

Team Nutrition

Family Nutrition Nights: Looking at Nutrition through Core Content

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State Superintendent of Education

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Preface

Looking at Nutrition through Core Content is an instructional resource for educators seeking to hold Family Nutrition Nights (FNN) for grades K-4 and 5-8. The lessons are designed to help students and their parents develop positive attitudes toward good nutritional practices, to establish lifelong healthful eating patterns, to take action for good health, and to provide accurate and current nutrition information.

This document is the product of USDA Team Nutrition grants and a partnership between the Louisiana Department of Education, Division of School and Community Support, and Southeastern Louisiana University, Excellence in Health and Education Project.

Helpful suggestions are offered along with current, research-based information that will give teachers, students, and families the knowledge and skills needed to make wise food choices throughout their lives. These activities easily can be modified to meet the needs of individual students.

All of the activity plans will be available at the Louisiana Department of Education Team Nutrition Education website <http://www/ldc/nutrition/465.html>. Questions, suggestions, or comments about *Looking at Nutrition through Core Content* can be directed to Alice Carroll (alice.carroll@la.gov), Division of School and Community Support, or by calling (225) 342-9442.

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Rationale

Looking at Nutrition through Core Content is a compilation of nutrition activities that have been correlated to the Grade Level Expectations (GLEs) in Science and Math and benchmarks in Health set by the Louisiana Department of Education for grades K-8. The activities are designed to be used within a Family Nutrition Night (FNN). As well as focusing on GLEs, the activities are designed to promote positive behaviors related to healthy eating and physical activity habits.

There are two broad approaches to school-based nutrition education – general knowledge, attitude, and behavior – and behavioral change programs based on social learning theory. Behavior change can be enhanced with a parent component for younger students and peer involvement for older students. Family Nutrition Nights promotes the social learning theory.

Students are more likely to make healthful eating choices when they receive consistent, reinforced messages from a number of creditable sources within an environment that encourages healthful choices. Collaboration among school food service staff, teachers, the community, families, and institutional services is necessary. Learning activities should provide hands-on experiences that are fun and that provide repeated opportunities for students to taste foods that are low in fat, sodium, and added sugars yet high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Nutrition education activities should provide positive aspects of healthful eating behaviors and should address social learning techniques such as role modeling and peer interaction.

Activities from *Looking at Nutrition through Core Content* will be located on the Louisiana Department of Education Team Nutrition Education website. This placement increases the visibility of the activities and provides a system for distributing, updating, and adding lessons for many years.

How to Use this Guide

Family Nutrition Nights (FNN) is an intergenerational educational program composed of nutrition-related mathematics, science, and health activities that involve the parent and child in “hands-on” learning using integrated modules of study. Each family-based learning activity provides a non-threatening environment for both parent and child to develop a better understanding of math and science content, as well as an appreciation for healthful eating and physical activity habits. Teachers can easily identify the subject area and grade level for each activity using the Table of Contents or the Lessons-at-a-Glance chart.

Teachers are encouraged to review all of the activities. Most activities for kindergarten through fourth grades can be enhanced for students in higher grades. Similarly, activities for fourth through eighth grade students can be made easier for students in lower grades.

Each FNN conducted should last approximately 90 minutes. The parent and child will circulate through a predetermined number of stations established by the school Family Nutrition Night Leader. Each station will consist of a problem and the necessary household or technology materials needed to solve the problem. The problem should be solved within the allotted 15-20 minutes scheduled for each station. The parent and child must work as a team to complete as many stations as possible within the allotted time.

Each activity includes an activity plan, lab instructions, and key concepts. Some activities include extra materials such as charts or student activity sheets. The activity plan identifies grade level expectations (GLE) for math and science and benchmarks for health. The activity plan also provides an activity overview, key concepts, procedures, and closure. The lab instructions should be posted at each station as is, or can be re-written in larger print and posted for sequencing. The key concepts sheet or sheets can be covered until the end of the activity, where the teacher can review them as part of the closure. Additionally, the key learning pages can be copied and given to the families to take home as reinforcement of what was covered at FNN.

Integrating activities from *Family Nutrition Nights: Looking at Nutrition through Core Content* will strengthen nutrition education in Louisiana. We hope you enjoy making nutrition a part of your teaching!

The listing of website links in the lessons does not constitute an endorsement of the information provided at the sites. Because of the nature of the World Wide Web, it is not possible to follow every link on every site to determine that all the information is up-to-date and reliable. Please use your own discretion when using any material found on the websites and links from them to other sites.