



Updating Agencies, Professionals, and Individuals with Current Life Skills Information

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Californians Report Eating More Fruits and Vegetables in Meals At Home

According to the California Dietary Practices Survey, 1989-97, Californians report eating more fruits and vegetables when they eat at home. An average of 60% of Californians report not eating more fruits and vegetables because they are "hard to get at work" (compared to 44% in 1995), and 57% stated that fruits and vegetables were "hard to buy in restaurants" (compared to 34% in 1995).

At the same time 41% of Californian's reported eating at least one meal out at a restaurant, cafeteria or fast food establishment "yesterday".

Life Skill Educators can give families the practical information they need to eat right and exercise every day. One specific message that educators could pass on is the "California 5 a Day-for Better Health!" Campaign. Families need to strategize how to get five servings of fruits and vegetables each day, especially if they are working or not eating many meals at home.

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Working Parents— A Guarantee of Escaping Poverty for Children?

Increasing employment and earnings of needy families and decreasing child poverty are two goals of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Welfare Reform). Robert Wertheimer, in a research brief from Child Trends, looked at whether or not children living in families whose parents are working are indeed escaping poverty. In 1996, over 2.7 million children, (19% of all poor children) lived in families with incomes below the poverty guidelines even though the head of household worked full-time, full-year.

The study found that children are much less likely to be poor if they are living in a working family. Among children living in married-couple families who met the work standard (1,820 hours per year), only 5% were poor. This compares to 54% of children in families not meeting the work standard. Among children living in single-mother families who met the work standard (1040 hours per year), 24% were poor. This compares to 76% of children in families not meeting the work standard. He also found that children whose parents meet the work standard have higher odds of leaving poverty and lower odds of

—continued on back

Parental Involvement in Children's Education

The most frequently repeated grades in school are kindergarten, first, and second grades. Children aged 5 to 7 often are retained once or sometimes twice due to factors affecting their ability to learn or achieve at the same level and rate as their peers. Factors that contribute to difficulty in learning include limited parental involvement in early development, few education readiness experiences, and poverty.

Evidence shows that retention harms students' achievement, attendance, personal adjustment in school, and attitudes toward school. In studies comparing retained low achievers with promoted low achievers, those promoted to the next grade exhibited higher levels of achieve-

ment one and two years later. Other evidence shows that if a child is retained once, he is 20% to 30% more likely to drop out of school; if retained twice, he is almost 100% likely to drop out. Males and Minorities are disproportionately retained and disproportionately drop out.

Thirty years of research has shown that parental involvement in children's education increases student achievement, enhances self-esteem, improves behavior, and increases attendance rates.

Parents and teachers, however, speak different languages when they discuss school and students. Parents are concerned with micro-issues – their individual child's successes. Teachers tend to speak more globally and address the system or the community.

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University of California and U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

Adult Learning and Workshop Design

The primary difference between adult and children's learning is the fact that adults have experienced more life situations that they can use in learning new behaviors. You can facilitate adults' learning, change, and growth by structuring each workshop session to include experiencing, processing, generalizing, and applying.

Whether you begin a session with experiencing or generalizing, it is important to proceed clockwise and complete the cycle for maximum impact on participant

learning. Each component of the Learning Cycle focuses on specific adult learning needs and suggests particular workshop activities to meet these needs.

EXPERIENCING: Using the experiences participants bring to the workshop or providing them with an experience there. This step involves the learners fully and openly in sharing experiences or participating in something new. In order for participants to connect their own interests and needs to the workshop goals, you

should choose activities which relate directly to the session topic. Appropriate exercises include warm-ups, guided fantasies, and self-assessment questionnaires.

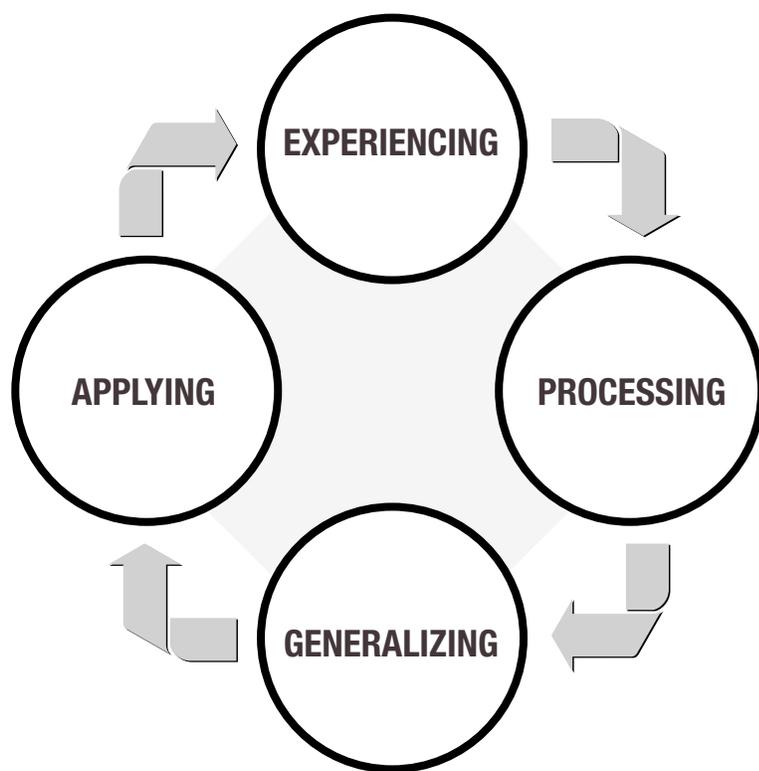
PROCESSING: Reflecting upon, discussing, and interpreting the experiences of participants. This step involves the learners in sharing feelings, reactions, and thought regarding their experiences. Workshop activities, which provide participants the means to reflect upon and learn from their experiences, include large or small group discussions, brainstorming, and problem solving.

GENERALIZING: Presenting new information, which builds on general trends or truths, found in the experiences people have. During this stage, participants draw conclusions from their experiences and reactions, develop new concepts, and learn new skills. Effective methods for presenting new, research-based information include mini-lectures, audio-visuals, handouts, and demonstrations.

APPLYING: Planning and practicing new behaviors (doing it). Workshop activities which provide participants an opportunity to apply new knowledge or skills include role-plays, case examples, written exercises, and homework. These methods are more helpful when you demonstrate a new skill, coach participants on how to apply the new knowledge, and give them feedback on their performance. Learners will have made a complete cycle in learning when they know how and when to use these new concepts and have an opportunity to actually practice them. **LS**

Source: Dorothea Cudaback, Ph.D., Family Life Specialist, UC Berkeley.

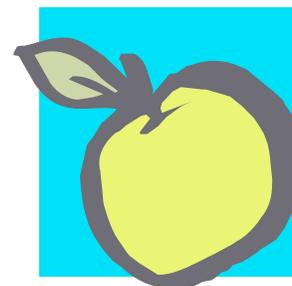
ADULT LEARNING CYCLE



Fruits and Vegetables

Some easy ideas include:

- ◆ taking fruit or cut up vegetables to snack on at work
 - ◆ substituting juice for soda
 - ◆ requesting vending machine operators to stock fresh fruits and vegetables
 - ◆ packing vegetable soup to reheat in the office microwave
- These easy choices will make a large difference in the overall health of busy, working families.



Parental Involvement

Many parents don't realize how important their role is in their child's education. They don't understand that they are their child's first and most important teacher. Some are not aware that they can easily become involved in their children's school experience.

What can parents do to become more involved in their children's education?

Following is a list of ideas presented in the "Forum for Family and Consumer Issues." Parents can:

- ◆ Assist in the classroom
- ◆ Volunteer to do phone tree calling
- ◆ Monitor attendance
- ◆ Monitor absentees
- ◆ Read to classes

- ◆ Make costumes for drama or musical presentations
- ◆ Share experiences from a career
- ◆ Help students learn computer skills and about the Internet
- ◆ Tutor and mentor students

What can school do to encourage parent participation?

Schools can assure that:

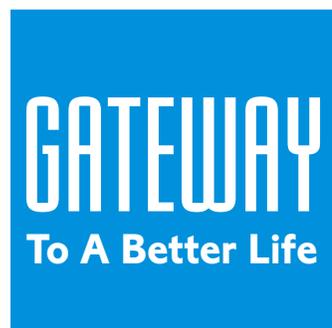
- ◆ Every parent or guardian feels welcome and that s/he feels that s/he belongs
- ◆ Each parent, regardless of socio-economic status, is valued and appreciated
- ◆ They seek and welcome inquiries
- ◆ Questions or concerns are replied to promptly and respectfully
- ◆ They write letters of thanks to employ-

ers of parents for allowing parents time away from their jobs to attend to school matters

- ◆ They make every effort to provide sibling care during conferences or events
- ◆ They plan activities at various times of the day
- ◆ Provide a Parenting Resource Center where parents can meet and receive uniform volunteer training on how to effectively and safely help within the school.

A climate within the school community of openness, welcoming participation, setting parents at ease, and encouragement to participate in the greater educational picture can set the tone. **LS**

Source: Karen DeBord, *Child Development Specialist*, North Carolina State University



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Working Parents

entering poverty. When parents work about half of the families are removed from poverty. However, in 1996, 5 million children lived in poor families that met the work standard.

Wertheimer found substantial differences between more prosperous working families and working poor families. These differences included:

- ◆ A high school diploma for at least one parent
- ◆ Children who were more likely to participate in paid child care
- ◆ The family being two times more likely

to live in owner-occupied housing

- ◆ Higher car ownership rates
- ◆ Higher health insurance coverage

The findings also looked at the differences between working poor families and poor families who did not meet the work standard. These differences included children who were more likely to:

- ◆ Live with both parents
- ◆ Have at least one parent who had completed 12 years of education
- ◆ Live in owner-occupied housing
- ◆ Live in a family that owns a car
- ◆ Attend preschool child care paid for by

parents

On the other hand, these children were LESS likely to be covered by health insurance.

This study suggests that welfare reform planners should make every effort to insure that families who are increasing their work effort can overcome key obstacles to escaping poverty, including completing high school, finding suitable child care, and providing health care insurance. **LS**

Source: Richard Wertheimer. "Working Poor Families with Children." *Child Trends* Washington D.C., 1999. <http://www.childtrends.org>

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For information about how you can get the Earned Income Credit and free help filing your taxes, call the IRS at 1-800-829-1040.

Avoid refund delays! Be sure to provide the correct name and Social Security number for each person listed on your tax return.

Claim Your Earned Income Credit

Get more from your regular paycheck! The Earned Income Credit (EIC) is a special tax benefit for people who work full- or part-time. If you qualify, you'll owe less in taxes, and you may get cash back. Even if you don't owe income tax you can get the credit. But, you must file a federal tax return.

Who can get the Earned Income Credit?

- Single or married workers who were raising children in their homes and who earned less than \$30,580 in 1999 can receive an EIC up to \$3,816 (or less than \$26,928 if they were raising only one child). File form 1040 or 1040A, and attach Schedule EIC.
- Single or married workers at least age 25 and under age 65, who were not raising children in their homes, and who earned less than \$10,200 in 1999. File any tax form.

The EIC Advance Payment option allows some workers who are raising children to get part of their EIC in their paychecks throughout the year and part in a check from the IRS after they file their tax return. Your EIC can help pay household bills and the cost of getting to work. A worker can get up to \$50 extra in each bi-weekly paycheck.

To get EIC Advance Payments, eligible workers give a Form W-5 to their employer. You can get the W-5 from your employer, or by calling the IRS at 1-800-TAX-FORM. Workers whose income or family circumstances change can become ineligible. They should stop taking EIC Advance Payments by providing their employer a new W-5 form marked "no".



¡Aumente Su Sueldo!



Para recibir información sobre cómo recibir el Crédito por Ingreso de Trabajo y ayuda gratuita para declarar sus impuestos, llame al IRS al 1-800-829-1040.

¡Evite la demora de su devolución! Esté seguro de dar correctamente el nombre y número de Seguro Social de cada persona que se encuentra registrado en su formulario de impuestos.



Exija su Crédito por Ingreso de Trabajo

¡Obtenga más de su salario regular! El Crédito por Ingreso de Trabajo es un beneficio fiscal especial para gente que trabaja a tiempo completo o a tiempo parcial. Si usted califica, reducirán sus impuestos, y podría recibir dinero de vuelta. Incluso si usted no debe impuestos, puede obtener el Crédito EIC. Pero tiene que presentar una declaración de impuestos.

¿Quién puede recibir el Crédito por Ingreso de Trabajo?

- Trabajadores solteros o casados que criaron a niños en su hogar, y que ganaron menos de \$30,580 en 1999 (o menos de \$26,928 si criaron a sólo un niño). Presente el Formulario 1040 o el 1040A e incluya el formulario llamado "Schedule EIC".
- Trabajadores solteros o casados que tenían entre 25 y 64 años de edad, que no criaron a niños en su hogar, y que ganaron menos de \$10,200 en 1999. Presente cualquier formulario de impuestos.

El Crédito Adelantado por Ingreso de Trabajo

permite a aquellos trabajadores que son responsables por la crianza de sus hijos que obtengan parte de su EIC en cada quincena que perciba a través del año. La otra parte la recibirá en un cheque del IRS después que haya llenado y presentado el formulario anual de devolución de impuestos. Este crédito puede ayudarles a pagar sus gastos domésticos y los gastos de transporte a su trabajo. Un trabajador que califique puede recibir hasta 50 dolares (\$50) de más en cada quincena.

Para recibir el Crédito Adelantado por Ingreso de Trabajo,

los trabajadores que califiquen deben presentar el Formulario W-5. Usted puede pedirle ese formulario a su patrono o lo puede conseguir llamando a la oficina del IRS al teléfono 1-800-829-3676. Si en cualquier momento durante el año sus circunstancias familiares cambian usted puede ser considerado no elegible. Por lo tanto cuando esto ocurra es muy importante que llene un nuevo Formulario W-5 marcado "no" y debe entregárselo a su patrono para que se le dejen de pagar los pagos por adelantado.

