

Healthy Sprouts—A Novel Program that Supports Parents in Creating a Healthy Food Environment at Home for their Preschool-Aged Children

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PRESENTATION FORMAT: 15 minute oral presentation

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Early Childhood and Nutrition Educator

ABSTRACT: BACKGROUND: The food environment at home shapes children’s food choices and ultimately their health and well-being. Currently, few programs are available that support parents in creating a healthy food environment at home for their preschool-aged children. Thus, we developed and evaluated Healthy Sprouts, a 10-session preschool, parenting, cooking and nutrition education program for English- and/or Spanish-speaking families and their preschool-aged children. Through a participatory educational approach where dialogue, personal connection, hands-on activities, and role-modeling are central, families learn about a healthy lifestyle, parenting skills and kindergarten readiness.

METHODS: Parents (n=17 to date) filled out before and after a 10-week session of Healthy Sprouts surveys that primarily measured steps toward implementing healthy parenting and food environment at home.

RESULTS: Based on their responses, most parents that attended Healthy Sprouts had already implemented healthy parenting and lifestyle strategies before they started Healthy Sprouts. Still, we observed changes toward a healthy food environment including non-starchy vegetables were more often served by parents and children learned more often from their parents how to wash their hands and set and clear the table.

CONCLUSIONS: Healthy Sprouts is a promising program to promote a healthy food environment at home in English/Spanish-speaking families of preschool-aged children.

OBJECTIVE(S): Explain how Healthy Sprouts may support parents in creating a healthy food environment at home.

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