

Description and Benefits

FOODcents ® is an education program that helps families to achieve a healthy diet and to save money on their grocery shop. The program is based on a simple concept. To have a healthy diet, people should spend most of their food money on the 'eat most' foods and spend least on the 'eat least' foods. The 'eat most' foods are often the cheapest, so using this spending model means more nutritious foods will be purchased and money will be saved (Government of Western Australia Department of Health, 2012).

Originally developed in 1992, the Department of Health in Western Australia continues to fund the Cancer Council WA and Diabetes WA to coordinate the FOODcents program in Western Australia only.

There are three main FOODcents® concepts (Government of Western Australia Department of Health North Metropolitan Area Health Service, undated):

- Food purchasing using the Healthy Eating Pyramid
- KILOCents Counter - comparing foods on a cost per kilogram basis
- Comparing labels - cost per kilogram with sugar or fat content

The model was developed on Green's 'preceed-proceed' model which strives to empower individuals to improve their quality of life through behavior change (Foley and Pollard, 1998, Foley, 1998). The program's proportional spending model has found it possible to achieve a healthy diet on a limited budget whilst distributing food money across the food categories (Foley et al., 1997).

The FOODcents program has been run with families, adults, young people, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and people on low incomes. However, the FOODcents model can be applied across all income groups (Foley et al., 1997).

The program is flexible in its delivery - 2 hour sessions can be conducted over four weeks, a whole day or as is appropriate for the group participants and can be tailored to suit differing needs covering topics such as:

- Basic nutrition principles
- Meal planning and budgeting
- Label reading
- Lunch box and snack ideas
- Recipe modification and healthier meals
- Food shopping
- Food safety
- Basic cooking skills and preparation of simple, low cost dishes.

Evaluation results (n=150 trained advisors and 373 participants) have shown positive changes in cooking and shopping behaviors and self-reported dietary intake, particularly reduced fat and sugar consumption and positive trends in fruit, vegetable, breads and cereal consumption (Foley and Pollard, 1998).

Evaluation of the supermarket component of the FOODcents program (n=864) reported that 91% of participants intended to change the way they spent their money on food and 82% would make changes to their diet as a result of the training. However, evaluators also recommended subsequent follow up with participants to assess actual changes in behavior (Health Department of Western Australia, unpublished).

It is recommended therefore that long term follow up is built into the evaluation design for this intervention.

Size and distribution of the problem

General data about healthy eating (including available data for Gippsland) can be found at <http://docs.health.vic.gov.au/docs/doc/Healthy-eating--Size-and-distribution-of-the-problem>

Leadership

Community Health Services
Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
Non Government Organisations such as Faith based, Migrant Resource Centres etc

Suggested Partners, their roles and responsibilities

Dietitians and graduate nutritionists to conduct supermarket tours and to train Advisors
Community volunteers trained as FOODcents Advisors who conduct the sessions.

Resources for Implementation

Online Advisor Training

The FOODcents Online Advisor training consists of seven interactive modules.

The modules are designed for those without a nutrition qualification. They cover essential background information on nutrition and the FOODcents program. Each module should take about 10 minutes to complete. Modules require basic computer skills and must be completed in sequential order.

- Module 1: The FOODcents Advisor
- Module 2: The Diet-Disease Relationship
- Module 3: The FOODcents Food Pyramid
- Module 4: The 10-Plan Spending Model
- Module 5: Comparing Price per Kilo
- Module 6: Cooking safe and Healthy Food
- Module 7: The Supermarket Tour

To register go to <http://training.foodcentsprogram.com.au/users/signup>

Face to Face Training

Cancer Council WA conducts community FOODcents education workshops and advisor training in WA only. The Seventh Day Adventist Church may provide training subject to negotiation.

FOODcents resources

A comprehensive list of resources is available in the manual provided to those who complete the training (Government of Western Australia Department of Health et al., undated). These include resources to support session planning, implementation and evaluation.

Some resources are also available online at <http://www.foodcentsprogram.com.au/>

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander FOODcents program

FOODcents for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in WA Program
http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/ATSI_FC_Manual.pdf

Self Directed Learning User Guide for the FOODcents for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in WA Program (Department of Health Western Australia North Metropolitan Area Health Service, 2005)
http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/Learning-Guide.pdf
http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/AFC-Home.htm

FOODcents in a school community

About FOODcents
http://www.crunchandsip.com.au/media/8047/about_foodcents.pdf

Evaluation Method and Tools

An outline of the evaluation plan, methodology (paired pre and post session) and measures for FOODcents is available at

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/120143905/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0> (Foley and Pollard, 1998) (Foley, 1998)

Process evaluation

- Number of FOODcents sessions conducted including adviser training
- Attendance details
- Questionnaires for completion by participants and Advisors on demographic information (Foley and Pollard, 1998) including Health Care Card Status, perceived usefulness of session and project materials and stated intentions to change behaviour are completed by participants.
- Questionnaires on intention and confidence to conduct FOODcents sessions are completed by the Advisors.
- Logs are kept on media and public relations activities and the number of resources distributed.

Resources for process evaluation are located in the Advisor's manual (Government of Western Australia Department of Health North Metropolitan Area Health Service, undated)

Impact evaluation

Food Frequency Quiz Diet Check (Foley and Pollard, 1998)

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/120143905/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

Participants and Advisors are asked to complete this self report quiz at the beginning of the budget session. This formed the baseline information. Six weeks after the budget session, a follow up Diet Check is sent to participants and Advisors to complete (Foley and Pollard, 1998).

Motivational question

Participants are asked to select and write down one or two aspects of their diet that they felt capable of improving, to enhance their intention for behaviour change (Foley and Pollard, 1998)

Questionnaire

Six weeks post budget session this questionnaire is distributed to capture participant's spending changes and additional dietary information. In addition to this information, Advisors are asked to report on value of training, usefulness of resources and confidence in conducting sessions (Foley and Pollard, 1998).

Food Shopping Dockets

Used to demonstrate how usual spending practices compared with the 10 Plan proportional spending. This evaluation strategy could be used as a pre post comparison.

FOODcents Supermarket Tour Evaluation Questionnaire

A questionnaire of open ended and partially open questions which is completed by participants at the end of the supermarket tour (Health Department of Western Australia, unpublished).

Other

Focus groups for Advisors who had not conducted a FOODcents program after training are undertaken to ascertain why they did not do so.

A Four years post program evaluation can be undertaken using the Diet Check and an outcome questionnaire – collecting information on spending, dietary change and program activity. This may be undertaken by phone or mail.

Resources for impact evaluation are located in the Advisor's manual (Government of Western Australia Department of Health North Metropolitan Area Health Service, undated).

Analysis

Comparisons between the baseline and follow up Diet Checks measured dietary change over time. Responses to the Diet Check were entered and analysed using the Statistical Analysis System. Changes in dietary behaviour were assessed using a Chi-square test on pre and post session Diet Checks (Foley and Pollard, 1998).

References

Department of Health Western Australia North Metropolitan Area Health Service (2005) Self Directed Learning User Guide for the FOODcents for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People in WA Program. Department of Health Western Australia North Metropolitan Area Health Service.

http://www.healthyfuture.health.wa.gov.au/Health_topics/ASTI-FOOD/Learning-Guide.pdf

Foley, R. M. (1998) The Food Cent\$ project: a practical application of behaviour change theory. *Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 55, 33 - 35.

Foley, R. M. & Pollard, C. M. (1998) Food Cent\$ - Implementing and evaluating a nutrition education project focusing on value for money *Aust N Z J Public Health*, 22, 494-501 <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/120143905/PDFSTART?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0>

Foley, R. M., Pollard, C. M. & McGuinness, D. J. (1997) Food Cent\$ - achieving a balance diet on a limited food budget. *Australian Journal of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 54, 167 - 172.

Government of Western Australia Department of Health (2012) FOODcents Program. Accessed on 4 October 2012. <http://www.foodcentsprogram.com.au/>

Government of Western Australia Department of Health, Cancer Council Western Australia & Diabetes Western Australia (undated) FOODcents Adviser's Manual. Promoting a Positive Approach to Spending Money on Food. Government of Western Australia Department of Health, Cancer Council Western Australia, Diabetes Western Australia.

Government of Western Australia Department of Health North Metropolitan Area Health Service (undated) About FOODcents. *Government of Western Australia Department of Health North Metropolitan Area Health Service*,. Accessed on 4 October 2012. http://www.crunchandsip.com.au/media/8047/about_foodcents.pdf

Health Department of Western Australia (unpublished) 2000 Food Cent\$ Campaign Evaluation of the Food Cent\$ Supermarket Tours. Health Department of Western Australia.