Abstract

Low-income parents and caregivers of preschool-age children are currently underserved in Pennsylvania (PA) Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP-Ed). Digital photo receivers (DPRs) are a viable means of delivering consistent, relevant nutrition education and may be an effective strategy to increase SNAP-Ed programming reach and scope. USDA Food and Nutrition Services core messages focus on family meals and prompted development of Mealtime is Family Time, a DPR program that provides information about the division of feeding responsibility. Caregivers of preschoolers at 6 Philadelphia WIC clinics and daycare centers were recruited to view the DPR program and provide feedback. An untested, 6-item survey was completed by 125 caregivers of children aged 2 to 5. The sample was primarily female (93%), 18 to 35 years (77%), and current or previous SNAP participants (69%). The majority of participants (>90%) indicated slides moved at the right speed, contained the right amount of information, and helped them think about family meals. 31 caregivers (25%) selected at least one negative survey response. This exploratory study suggested use of a DPR to provide education about family meals was feasible and well-received by these caregivers. Findings indicate a need for additional examination with tested survey items and qualitative methods. Funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program.

Background

Mealtime is Family Time is a digital photo receiver program (DPR) consisting of 17 slides designed to provide concise, tested messages in a clear, visually appealing format. DPRs display information downloaded from the internet or loaded from a flash drive. Viewers watch slides progress through predetermined intervals on a digital photo frame. DPRs deliver consistent nutrition education; thus, they may increase programming reach and scope to preschool caregivers throughout Pennsylvania. In PA SNAP-Ed, DPRs display information in waiting rooms of health clinics, WIC offices, food pantries, and other locations to reach target audiences.

Methods

Participants (n=125) viewed a digital photo receiver program (DPR) consisting of 17 slides designed to provide concise, tested messages in a clear, visually appealing format. DPRs display information downloaded from the internet or loaded from a flash drive. Viewers watch slides progress through predetermined intervals on a digital photo frame. DPRs deliver consistent nutrition education; thus, they may increase programming reach and scope to preschool caregivers throughout Pennsylvania. In PA SNAP-Ed, DPRs display information in waiting rooms of health clinics, WIC offices, food pantries, and other locations to reach target audiences.

Results

Participant survey responses: 77.6% responded that the slides were easy to read; 94.4% felt the slides contained the right amount of information; 92.0% noted the slides moved at the right speed; 81.6% understood the information presented in the DPR show; 56.8% liked the pictures used in the slides; 94.4% felt the slides contained the right amount of information; 93.6% responded that Mealtime is Family Time helped them to think about family meals.

Background

Mealtime is Family Time (n=7,616); only 13% was provided to parents and caregivers of preschool-age children, a SNAP-Ed target audience, in WIC clinics in southeastern Pennsylvania. Most of the preschool programming in PA SNAP-Ed in FY 2010 was provided to children (n=17,616); only 13% was provided to caregivers (n=1,101).

Mealtime is Family Time incorporates Core Messages for preschool caregivers developed and tested by the Food and Nutrition Services. Messages address 3 feeding categories: Role Modeling, Cooking and Eating Together, and Division of Feeding Responsibility.

FNS Core Messages used in Mealtime is Family Time include:

- “They learn from watching you. Eat fruits and veggies and your kids will too”
- “Cook together. Eat together. Talk together. Make mealtime a family time”
- “Let them learn by serving themselves”
- “Sometimes new foods take time”
- “Patience works better than pressure”

The purpose of this study was to test Mealtime is Family Time with low-income parents and caregivers of preschool-age children, a SNAP-Ed target audience, in WIC clinics in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Study Purpose

The purpose of this study was to test Mealtime is Family Time with low-income parents and caregivers of preschool-age children, a SNAP-Ed target audience, in WIC clinics in southeastern Pennsylvania.

Figures:

- Mealtime is Family Time
- Role Modeling
- Cooking and Eating Together
- Division of Feeding Responsibility
- Preliminary Testing Shows Family Meals Education Delivered with a Digital Photo Receiver was Well-Received by Low-Income Caregivers in Pennsylvania

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Poster design and preparation by Kristen Arnold, BS, Graduate Student, Nutritional Sciences, The Pennsylvania State University.