

California WIC Program



How To Start a Family-Centered-Education Program in Your Agency

A Practical Guide for Leaders

Developed for the California State WIC Program

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October 2003

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Table of Contents

The ABCs of FCE..... 4

Value of FCE.....13

FCE Curriculum.....18

Preparing FCE Educators26

FCE Resources 32

Next Steps.....37

I.



The ABCs of FCE (Family-Centered-Education)



What is FCE?

Family-Centered-Education refers to an exciting educational method that meets the following criteria (see the diagrams on the next two pages):

1. Parents and children learn together
2. The content focuses on both nutrition/health AND school readiness skills* (*see page 9 for definition)
3. Support is provided for parents as the child's first teacher
4. The environment is learner-centered and family friendly

Principle #1. Parents and children together...

- In the past, most of WIC's group education classes focused primarily on the parents. If children were in attendance, they were often considered a distraction from the adult learning taking place.
- In some other settings, such as preschools, classes focus on the educational needs of the child.
- In FCE classes, the learning is geared toward educating both the child and the parent—in the same class!

Principle #2. Both nutrition/health AND school readiness skills...

- WIC has discovered that it has the potential to provide support for children in two critical ways:
 1. Improve their health by educating parents about health and nutrition (as well as providing food coupons).
 2. Improve the child's readiness for school by educating parents about their role as the child's first teacher.
- WIC has further shown that it can accomplish both of these tasks—at the same time—in FCE group education sessions when both parents and children are present.



What is FCE? (Cont'd)

Principle #3. Support is provided for parents as the child's first teacher...

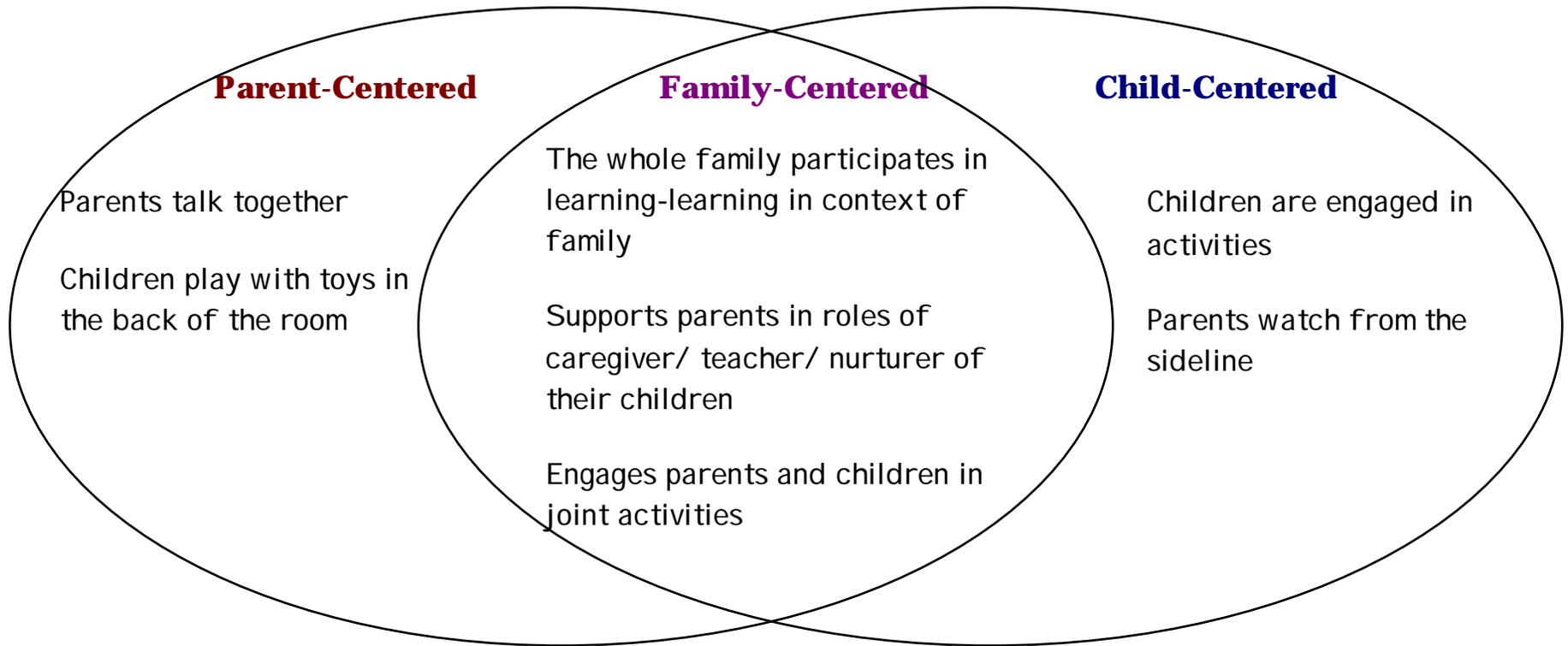
- Rather than “taking” the role as the child's first teacher, FCE classes *support parents* in their role as the child's “first teacher”.
- Activities within FCE sessions encourage parents and children to participate together, allowing the parents to practice the role of “teacher”.
- FCE educators also act as role models for parents showing how they can help children participate in school readiness activities, such as reading books.
- After class activities (included in FCE lessons) promote parents' continued efforts at home with improving their child's school readiness skills.

Principle #4. The environment is learner-centered and family friendly...

- Rather than focusing on the nutrition educator “delivering” information, the focus is on the learner (adult or child) “discovering their own learning”.
- Learners “discover” their learning by participating actively in learning experiences.
- Participating actively includes expressing their own ideas and sharing personal experiences.
- While encouraging participation, the educator carefully guards the learners' self-esteem and protects them from embarrassment.
- Without concern about embarrassment, learners find that learning is fun and children approach school with a positive attitude about their own potential for success!
- Physically, the room is inviting and safe for families

Family-Centered-Education

“Parents are the child’s first teacher!”

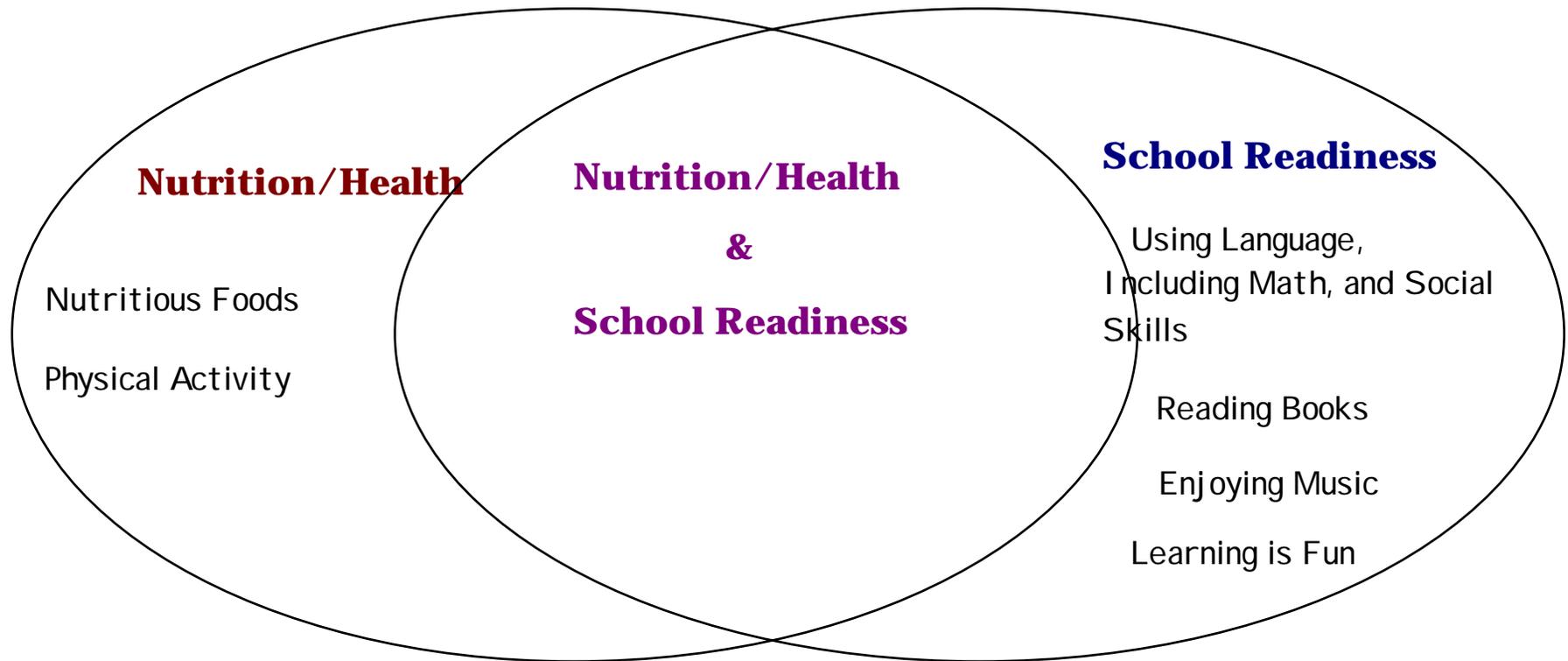


Family Centered Education Offers Opportunities for:

Normalizing- parents “see” that others face similar challenges
Modeling- parents and educators share ideas in real life

Family-Centered-Education

In a Learner-Centered Environment!



Fun, Positive, Safe!



What is School Readiness?

One of the goals of the WIC FCE initiative is to help parents prepare their children for success in school (sometimes called kindergarten readiness).

The "readiness" or "preparedness" not only includes specific reading skills but also involves the social and emotional skills that children need in order to succeed in school.

Enjoyment of books... There is widespread evidence that children who are read to at home will be better prepared for kindergarten – and the ongoing school experience. Book sharing can include identification of objects, as well as cognitive understanding of story lines.

Language acquisition... Children who fail to develop appropriate speech and language in the first years of life are up to six times more likely to experience reading problems in school; parents must speak frequently to children, listen attentively to them, respond to questions, and read aloud to them. Children should be encouraged to communicate both verbally and non-verbally through such means as art, music, dance and rhythm.

Self esteem... Self esteem in a child develops when parents (and caregivers) display confidence in their child's ability and look for their child's particular strengths.

Positive attitude toward learning... Children develop a positive attitude toward learning when they are encouraged to explore their world, provided with a stimulating environment, and their successes are celebrated and their "failures" met with support for trying "until" they eventually succeed.

Good Health... Physical well-being, healthy brain development and appropriate motor development are crucial to school readiness and require that children receive adequate nutrition both prenatal and after birth.



It's FCE When It...

How can you tell if the class is Family-Centered? Here's a checklist to find out. It's FCE when ...

- Adults Do Meaningful Activities...**such as sharing with other parents, observing how their child learns, way to use information at home, parent as first teacher message.
- Basic Nutrition messages are offered ...** information is at a level for young children; simple and fun, focused on exploring new foods and experiencing the fun of nutrition and healthy behaviors.
- Children are Engaged...**Activities are hands-on; learning environment is child friendly and welcoming.
- Design is Learner Centered...** Includes open questions, RI SE principles (Respect, Immediacy, Safety, and Engagement), voice by choice, variety of learning styles used, and amount of information is matched to amount of time. Families are talking, moving, touching, singing, thinking, & listening.
- Encourages Positive Role Modeling...**Offers ways for parents to interact positively with their children. The educator models good ways to handle "real life" parenting situations. Supports the parents in their roles as teachers and caregivers. Parents "see" that others face similar challenges.
- Family Participates Together...** The activities are for everyone and families take part in the action.
- Getting Ready for School is central...** Increases parents' confidence and skills as they promote the growth and development of their children. Gives children a chance to sharpen the skills they will use in kindergarten.



FCE: A Class Format or a Philosophy

The use of the term FCE can be described this way:

Group Education Session...

As indicated earlier, the most common use of the term, Family-Centered-Education, is in reference to a type of group education session or class in which both parents and children are active learners and parents are supported as their child's first teacher.

A Philosophy...

FCE can also be used in a broader context. A WIC agency can approach FCE more as a doctrine, foundation or "philosophy" and see the application of Family-Centered-Education principles in other places in a WIC center.

One place where FCE can have some application is within Individual Education when both parents and children are present.

Another is expanding into offering additional services such as WIC library where adults can check out books on nutrition, health, and school readiness for their own education as well as children's books that they can read to their children.

While the expanded services are addressed in the section titled, *Next Steps*, the primary focus of this Guide is on implementing FCE in group education sessions.



FCE is Learner-Centered

Some information about terms used in WIC related to education methods:

Learner-Centered-Education (LCE) Defined...

The California WIC Training Manual defines Learner-Centered-Education as “a focus on learning that allows for a range of approaches and involves the learner as an *active participant* in the learning process.” There is clear evidence that better learning takes place when learners are engaged in the learning process than when they listen passively to a lecture.

Learner-Centered-Education is an umbrella term for the type of learning where the focus is interactive education that meets the needs of the learner. The learners can consist of adults, children, organization leaders, or any other group of learners.

Family-Centered-Education (FCE)... Family-Centered-Education is a special form of LCE in which the parents and children participate together in learning.

Other Related Terms

- GLP (Global Learning Partners) is the company that presents the LLLT (Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach) training. This training helps educators better understand learner-centered education through dialogue based education. The training also includes a focus on how to design learner centered education sessions.
- FTW (Finding the Teacher Within) is California WIC's version of LLLT that helps nutrition educators understand how to use learner-centered education with WIC Families.
- FGD-Facilitated Group Discussion focuses on group facilitation skills that educators use when encouraging discussion. The emphasis is on the learners setting the agenda and topic and the group sharing their expertise. FGD usually works best in areas such as breastfeeding support.

II.



Value of FCE (Family-Centered-Education)



Need for FCE

When preparing your agency for implementing a Family-Centered-Education program, you want to be assured of its value both for WIC families and for WIC as an organization. Let's start with the value of FCE for WIC families.

Research Shows...

A study of 500 California WIC families found that...

- Less than 10% read to their children
- Majority had only 5 books in the home
- Most thought school was a place to learn, not the home
- Less than 10% of reading time compared to middle class homes
- Children heard fewer words in the home than in middle class families (thus language acquisition was hindered)

Summary...

Research indicates a strong need for the following:

- Support for children in school readiness skill development
- Involvement from parents as the child's first teacher



Need for FCE

Additional research conducted with 335 California WIC families in 2003 provided further insights into family practices that point to FCE needs.

Research Shows...

A study of 335 WIC families found that...

- Approximately half do not subscribe to any newspaper or magazine regularly
- 21% report that they never or seldom read to their children
- 31% never read to themselves
- 33% watch 6 or more hours of TV daily
- 73% of the children do not attend preschool

Summary...

The additional research supports the need for FCE among WIC families. Since the overwhelming majority of children in WIC families are not attending preschool, the parents' role in preparing their children to succeed in school is even more critical. Not only are the parents the child's "first" teacher, they are often the child's "only" teacher until the child attends kindergarten.

Parents who read infrequently to themselves may need additional help in being shown how to help their children enjoy books, learn readiness skills and be prepared for kindergarten.



Parent Attitude Toward FCE

As an FCE leader, you might also want to know about parents' attitudes toward FCE. Both research and experience have provided useful insights.

Research Shows...

The 2003 study of 335 WIC families found that...

- 59% indicated that they “expected” WIC to talk to them about helping their children prepare for kindergarten.
- 87% think WIC should show them how to read and enjoy books with their children.
- 90% think WIC should show them how to teach their children numbers, letters, etc.

Experience shows...

Parents who have participated in FCE classes say this about the experience:

- When asked if they would come again if another WIC family class was offered, 99% said, “Yes.”
- When asked what they liked about the class, one mother responded, “That I learned something new to teach my child.”
- Four of five parents rated the class as “VERY useful to me as a parent” and over 85% rated the class as “VERY useful to their child.”



Parent Responses to FCE Classes

As an FCE leader, you might also want to hear some parents' own comments about attending FCE classes.

Parents say...

"You can take your kids shopping with you so they can learn."

"Starting a garden with my child can be fun and not work. Reading and listening to music are ways of learning for my child, as well as for myself."

"I like doing activities with my children. It makes them feel important."

I learned...

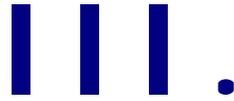
"...that WIC cares about the children's education."

"..how to encourage my kids to eat fruits and vegetables."

"...that we need 5 a day."

"...that fruits and vegetables help prevent cancer."

"...to spend more time with my child and read to him."



FCE Curriculum



Typical FCE Lesson Format

Each California WIC FCE lesson plan includes specific elements that help children get ready for school while learning about nutrition. The elements include:

Music... The music at the beginning of each session welcomes the families and sets the stage for a fun learning environment. Music has been shown to be a great way to help a child's brain develop.

Introductions & Warm-up... The warm-up activity gives the children and parents a chance to interact with each other and creates safety. This friendly conversation invites children to get involved just like they will do in school.

Book Sharing... Sharing a nutrition book in each class helps children explore the exciting world available through books. Plus reading aloud to children is considered one of the most important ways to help children become successful readers themselves. Sharing stories is something parents can do at home too.

Hands-on Family Activities... Each lesson offers a fun, nutrition-related activity for families to do together. In these activities children (and parents) will use their bodies, have fun with language and math, and try out their social skills in a group setting..all while learning about nutrition.

Take Home the Learning... Families will explore ideas for similar learning activities that they can do at home. As the primary teachers of their children, parents and caregivers will leave the WIC session with new things to try.

Lesson plans are posted on the WIC website at www.wicworks.ca.gov



Lesson Plans on the Web

You can easily access all approved FCE Lesson Plans on California WIC's website. As WIC educators submit additional lesson plans, they will be added to the site for your use. Below is a brief description of three additional lessons that you could choose for your own FCE program.

Five a Day

This lesson encourages families to eat five or more servings of fruit and vegetables daily for good health.

- The warm up activity includes a fun guessing game in which parents and children feel objects (common fruits and vegetables) in a mystery box and guess what they are.
- The book, *How are you Peeling? (Vegetal Como Eres?)* allows you to introduce fruits and vegetables in a fun way. Each food pictured shows an "emotion" which offers opportunities to practice using words to identify common feelings.
- After placing fruits/veggies in the "meal bowls" where they might eat it, families pick out "5" they could eat in a day. Five a Day!

Grow Your Own Garden

Based on the fact that kids tend to eat what they grow, this lesson provides practical tips for growing vegetables at home.

- This lesson features the book, *Growing Vegetable Soup*, by Lois Ehlert—a story about seeds that turn into soup.
- Families then plant seeds in "container gardens" such as soup cans, cottage cheese cups or half-gallon milk containers that they could use to grow veggies at home.



Lesson Plans on the Web (Cont'd)

(Remember to check the California WIC website regularly to find new FCE lessons. Also be sure to send any lessons you write to the state branch for posting.)

Eating the Rainbow at the Farmer's Market

This lesson encourages families to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables by selecting a range of choices from their rainbow of colors.

- The warm up activity includes a discussion of fruits and vegetables families might buy at a Farmer's Market.
- The book, *Market Day*, with its colorful folk art pictures gives a multi-cultural look at getting produce to market and families bringing produce home to cook and eat.
- The family activity builds on the rainbow theme by having parents and children group pictures of fruits and vegetables by color and placing them on the rainbow.
- When they are available, coupons to use at the Farmer's Market are distributed so that families tie their learning to their real-life experience!



Lesson Plans on the Web (Cont'd)

Snacks Count

This lesson encourages families to healthy snacks by practicing making snacks together using photographs.

- The warm up activity includes a guessing game where children and parents guess each other's favorite snacks and includes a discussion of what makes a good snack for parents and for children.
- The book, *I Want My Banana*, with its whimsical drawings and simple story, gives children the experience of how important one's favorite snack is. The monkey in the story interacts with other animals in his hunt for a banana.
- The family activity builds on the snack theme by having parents and children choose two pictures of foods from the food groups and place them on a tray as a snack.
- The Take Home the Learning reviews the handouts and has families state one snack they will try at home.



Choosing a Lesson

When starting your FCE program, carefully choose the first FCE lesson that your staff will teach.

Ease of Preparation

You will notice that all FCE lessons require time to prepare the materials that will be used during the lesson.

We suggest that you choose a lesson that requires minimal preparation time until teachers get used to the FCE format.

Materials

All FCE lessons include a book that is read to families, plus parent handouts and additional materials used during family activities.

- Be sure that your teachers have all the necessary materials before they begin.

Level of Complexity

All FCE lessons require a variety of teaching skills such as facilitating discussion and reading books aloud to WIC families.

Some FCE lessons are more complex than others and require additional skills such as using puppets. We suggest that you get your staff off to a good start with a lesson that is limited in complexity.



Getting Lesson Supplies

Before you start your first FCE class, make sure that you order all necessary supplies.

List of Supplies

Determine what you will need for the lesson and where you will order the supplies.

- A list of supplies is provided with each lesson plan.
- Check the resource list (included in Section V of this Guide) to find out how you contact the supplier.

Time for Purchase

It can take several weeks for some supplies to arrive. Plan ahead so that the lesson materials are available before the start of the first scheduled class.

- Find out how much time to allow for the order to go through your own purchasing system (if you don't order them yourself).
- Find out how much time it takes the supplier to get the supplies to you once the order is received.



Writing Your Own FCE Lessons

After you become experienced with teaching FCE Lessons, you may want to create your own. Keep in mind that not all nutrition topics are suitable for family-style lessons. Choose topics that are a good fit to the Family-Centered-Education format.

Fulfill FCE Criteria

Specific criteria have been established so that FCE lessons have all the elements required.

- Review your lesson plan to ensure that they fulfill the criteria including being learner centered.

Less is More

Many educators have found that they have a tendency to put too much into a lesson.

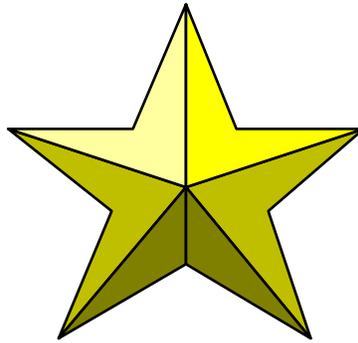
- Be realistic about the time needed for an activity.
- Have some of your teachers review the lesson and ask whether they think they could complete the lesson in the time frame given. Ask them for their honest feedback!
- Pilot a lesson with one group and make changes based on what you learn.

Share Your Lessons

One way that we all grow is to share our knowledge with each other. We want you to share your FCE ideas too.

- Please submit your FCE lesson plans to the California WIC branch and after review, they will be added to the website for others to use! Contact Heather Reed at hreed@dhs.ca.gov

IV.



Preparing FCE Educators



Prepare Yourself

Whether you have volunteered or been selected to lead your agency's FCE Program, there are several actions you can take to become familiar with FCE, in general, and specifically, with your role as leader. (Reading this guide is one of them!) Here's a checklist of additional ways to get prepared.

- Observe a FCE session in action**
- Talk to the CA WIC Program**
(Heather Reed- hreed@dhs.ca.gov (916) 928-8523)
- Talk to a WIC FCE Mentor** (Ask the California WIC Branch for an updated list of experienced FCE educators at WIC local agencies)
- Review FCE lessons**
- Talk to FCE educators at another agency about their experiences**



Prepare Your Staff (Part 1)

Now that you've prepared yourself to lead your agency's FCE program, it's time to prepare your staff and build their enthusiasm for Family-Centered-Education.

Prepare an (FCE) Introduction

Plan what you will say to introduce FCE to your staff.

- Be sure to include What is it, Why we're interested, and How your agency will implement FCE classes.
- Decide how you will generate enthusiasm for FCE.
- What can you demonstrate that will give them a real-life example of what they will be doing?
- Explain how they will benefit too!

Provide Skill Training

Before your staff presents FCE lessons, it is critical that they participate in skill training.

- See if you can schedule training provided by California WIC Program
- If you will provide training for your staff, these are some topics to include in the training:
 - ✓ *What is FCE and Why is it Valuable?*
 - ✓ *Reading Aloud to Families*
 - ✓ *Using Music with WIC Families*
 - ✓ *Facilitating Discussions*
 - ✓ *Handling Challenges with Children in a Group*
 - ✓ *Handling Challenges with Parents in a Group*
 - ✓ *Handling Challenges with Parents and Children Together*
 - ✓ *Pair and Share*
 - ✓ *Using Puppets*



Prepare Your Staff (Part 2)

If you plan to train your own teachers, talk to the California WIC program to use some of the training materials used for teaching FCE classes in the six agencies who participated in California's FCE 2003 Project.

- ✓ **Be sure to include Teachbacks (practice and feedback)**

Teachbacks

- We suggest you set aside adequate time for teachbacks or practices using a specific FCE lesson.
- Set up small groups so that some people take the role of children in the class and some take the role of the child's parent or caregiver.

Teachback Ideas:

- Practice their FCE class introduction.
- Practice reading the children's book aloud using the skills in the teacher training materials.
- Practice asking children questions that engage and involve them while reading the children's book.
- Practice developing and asking *parents* questions that keep them involved while reading the book.
- Practice leading discussions using an open-ended question from the FCE lesson.
- Role play handling various FCE class challenges.



Prepare Your Staff (Part 3)

Even after participating in training, your staff will need continued reinforcement and encouragement to build their skills and confidence. These are some techniques that have worked for FCE educators in other agencies.

Reinforce, Reinforce, Reinforce

Michelle Fox from Monterey County WIC Program offers these suggestions:

- ✓ We start every staff meeting with a Music Activity. It increases everyone's energy level, and prepares teachers for FCE and FIT WIC. Over time, our staff members get more comfortable with moving to music and even leading songs and fingerplays.
- ✓ Another idea is to give a teaching tip during each staff meeting. It not only gives teachers new ideas but keeps reminding staff members how important good teaching is.
- ✓ Something I'm going to start doing is "celebrate success" during staff meetings. I'm going to read a positive comment from a parent feedback form and applaud the teacher who gave the class.

Gauri Rao, from PHFEWIC suggests these ideas:

- ✓ At each monthly staff meeting describe an FCE "challenge" and have everyone discuss the best ways to handle it.
- ✓ Sometimes we include a brief role play too.



Prepare the Parents

When you are ready to start your first FCE lesson, think about how you will prepare the parents who will participate in the new type of class.

Bring their Children

Agencies differ on how they prepare parents for FCE classes.

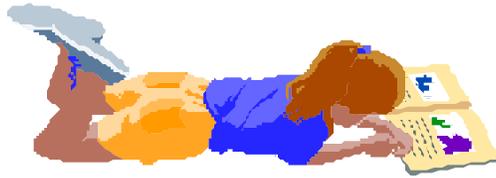
- ✓ Some agencies tell parents ahead of time to bring their children.
- ✓ Some agencies present FCE classes whenever there are enough children in the lobby.
- ✓ Some agencies schedule all GA classes as FCE classes and remind parents that the class is for both parents and children.

Educator's Introduction

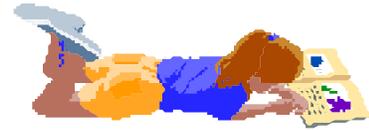
What the nutrition educator says at the beginning of an FCE class helps parents know what to expect.

- Example, *"This is a class for both parents and children together. It's a fun way to learn about foods that are good for you and a fun way to help children be ready for kindergarten."*
- Have your teachers "practice" their own personal introduction for their upcoming FCE class.
- Encourage teachers to share their enthusiasm too!

V.



FCE Resources

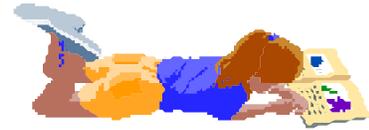


Where to Buy FCE Materials

The following are names and contact information for some companies where you can find FCE resource materials. On this page are some resources for books. There are many others. Please review "Recommended Children's Nutrition Books for California WIC for a more comprehensive listing of WIC recommended nutrition books with short descriptions of each.

Books

Amazon Books www.amazon.com	Source for most books
Scholastic Books www.scholasticbooks.com	Big books & Spanish translations. NWA has a partnership with Scholastic Books to buy some books at discount
Harcourt Trade Publishers www.harcourtbooks.com	Publishes children's books in English and Spanish
Neat Solutions 1-888-577-6328	Catalog carries numerous children's books and tapes all with a food or nutrition theme (English and Spanish), puzzles, felt boards, stickers, stuffed fruit and veggies, etc.
Just for Kids www.just-for-kids.com 847-803-8783	Variety of nutrition books and materials including books categorized by culture
Libritos en español e ingles para hacer y leer	Spanish-English Little Books to Make and Read



Where to Buy FCE Materials (Cont'd)

On this page are some resources for Music.

Music

Greg and Steve's Productions www.gregandsteve.com 1-800-548-4063	Fun, interactive music for kids ages 3-9. Their motto is "educate, motivate, enrich and entertain"
Banana Slug String Band www.bananaslugstringband.com	Environmentally focused music in English and Spanish
Dole Nutrition Program www.dole5aday.com 510-639-5566	Five a Day music and stickers, materials, lesson plans
Neat Solutions 1-888-577-6328	Catalog carries numerous children's books and tapes all with a food or nutrition theme (English and Spanish)
Jose Luis Orozco www.joseluisorozco.com	Spanish language children's music which passes on traditions and Latin American culture
National Education Network 1-800-537-6647	Spanish and English children's music
Kids Web Music www.kidsmusicweb.com	Good place to locate a variety of sources for children's music

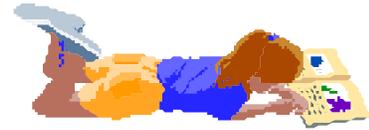


Where to Buy FCE Materials (Cont'd)

On this page are some resources for a variety of other educational materials.

Other

<p>The Produce for Better Health www.5aday.com 1-888-391-2100</p>	<p>Features a catalog of 5-a-day materials from many states including books, educational materials, puppets, music, etc.</p>
<p>Yummy Designs www.yummydesigns.com 888-749-8669</p>	<p>Nutrition books, games and other nutrition education materials</p>
<p>Discount School Supply www.discountchoolsupply.com 800-627-2829</p>	<p>Catalog includes a variety of supplies including fruit and veggie puzzles, play plastic fruit and veggies, children chairs, etc.</p>
<p>Lakeshore Learning Materials www.lakeshorelearning.com 1-800-428-4414</p>	<p>Catalog includes children's chairs, tables, activity kits to accompany children's books</p>
<p>Nasco Family & Consumer Sciences www.eNasco.com 800-58-9595</p>	<p>Catalog includes fruit and vegetable items such as 3-D puzzles, stickers, stamp sets, bean bags, etc.</p>
<p>SmileMakers 1-800-825-8085</p>	<p>Inexpensive health oriented stickers</p>
<p>ChildCraft www.childcraft.com 800-631-5652</p>	<p>Children furniture, storage units, supplies, books, music</p>



Where to Buy FCE Materials (Cont'd)

On this page are some sources for additional supplies.

Library Supplies

Highsmith Inc. www.highsmith.com 1-800-558-2110	Variety of library supplies for a lending library
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Puppets

U.S. Toy www.ustoy.com 1-800-255-6124	Animal finger puppets
Oriental Trading Company 1-800-526-7400	Plush Hand Puppet (Mouse Puppet)

Imprinted Items

Produce for Better Health 1-888-391-2100	5 a Day Color Me Lunch Bags
Dresmann Promotional Products 1-800-378-4237 www.DPPCanDoThat.com	5 a Day Beach Balls (Imprinted)
Acme Advertising Specialties 661-664-9412	5 a Day Food Containers (Imprinted)

VI.



Next Steps



Next Steps

Once you have implemented a successful FCE program in your agency, you may find you want to take additional steps in adding FCE services and/or expanding FCE into the community. These are examples of actions other WIC agencies have taken.

Start a Lending Library

- Encourage parents to read by having books available for lending from a WIC clinic library.
- Books on nutrition, breastfeeding, parenting and for reading to children are good choices.
- Keep books in locked (so that children can't pull onto the floor), glass-front cabinets for easy access.
- Prepare to call parents on book due dates.
- Work with a community organizations or book clubs to provide books for the library through book drives.

Collaborate with a Community Library

Several CA WIC agencies have developed successful collaborations with their community libraries.

- In San Mateo, library volunteers came to WIC to read children's books in the lobby.
- In Riverside, the local library joined efforts with WIC to build a summer reading program where parents received incentives for completing reading logs with books borrowed from the library.
- In Monterey County, the local library helped develop a reading program with the parents borrowing books from the WIC clinic library.



Next Steps (Part 2)

Think about other organizations with whom you share common interests. How can your help each other succeed?

Collaborate with Head Start

You have expertise to offer local preschools and they have expertise to offer you. Through sharing your knowledge and skills with each other, both programs will benefit.

- Have Head Start personnel provide tips for your staff on handling preschoolers in groups.
- Share your FCE lessons with Head Start and describe your successes with parents and children together in a classroom.

Collaborate with Other Community Organizations

Sonoma County WIC joined forces with CAPSC (Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County) to find solutions to a local health problem: an increase in the rate of anemia in children under five.

- Upon discovering that children moving from iron-fortified formula or breast milk often drink excessive amounts of cow's milk from a bottle (with little appetite left for foods with iron), the collaboration took action.
- A family-centered-education session was designed called *Bye Bye Bottle, Every Bite Counts*.
- The class gives parents knowledge about how to prevent iron-deficiency anemia (less cow's milk and more iron-rich foods).
- And gave families a fun way to encourage children to move from the bottle to a cup (sing the *Bye Bye Bottle* song while gently encouraging exchange of their bottle for a *Hello Cup*).

Next Steps



Final Word

You will find other creative ways to start and grow the Family-Centered-Education program in your agency.

Please share your successes and lessons learned with the California WIC branch so that we can help others learn from your experience.

Together, we will provide the best education we can for our WIC families and the best start in life for their children.

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(adapted from materials developed by Peggy da Silva of James Bowman Associates)