

# Supporting Healthy Lifestyles via a “Cloverbud Family Fun” Series for Youth and Their Caregivers

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## INTRODUCTION

EFNEP is one of the only nutrition education programs in Lawrence County. Lawrence County ranks poorly when it comes to certain health-related statistics.

- Lawrence County vacillates between ranking 87 and 88 in the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's County Health Rankings.
- 37% of Lawrence County adults are obese compared with the state average of 30%
- 34% of Lawrence County adults are physically inactive compared with the state average of 27%
- According to 2013 data from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, 10 out of the 11 public schools in Lawrence county have greater than 50% of students receiving free- or reduced-priced lunches.

Nutrition and physical activity programming aimed at increasing positive health behaviors can help improve these factors.

The EFNEP Program Assistant (PA), EFNEP Program Specialist (PS), and 4-H Educator developed a partnership where the 4-H Educator and 4-H Teen Leaders would lead hands-on nutrition/physical activity programs for Cloverbud youth (ages 5-8) while the EFNEP PA facilitated EFNEP lessons with the parents/caregivers. The Ohio 4-H Foundation awarded \$2,070 in funding to support youth activities, provide food to make a nutritious meal together, provide educational enhancements for youth, and provide additional educational enhancements for adults.



Caregivers & Youth Participate in Physical Activity Together

## GOALS

- 1) Implement 4 weeks of nutrition and physical activity programs for youth and their caregivers.
- 2) Train 4-H Teen Leaders to lead the programs.
- 3) Engage youth and adults in a new 4-H Cloverbud program outside of the traditional club based activities.
- 4) Teach families strategies to involve all family members in food preparation for meals.
- 5) Teach families strategies to be active together.
- 6) Fill gaps in healthy living life-skills through nutrition education programming for youth in Lawrence County.

## METHODS

For the youth programming, the following activity-based, nutrition education curriculums were used: Jump Into Food and Fitness and Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Education Kits (Fitness is Fun and Food is Fun). The EFNEP Eating Smart Being Active curriculum was used for the adult programming. The EFNEP lessons are presented in the following order: 1) Get Moving, 2) Plan, Shop, and Save, 3) Fruits and Veggies: Half Your Plate, 4) Make Half Your Grains Whole, 5) Build Strong Bones, 6) Go Lean with Protein, 7) Make a Change, and 8) Celebrate! Eat Smart and Be Active. Curriculum topics were aligned so that youth and adults received the same messages during each lesson.

The 4-H Educator and EFNEP PA recruited 4-H families through outreach at the county fair, email newsletters to 4-H families, and personal communications with families.

The lessons were done as part of a series lasting four weeks and were called the "Cloverbud Family Fun" series. 4-H Teen Leaders and the 4-H Educator taught the youth lessons. The EFNEP PA taught the adult lessons. 4-H Teen Leaders also discussed opportunities for improving nutrition/physical activity policies at 4-H activities.

At each lesson, youth and their caregivers prepared and ate a meal together; the meal fit MyPlate recommendations. Youth and their caregivers came together to participate in physical activity at each lesson. Each lesson lasted 2.5 hours.

## RESULTS

In addition to the Cloverbud Family Fun series, this partnership between 4-H and EFNEP expanded to 4 more opportunities with different audiences. Several organizations in the county learned about this approach to youth/adult programming, and offered additional funding (\$4,500 and \$1,500) to do similar programs with their clients in June and August 2015. Funding (\$5,600) was also provided for two series in 2016.

The Cloverbud Family Fun series took place in September. EFNEP's pre- and post- behavior surveys and food recalls were given to adult participants at each series. Behavior change data for the 9 adult graduates is in the next column. Pre- and post- behavior surveys were given to the 9 youth participants at each series.

### • What youth learned from the class:

- “Foods can taste good and be good for you.”
- “Eat healthy and exercise right to live a healthy life.”
- “It’s a good thing to be healthy.”

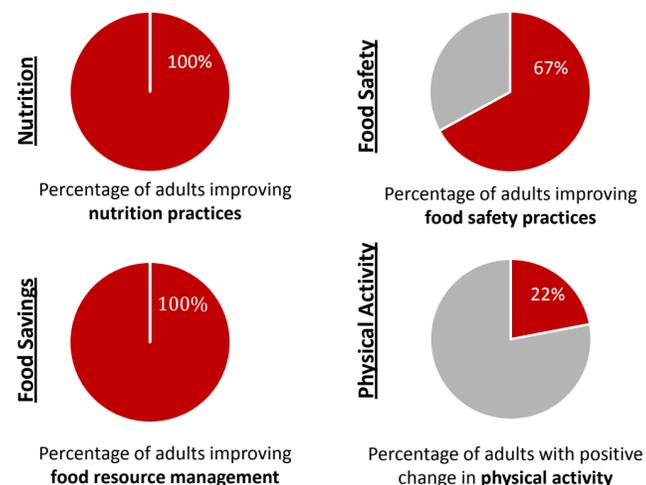
### • What youth will now do differently:

- “Not as much time on electronic devices.”
- “Eat healthier snacks.”

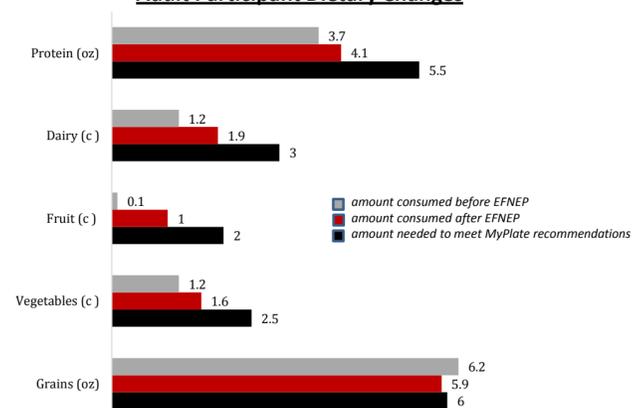
### • Success story from an adult participant:

- One participant ate fast food often because it was quick and cost less than preparing food at home. After a class activity where she planned a meal for \$11 or less using MyPlate as a guide, she discovered she could have healthy, low-cost meals for less than \$11. She was shocked to learn how much fat, salt, and sugar was in her fast food meals. She enjoyed all the meals from class and said she would cook these foods for her family because “fast food doesn’t look so good anymore.”

The turnout for the sessions was smaller than expected; therefore, the group used the extra physical activity supplies to develop physical activity kits for each 4-H club in the county to use within meetings. The kits also included a recipe book, OSU Healthy Eating Guidelines for Meetings, and flyers promoting the EFNEP open site classes



### Adult Participant Dietary Changes



## CONCLUSIONS

Working with caregivers and their children helped strengthen nutrition/physical activity/food safety/food resource management messages. EFNEP and 4-H expanded community nutrition education opportunities for youth and adults in Lawrence County. The partnership forged new relationships with county organizations and increased the community's attention to the variety of programming offered by OSU Extension. The physical activity kits were created to provide the youth lessons to Cloverbud 4-H Advisors and promote wellness within clubs. Other Extension offices with 4-H and EFNEP (or SNAP-Ed) could offer similar programs to encourage families to eat smart and be active together.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- 3) Ohio 4-H Cloverbud Education Kits. Available at: <http://www.ohio4h.org/volunteers/cloverbud-leaders/curriculum>.
- 4) Eating Smart Being Active. Available at: <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/esba/>.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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4-H Junior Leaders Help Youth Create Their Own “MyPlate”



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