take home to replicate the meal with their family. Agencies may

also provide transportation and child care.

Another component of SuperCupboard is a lifeskills speaker arranged by the agency at each class. The topics can include first aid, kindergarten readiness, budgeting, stress reduction, personal safety, self sufficiency, and so forth.

- Eating for A Better Start (EFABS) — A program designed for young pregnant women. Lessons cover the discomforts of pregnancy, weight gain, fetal development, the nutrient needs during pregnancy, the dangers of substance abuse, breast and formula feeding, and introducing solid foods to infants.

EFABS program can be implemented at hospital clinic programs, high schools and community agencies.

- 4-H Youth Development - Targets youth ages 8 to 19 in both a traditional and non-traditional 4-H setting. The nutrition education programs for youth can be done over a series of lessons. They are often run in

conjunction with other community programs such as township day camps, after-school programs, summer youth programs, etc.

EFNEP works with the Family Centers, YMCA and YWCAs, Hispanic Centers, schools, Boys & Girls Clubs and Juvenile Detention Centers. NEAs and graduated homemakers also run the more traditional in-home clubs.

The EFNEP program is staffed by NEAs who are hired from within the community and are trained and supervised by extension agents and by university faculty and staff. They receive referrals from welfare offices, family centers, churches, agencies, former participants and other individuals across the state. To extend the outreach of their efforts NEAs recruit volunteers on a regular basis. The volunteers contribute countless hours to the EFNEP program by

assisting with SuperCupboards, groups, 4-H, transportation, etc. Does EFNEP make a difference?

Yes! Statistics show that more than 90% of the graduates make positive food choices. Improvements were made primarily in consumption of fruits, vegetables and dairy products.

In addition, clients reported spending less dollars on food, a reduction in their reliance on emergency food sources and improved food safety practices.

NEAs report various socio-economic benefits to families including awareness of other community services, enrollment in GED classes, increase in skills that contribute to job readiness, and a myriad of parenting and socialization skills.

Final answer to the million-dollar question, if asked: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program works!

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