Objective: Examine if nutrition risk or quality of life (QoL) in preschool children is associated with parent eating competence (EC).

Study Design, Setting, Participants, Intervention: Cross-sectional online survey of preschool parents recruited from low-income settings. Parents (n=117) were female, 77% white, resource-constrained (62% reported social service program participation); mean age 32.2 ± 8.0 years; 50% had ≤ an associate’s degree. Low income was defined by worry about money for food and assistance program (SNAP, WIC, Food Banks) participation. Mean ecSI 2.0 score 31.6 ± 8.2 (scored from 0 to 60; higher scores indicate greater eating competence). 19% scored ≤ 80 for 6%.

Data Collection were also included after affirming demographic similarity. Data were collected from May through October 2014. Pilot study data (n=8) collected the previous May.

What is eating competence? Eating competence (EC) is a construct in academic terms; a perspective or way of eating in lay terminology. Eating competence is a multidimensional construct, including eating behaviors, emotions, and beliefs related to eating. In this context, eating competence refers to the ability of parents to make healthy eating decisions for their children.

What is quality of life? Quality of life (QoL) is a multidimensional construct that includes physical, emotional, social, and vocational well-being. In this context, QoL for preschool children was measured using the Pediatric Quality of Life (PedsQL) 9 survey.

Data Analyses: EC parents were characterized using a general linear model for low-income status.

Results: Participants were recruited from WIC clinics and low-income settings (e.g., libraries, laundromats, food banks), using flyers and emails either posted or distributed-in-person. Parents included the IRS for an online survey (Qualtrics), Provi UP! that was completed independently at participant consent after confirming eligibility.

Parenting style: Parenting style was measured using the Parenting Style Questionnaire. There are three types of parenting styles: authoritive, authoritarian, and uninvolved.

Conclusion: EC parents perceived their child had a significantly better quality of life than non-EC parents. EC parents remained significant after controlling for socioeconomic position (P=0.03).

Pediatric Quality of Life: EC parents scored lower for low-income parents when nutrition risk was moderate or high. EC = 0.008

Conclusions: 1. Tenets of healthy approaches to eating and lifestyle behaviors associated with being eating competent were supported.

Results: Participation status (n=117) were female (94%); white (77%); black (10%); non-Hispanic (90%); food insecure (39%); worried about money for food; 62% participate in assistance programs, SNAP, WIC; 40% Food Banks; 11% overweight/obese (6.4%, mean BMI 28.5 ± 8.0); disfavored with their weight (59%) and felt stressed (mean 6.7 ± 2.1; 53% scored ≥ 7).

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