

Family and Community Partnerships



Distributing *Team Up for Families* Newsletters

Organizing a Community Health Fair

Distributing *Team Up for Families* Newsletters

Why Family Newsletters?-The nature of parent and child interactions may be connected to a child's eating behavior.¹ Furthermore, nutrition programs that include family involvement can improve children's health, dietary patterns, and levels of physical activity.²

Introduction

Team Up for Families is a newsletter series designed to provide resources to parents of children participating in the Shaping Healthy Choices Program. It is composed of eight newsletters to support parents in promoting healthy eating habits and environments for their school-aged children. Newsletters include content related to nutrition recommendations for school-aged children, parenting skills to promote quality interactions with children, and relevant developmental milestones for this age group.

- Family Newsletter 1: Winning Mealtime Battles
- Family Newsletter 2: Movin' On Up
- Family Newsletter 3: What's in Your Drink
- Family Newsletter 4: The Real Happy Meal
- Family Newsletter 5: A Garden Party
- Family Newsletter 6: So You Think You Can Shop?
- Family Newsletter 7: What's Growin' On
- Family Newsletter 8: Snackdown

Download the newsletters

Team Up for Families newsletters are available in both English and Spanish. A free download can be found through the UC Davis Center for Nutrition in Schools (<http://cns.ucdavis.edu>).

Program Connections

Connections to *Discovering Healthy Choices* curriculum

The theme of each newsletter is related to content that children are learning in each of the eight modules of *Discovering Healthy Choices*. Additionally, each newsletter contains a "school connections" section, which includes information to parents about what their child is learning as part of the *Discovering Healthy Choices* activities.

With the completion of each module in *Discovering Healthy Choices*, the matching *Team Up for Families* newsletter should be sent home. If time permits, review the activity for the newsletter at the end of the lesson so the students have an opportunity to ask questions. See the recommended schedule of implementation for when to send home newsletters in order to further extend opportunities for parents to reinforce the concepts being learned.

☑ **Linking to *Cooking Up Healthy Choices* curriculum**

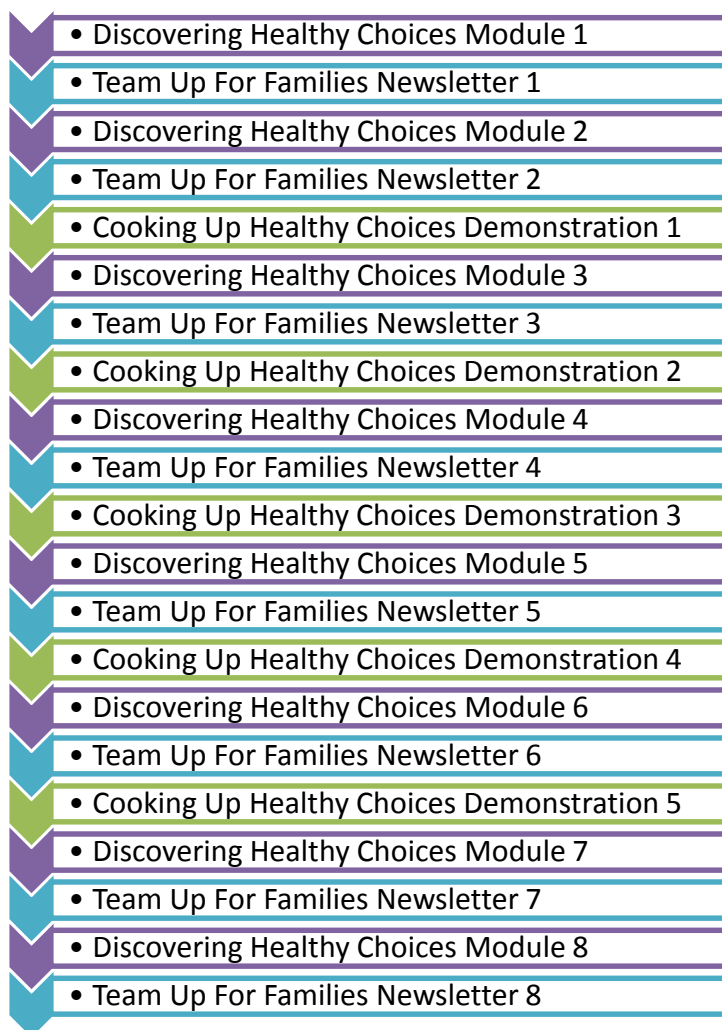
The recipes conducted as part of the *Cooking Up Healthy Choices* are featured in the “school connections” section of five of the *Team Up for Families* newsletters. This is to promote involvement in cooking at home using recipes that children have already tasted.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! Send the parent newsletters with recipes from *Cooking Up Healthy Choices* immediately following cooking demonstrations to reinforce excitement for students’ involvement in cooking at home. See the recommended schedule of implementation for when to send home newsletters to maximize these opportunities.

☑ **Maximize Connections with *Discovering Healthy Choices* and *Cooking Up Healthy Choices***

In order to maximize the integration of *Discovering Healthy Choices*, *Cooking Up Healthy Choices*, and *Team Up for Families*, the following sequence is recommended:



☑ **Coordinate with other Shaping Healthy Choices Program activities**

While the family newsletters are an important Shaping Healthy Choices Program activity, it is important to make sure that the other activities of the Shaping Healthy Choices Program are tied back to the newsletters. Remember, the more connections you make between the program activities, the stronger the infrastructure of the program as a whole.

As an example, **Reinforce connections to lunchroom produce and the instructional garden:** In addition to the content already in the newsletters, additional information can be added that feature

what fruits and vegetables are currently being offered in the salad bar. Also consider showcasing a regional farmer to reinforce connections with local community members and regional agriculture.

Distributing the newsletters

☑ Consider the format for distribution

These newsletters can be printed and sent home to parents through the classroom or emailed.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! Ask the teacher how he/she usually sends home information to parents and make sure to follow up periodically throughout the program to make sure the newsletters are being sent according to schedule. Teachers have experience in this area and often know how to best reach the parents of their students.

References

1. Ventura AK, Birch LL. Does parenting affect children's eating and weight status? *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.* 2008;5(15):1479-5868.
2. Lindsay AC, Sussner KM, Kim J, Gortmaker S. The role of parents in preventing childhood obesity. *Future Child.* 2006;16(1):169-186.

Organizing a Community Health Fair

Why a community health fair? Organizing a community health fair is a great way to promote good health, provide screening services for the school and community, provide the community with a variety of health education information and resources, emphasize the practice of good health habits, and connect with community health organizations and agencies. It is also an effective way to showcase what the school is doing to help promote a healthy school environment.

Introduction

A community health fair can be another way to reinforce concepts of school health, especially those set forth by the Shaping Healthy Choices Program. A health fair can take on many shapes depending on the goals of the school and surrounding community. Showcasing strides made towards health goals, featuring the instructional garden, and partnering with local youth and 4-H are all ways to bolster attendance and school/community support.

Program Connections

- Coordinate with Shaping Healthy Choices Program Wellness Committee**
One of the goals of the wellness committee can be to promote the district wellness policy as well as the Shaping Health Choices Program; this can be done through a health fair. Enlisting the committee's help will assist them in achieving their goals as well as lighten the health fair planning load.
- Reinforce nutrition education lessons at the event**
Be sure to contact the facilitators of nutrition education to ensure nutrition messaging at the health fair is consistent with that being covered in the classrooms.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! Nutrition education facilitators may work with their students to develop a booth, display, or game at the fair that reinforces what they are learning in the classroom. One of the *Cooking Up Healthy Choices* cooking demonstrations can also be featured at the event.

- Showcase local and regional produce**
Contacting the food and nutrition services director to brainstorm ideas to help showcase local farmers is another way to foster interaction of Shaping Healthy Choices Program components/overall school health.



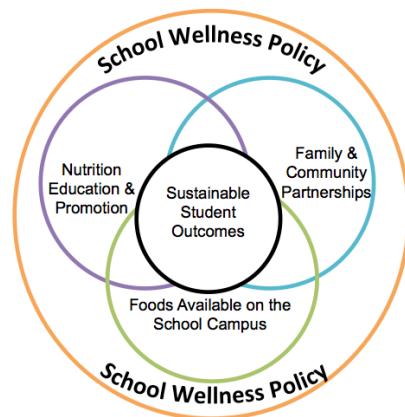
Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! A small farmer's market is an interactive way to bring local produce into families' homes. Consider building on existing partnerships between the

food and nutrition services director and local farms that are supplying the school with local and regional produce by using their produce for the farmer's market. Food Banks also often have produce that they can donate for free to locations that meet their qualifications.

☑ **Coordinate with other Shaping Healthy Choices Program activities**

Listed above are some specific ways to establish program connections when planning your community health fair. Feel free to get creative in establishing program connections beyond those listed. Remember, the more connections you make between program activities, the stronger the infrastructure of the program as a whole. More ideas for coordinating with other Sharing Healthy Choices Program Activities include:

- **Promoting the school-site wellness committee:** A community health fair is an excellent place to recruit members for your school-site wellness committee. Consider bringing a sign-up sheet to collect information from those interested.



Planning the event

☑ **Select a date**

It is essential to coordinate with school and district administration to find a time and date that will work best for the school. After school, evening, or weekend events may increase attendance and parental involvement.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! The school may already hold a community function such as a harvest party, field day, or spring event. Combining health and wellness activities with existing events may help ease the planning load. Even small changes can help change the community culture to a healthier one. For example, instead of hosting a “cake-walk,” consider a fresh fruit and vegetable walk.

☑ **Plan event**

Work with a school nurse or other health professionals to come up with a list of possible presenters at the fair. Invite people from the local community to give presentations and set up tables with information about healthy eating or physical activity opportunities. Some possible guests might be county Cooperative Extension representatives, personnel from the local hospital or a local pediatrician, a local celebrity (such as a health news broadcaster) or a local chef.

Make sure to budget plenty of time to get individuals and businesses in the community involved. It can be very effective to discuss involvement with the event in-person, rather than over the phone or via email.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! Contact information for County Cooperative Extension offices can be found on the United States Department of Agriculture Website (<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/>).

Enlist help

It may be helpful to utilize the school wellness committee and other existing school committees for help with planning, advertising, and implementing a school health fair. Other local community resources that may be interested in helping can include county Cooperative Extension representatives, local 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, high school students, parents, and more. Students are usually enthusiastic helpers. Contact the student council to get students involved.



Shaping Healthy Choices Tip! Local businesses and the community can get involved with your event in a variety of ways. Some examples include having a table at your event, donating necessary supplies, or providing volunteers. Consider displaying contributing business names at your event to incentivize participation.

Advertise for your event

Advertising can be done in many ways. Many schools have a marquis that can be used to advertise the date of the health fair, as well as school newsletters, flyers sent home, and phone calls from the principal. Consider contacting local news stations for media coverage and provide a teacher, nutrition educator, or principal as a person of contact for interviews. Local newspapers may be willing to advertise the event too. Social Media can also be a useful tool in getting the word out to your community. Consider advertising for your event on Twitter or Facebook.

Additional Resources

1. **Appendix 3: Sample Donation Form with Tax Deduction Information.** You may use this template to request donation from local organizations.

Appendix 3: Sample Donation Form with Tax Deduction Information

DATE

To Whom It May Concern:

The University of California Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program in _____ County is sponsoring a (name of event) at (name of school) on (date). The (name of event) is designed for families to learn about healthy eating habits and physical activity in a fun, engaging environment. Hundreds of families attend the event every year.

The University of California Cooperative Extension Nutrition Education Program is seeking in-kind donations, including gift cards, for this event. These donations will be used for nutrition, fitness, and garden related activities, as well as prizes and drawings. Food donations will be used for such things as food demonstrations/tastings, melon weight lifting, bowling, bell pepper toss, etc. Our Federal Tax ID number is _____. Your tax-deductible donation will be acknowledged by the University of California Cooperative Extension.

We appreciate your consideration and time in this matter. If you can make a donation or have any questions, please contact (name) at ([phone](#) number) or (email).

Sincerely,

Name & Contact Information