

Family-Centered Education in WIC

Getting Children Ready for School



What Is Family-Centered Education in WIC?

Family-centered education is a way for parents and children to learn and have fun together while children develop basic school readiness skills.

Why Is Family-Centered Education Important for WIC?

Nationwide, children who qualify for WIC enter school with below average reading readiness skills. A recent study of 500 WIC families from an agency in Los Angeles found:

- Less than 10% of the parents read to their children on a daily basis compared to 46% of similar low-income families not on WIC.
- The majority had fewer than five books at home.
- Most WIC parents thought school was the place to learn, not the home.
- Most WIC parents did not think early childhood learning was important to school success.

What Can WIC Do to Help?

WIC can use books and other nutrition education activities to build parenting skills that will help children get ready for school while promoting good eating habits. Reading to young children helps brain development. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly recommends reading aloud daily to children starting at 6 months old. Studies show that low-income mothers are eight times more likely to read to their children if they are given books and encouragement. WIC can play a significant role in building reading readiness skills for the children on our program.

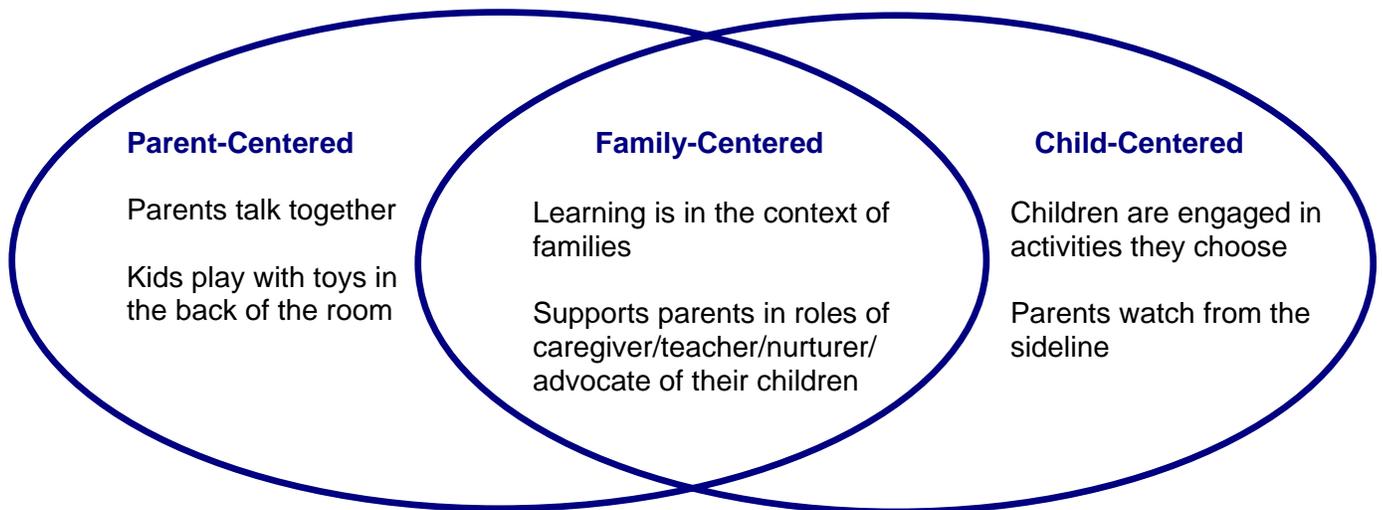
What Are Examples of Family-Centered Education Activities?

- Reading a nutrition picture book such as *Oliver's Vegetables*
- Doing hands-on container gardening
- Counting the fruits and vegetables that the children like to eat
- Playing or singing songs about nutrition such as *Dirt Made My Lunch*
- Drawing or doing art activities about food
- Preparing simple, nutritious recipes together
- Doing simple physical activities and games to music

What Are the Benefits of Family-Centered Education?

- Parent-child bonding
- Positive learning experience for parents and children
- Modeling of positive parenting skills
- Developing school readiness skills
- Children engaging in the educational experience

Benefits of Parents and Children Learning Together



Family-centered education offers opportunities for:

- Normalizing – parents see that others face similar challenges
- Modeling – parents and facilitators share ideas and strategies in "real" life

Catch the Fun!



WIC Families Get Ready for School