



Parents as Teachers
national center



High 5
Low fat

Access On-Line Training

Review Curriculum

Do not review curriculum until you
have completed the On-Line Training

Funding provided by the
National Cancer Institute



Introduction

Living a healthy lifestyle is becoming more challenging in modern times. Life is fast paced and complex. A fast food restaurant often substitutes for the family kitchen and processed foods simplify shopping and cooking but replace fresh ingredients. As rates of obesity and obesity related diseases rise, beginning healthy eating habits early in life is essential if maximum health effects are to be realized. Studies have shown that ethnic groups such as African Americans have an overall higher rate of dietary related cancers and other diseases related to obesity. Parents serve as role models for their children. Teaching parents of young children how to provide nutritious, economical meals and snacks that respect and maintain cultural traditions provides a way to impact these serious health conditions and to shape the next generation's eating behaviors.

The *Parents as Teacher's High 5 Low Fat (H5LF) Nutrition Curriculum* grew out of a collaboration between the Saint Louis University School of Public Health and the Parents as Teachers National Center. A three year project providing for the development and evaluation of the curriculum was funded in 1997 by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). The H5LF program includes personal visits and nutrition materials

targeted to African American parents as part of the regular Parents as Teachers (PAT) program. The evaluation showed that H5LF successfully improved the diets of African American parents by increasing the amount of fruits and vegetables eaten and decreasing the intake of dietary fat. Parents receiving H5LF increased the frequency of low fat eating behaviors and modeled healthy food choices for their children.

A new grant from NCI provides for the national dissemination of the H5LF curriculum to parent educators throughout the Parents as Teachers network. The continuing collaboration between researchers at Saint Louis University's School of Public Health and the Parents as Teachers National Center has resulted in a professional development opportunity that is a milestone in the history of Parents as Teachers. It marks the first distance learning opportunity offered as a PAT training. While targeted toward African Americans, the H5LF personal visit plans, parent educator resources, and parent handouts are good information for any family. They will enable PAT parent educators to meet the needs of families for specific nutrition information in a way that empowers parents to provide a healthy future for their children.

How to Use the *Parents as Teachers High 5 Low Fat Curriculum*

Parents today face serious challenges in providing a healthy lifestyle for their children and for themselves. Obesity is a major public health concern in the United States, and the incidence of dietary related cancers and other diseases related to obesity has risen alarmingly in the past several decades. Parents often ask parent educators for guidance regarding their family's nutrition. The *Parents as Teachers High 5 Low Fat (H5LF) Curriculum* will allow you to give parents important research based information and strategies that will empower them to make healthy choices and serve as positive models for their child.

Helping African American families reap health benefits

The introduction to this curriculum covers background and rationale of the material. Because dietary related cancers are more prevalent in African Americans, the H5LF program is designed to address the dietary needs and traditions of African American families. Use of the Curriculum with African American parents is intended to encourage change in the eating habits of adults and formation of healthy eating patterns in the next generation. In the material, you will see newsletters, calendars, and recipes that incorporate African American history and culture.

Good nutrition for all families

In addition to this special focus, the nutrition information contained in the *Parents as Teachers High 5 Low Fat Curriculum* is appropriate for use with any family. When you use this curriculum with a wide variety of families, you will discover ways to incorporate recipes and traditions from many different cultures, and will experience the richness that cross-cultural exploration can bring.

The *PAT H5LF Curriculum* is not intended to be a comprehensive presentation of nutrition information. Rather it focuses on two factors that have been shown to impact the incidence of dietary related cancers: increasing the consumption of fruits and vegetables to at least 5 servings a day and decreasing the intake of dietary fats. The Curriculum does not discuss child

nutrition specifically, but gives parents strategies for improving the diet of all family members. Parents of young children are in control of what their child eats. They do the shopping, the food preparation, and make choices about eating out. As designers of their child's environment, they can structure routines for family mealtime and determine what snacks their child will eat. Empowering parents to make healthy choices for their family will have short term and long term benefits for both adults and children.

Overview of the H5LF Curriculum

The *H5LF Curriculum* contains 5 units. Each unit contains a personal visit plan, parent educator resources, and parent handouts presented in the same format as the *Born to Learn™ Curriculum*. Therefore, you can conduct these visits in exactly the same way you do other PAT visits. Summaries of topics covered in the units are as follows.

- *Rate Your Plate* gives parents a way to look at their present food choices and introduces H5LF concepts used throughout the curriculum.
- *Reading is Power* shows parents how to read the food nutrition labels that by law appear on packaged foods.
- *Shop Smart* teaches strategies for food shopping that enable parents to make nutritious food choices economically.
- *The In Way to Eat Out* recognizes that most families of young children eat at fast food or family restaurants to some extent and gives parents strategies for following H5LF principles when eating on the go.
- *Discover New Recipe Traditions* teaches parents to modify their family's favorite recipes to support their H5LF goals.

You can use these visit plans in several ways.

- Each visit plan is complete, including child development information and discussion points, and can be presented in its entirety.
- Nutrition content discussion points can be incorporated into a *PAT Born to Learn™ Curriculum Prenatal to 3 Years* or *Born to Learn™ Curriculum*.

lum 3 Years to Kindergarten Entry personal visit plan appropriate for the child's age. It may take several personal visits to complete all the discussion points in one H5LF plan. The Nutrition Checklist, Goal Cards, and other parent activities should be used even if you are incorporating a H5LF visit plan into another personal visit plan.

- H5LF information and parent handouts can be used for group meetings. The *H5LF Curriculum* does not contain group meeting plans, but the content of the curriculum easily lends itself to several group meeting formats.

Special features of the H5LF personal visit plans

There are several ways in which H5LF personal visit plans differ from other PAT personal visit plans.

- **H5LF personal visit plans are not dependent on the age of the child.** Any plan can be delivered to families regardless of their child's age. This is primarily because the discussion points relate to information and strategies that help parents increase the number of fruits and vegetables and decrease the fat in their family's diet. There are two places in these visit plans where you will have to individualize for the age of the child.

One place is in *Developmental Characteristics*. Give a *Your Child* or a *Your Baby* handout appropriate for the age of the child for the developmental domain listed in the H5LF plan. Discuss the handout with the parent, just as you would on any visit, and ask them what they are already observing about their child's development. Record their responses on the form, *Milestones*, appropriate for the child's age, after the visit.

You will also need to individualize the plan in the parent-child activity. Since the H5LF plan is not associated with the age of the child, you are asked to refer to an age-appropriate personal visit plan in the *Born to Learn™ Curriculum*. Follow the procedure for the parent-child activity from the plan you have chosen, including materials, rationale, shared observation, and follow-up activity(s). It is helpful if you substitute food-related items for the materials in the activity when ever possible. For example, if the activity involves a zip-lock book, use pictures of fruits and

vegetables. Or bring measuring cups and spoons for playing in the grain box, and plastic fruits and vegetables to bury and find. Be aware, however, that some cultures do not allow children to play with food that could be eaten. Always ask parents if they approve of the play materials you bring.

Bring children's books about healthy eating and teach the parent new rhymes or songs that feature nutrition principles during book sharing. A selection of nutrition related literacy materials can be found in the parent handout, *Making Nutrition Fun*, in the *Rate Your Plate* unit. When you use these kinds of materials in the parent-child activity you provide another opportunity for sharing information or answering parents' questions about H5LF principles.

- **A second way H5LF personal visit plans differ involves a new section called "High 5 Low Fat parent activities."** As the name states, these are activities for parents to try during the visit that allow them to practice H5LF strategies and skills. Examples of these activities include learning to read food nutrition labels and modifying favorite family recipes. There is a follow-up activity included in this section. Parents are asked to set behavioral goals using H5LF Goal Cards, which will be explained later in this resource. Parents are also given Tip Cards with new recipes as part of the follow-up activity.

H5LF resources and handouts

There are some special nutrition resources and handouts that will help you effectively communicate H5LF principles and support parents as they work to develop healthy eating habits. The following are descriptions of these materials and suggestions for their use.

- **Nutrition Checklist.** The Nutrition Checklist provides a snapshot of the parent's eating patterns. Use this information as a foundation to help the parent set realistic H5LF goals. Each question response will offer unique challenges and opportunities for reinforcement of good eating habits or for positive change. The response to question #1 and #3 (who does the shopping and