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Texas

WIC NEWS

Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

October 1997
Volume 6, Number 9

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Ten things every child needs

Referrals helpful to clients, crucial to program

By Shelly Ogle
Staff Writer

"Through referrals, WIC staffers make a significant contribution to a healthier Texas," says Mike Montgomery, Texas WIC director. "Referrals ensure that WIC families have information on other health-related programs and public-assistance services. I want to personally stress the importance of making referrals regularly to our clients."

Five required referrals

WIC clinic staff are required to provide all WIC applicants with written information about five other programs:

- ◆ Food Stamps.
- ◆ AFDC.
- ◆ Medicaid.
- ◆ Texas Health Steps (formerly EPSDT).
- ◆ Child Support Enforcement.

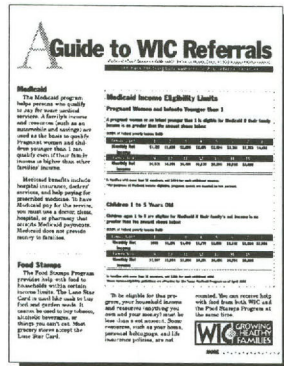
Although we are not currently at any caseload limits, any local agency with a waiting list or already operating at maximum caseload must also refer potentially eligible applicants to other sources of food assistance, such as food banks and food pantries.

Referrals to these programs can make a big difference in the daily lives of many WIC applicants and clients: providing food for their meals, financial assistance for their needs, medical and dental care for their children, and child-support checks from deadbeat dads.

Texas WIC provides a handout, *A Guide to WIC Referrals*, for

staffers to give to participants. It includes all of the required written information on the five programs that WIC refers clients to.

The handout can be ordered from Diane Salem or Susan Presto in the outreach section by calling (512) 458-7532.



Optional referrals

Local agencies are also encouraged to create a listing of local referrals to address the needs of their clients. This local listing could include information on receiving the following types of services:

- ◆ Child care.
- ◆ Clothing/household goods.
- ◆ Drug treatment.
- ◆ Domestic violence.
- ◆ Education.
- ◆ Employment.
- ◆ Family planning.
- ◆ Housing.
- ◆ Migrant services.
- ◆ Parenting.
- ◆ Transportation.

Performance measures

The Texas Department of Health and the Legislative Budget Board measure Texas WIC's performance. One of the targeted performance measures examined is the number of referrals made each fiscal year by field staff and entered into the Texas WIN computer system.

"Referrals must be documented in the WIN system in order for the data to be captured and reported accurately," says Montgomery. "It is crucial to the WIC program that every referral we make be documented in the WIN system. This includes verbal referrals as well as written ones."

In fiscal year 1998, all contracts with Texas WIC local agencies will include performance measures.

Referrals to health care

One of the minimum performance measures to be examined in fiscal year 1998 is referrals to sources of health care.

"In our monitoring reviews," says Montgomery, "we noticed that some clients who were documented in WIN as having no health care were also documented as receiving no referrals to sources of health care. This could be due to data-entry error or nondocumentation of verbal referrals, or perhaps no referral was even made. Again, let me stress the need for all Texas WIC staff to assist clients and applicants in finding a source of health care and in referring them to all of the services they need."

Referrals are a two-way street. As Texas WIC's program partners, the agencies we refer to also refer their clients to us. "The referral process is integral to the mission of Texas WIC," says Montgomery.

Anyone with questions about Texas WIC's policy on referrals is welcome to call Montgomery at (512) 458-7444.

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Texas

WIC NEWS

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*Cover: Ten things all children need are interaction, touch, stability,
safety, self-esteem, care, communication, play, music, and
reading. Photo by Kristine Wolff. Design by Shelly Ogle.*

Project 1

'Police Ice,' cop rapper, leads WIC van tour

The "Police Ice WIC Van Tour '97," featuring Austin Police Department detective Mark Gil as rapper "Police Ice," and other actors from Texas WIC's *Pyramid Rap* video, is on the road.



Onlookers watch as the 'Police Ice WIC Van Tour '97' performers rap about good eating habits. From left are Rodney Garza, Mark Gil ('Police Ice'), Myrna Cabello, and Cara Briggs.

The group first performed July 5 in Austin at the African-American Independence Day celebration at Doris Miller Auditorium. On July 17, the tour played to about 150 families at Austin's Zilker Hillside Theater before moving on to the parking lot of a Sam's Club ware-

house store. The troupe also participated in the annual Austin Aquafest parade.

Police Ice, who also conducts Stop the Violence programs across Texas, helps promote the services of Project 1's mobile WIC clinic. At each stop, he and the other video actors perform for the crowds and give tours of the WIC van. Children receive a copy of the *Pyramid Rap* video, pencils with the WIC logo, and apples provided by Sam's Club. Information about the van's schedule is given to potential clients. More appearances are planned.

St. Johns WIC celebrates World Breastfeeding Day

To observe World Breastfeeding Day, the St. Johns WIC clinic organized and hosted a lunchtime celebration with food, games, and prizes on Aug. 1. Fliers were sent to all breastfeeding mothers served by the clinic. About 50 breastfeeding mothers, babies, and children attended.

At the event, a "Breastfed Is Better Fed" height-and-weight contest was held, with the first-place winner receiving a first-aid kit as

her prize. A baby carrier lining was raffled off. The longest-nursing mothers and largest-birth-weight babies were also recognized.

WIC nutritionist Diane Turner coordinated the celebration with help from the entire St. Johns staff, especially breastfeeding peer counselors Elizabeth Cuadros, Mysti Easterwood, Dana Michaud, and Victoria Banks.



WIC mom Rocio Jaimes, holding 4-month-old Maria Celeste, enjoys the World Breastfeeding Day festivities with her 4-year-old twins Steppany and Yennifer and 6-year-old Maria. Jaimes won the St. Johns clinic's prize for breastfeeding the longest.

Northeast WIC clinic celebrates Juneteenth

Project 1's Northeast clinic in Austin conducted outreach on June 19 to celebrate the Juneteenth holiday. The clinic's sidewalk fair offered information about WIC and breastfeeding.

Orange smoothies were provided by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service's Expanded Nutrition Program, and a cakewalk was held with healthy snacks for the children.

Project 41

Staff and family members 'Stand for Children'

Staffers and family members at San Antonio's Project 41 took part in the second annual Stand For Children parade and rally on June 1. On Stand For Children Day, San Antonio and other communities across the country took a stand in the belief that every child should be free from hunger and preventable diseases, have adequate shelter and access to regular health care, and be free from violence.

San Antonio's Stand For Children Day began with a parade from Milam Park to Alamo Plaza. It was followed by a rally and other activities at Alamo Plaza.

Project 41 staff and family members constructed a "handprint wall," with the hand prints of WIC children from the local agency's different sites. The wall's theme was "Our future lies in the hands of our children."



Nutritionist supervisor Diana Montaña, left, health program manager Diane Pfiel holding James Treviño, son of secretary Dora Treviño, and outreach coordinator Eusebio Diaz enjoy the shade in front of the 'handprint wall.'

Project 41 co-sponsored events in San Antonio and worked for months on coordination and plans, including soliciting volunteers from local high schools to assist with activities.

At the rally, Project 41 staff distributed donated water, fruit, and other snacks to the many adults and children present, and also assisted in face painting.



WIC clerks Diana Borrego, left, and Nellie Gomez use the display behind them to teach nutrition to mothers and mothers-to-be.

overview of the WIC program and how it works in Texas.

"WIC started as a satellite project in Alton around 1990. We opened a clinic here in 1992, and have been in this location on the Five Mile Line since 1995," computer clerk Anabel Cavazos told the *Alton*.

The Alton clinic is a busy place, reports the *Alton*. Linda Cantu, L.V.N., an Alton resident and nurse at the center, says she gave more than 700 free immunizations there during a recent month. People from Mission, La Joya, and San Juan come to the clinic for their shots.

"Last month, we served 3,640 WIC participants here," says WIC clerk Diana Borrego, who's also an assistant nutrition educator.

Project 12

WIC clinic profiled in Alton newspaper

Project 12's Alton WIC clinic, the Alton WIC Health Center, was the subject of an in-depth feature in the spring edition of the *Alton*, a quarterly newspaper dedicated to

activities and events in the city of Alton in Hidalgo County. The story recounted the Alton clinic's history, current activities and services, and future plans, in addition to a general

Project 48

Outreach assistants recruit new clients

The Harris County Health Department WIC Program employed five outreach assistants this year from June through September who worked 20 hours per week and actively recruited new clients.

Local offices of the Texas Department of Human Services were a major recruiting area where many new WIC client appointments were made. The public comes to these offices to sign up for Medicaid, Food Stamps, AFDC, and other services.

The outreach assistants networked with parents bringing their children into clinics for immunization, and with parents registering their children for the school-lunch program.

WIC ads were also translated and placed in two local Vietnamese publications by two of the team members.



From left, outreach assistants Yesenia Garcia, Huong Nguyen, Tu Nguyen, Rosie Maldonado, and Tabatha Harper helped draw in WIC applicants over the summer.

Rosas named as Employee of the Quarter

Juanita Rosas, a nutrition assistant at Project 48's Southeast WIC Clinic, was named Employee of the Quarter for 1997's second quarter. She received her award on June 6 at the Humble Civic Center.

Nominated by a large number of her fellow employees, Rosas was cited for being a resourceful person whose work was



Juanita Rosas displays her award.

accurate, efficient, and thorough. She consistently demonstrated high standards of professional conduct and was an excellent team player and role model.

An organized person, Rosas loves teaching and working with others. She recently left the local agency.

World Breastfeeding Day celebrated with displays, receptions, coloring contests

Project 48 celebrated World Breastfeeding Day in a wide variety of ways. "We got more publicity this year than in previous years," says breastfeeding coordinator Nancy Pate. Features appeared in the *Humble Observer*, the *Kingwood Observer*, and the *Spring Observer*. A thank-you letter from Pate was published later in the *Kingwood Observer*.

In July, Pate brought 35 packets of breastfeeding information and materials to Houston's main library for distribution to its 35 branch librarians. Included in the packets was a list of breastfeeding books that librarians could cite as resources for their customers.

On July 31, a reception and breastfeeding information display was held at the South Houston Library.

On Aug. 1, Project 48 displayed breastfeeding information and held a reception for breastfeeding mothers at the Atascosita Library, with breastfeeding peer counselors and La Leche League members on hand to answer questions.

La Leche League members told Pate and her staff of their fundraising "stroller parade" Aug. 2 at the Columbia Kingwood Medical Center in conjunction with the seventh annual World Walk for Breastfeeding. Pate hopes that Project 48 can join it next year.

From mid-July to mid-August, all Project 48 clinics held coloring contests for WIC kids in three age groups. The children colored pictures created by Texas WIC state-agency staffers as part of an activity packet for World Breastfeeding Week.

Winners were awarded ribbons and crayons and were photographed for display on bulletin boards and in a breastfeeding scrapbook.

At the Decker Drive WIC Center in Kingwood, breastfeeding peer counselors held a baby shower for pregnant moms in August, offering them information and encouragement about breastfeeding.



Martha McCarthy, named Employee of the Quarter, is learning Vietnamese.

Project 37

McCarthy earns employee award

Martha McCarthy, a certification specialist at the Victoria WIC clinic, was recently chosen as Employee of the Quarter for the Victoria City-County Health Department for the third quarter of 1997.

She began work at WIC five years ago as a clerk and was recently promoted to certification specialist.

McCarthy is trained in all areas of the certification process, as well as teaching classes.

"She has learned Spanish and is currently learning Vietnamese to better serve our participants," says nutritionist Sara Gibson. "Martha always has a smile on her face and always makes participants feel like they are somebody special."

Project 53

Pleasanton proclaims month for breastfeeding awareness

Efforts by Project 53 staffers resulted in Pleasanton's mayor, John Purcell, proclaiming August to be Breastfeeding Awareness Month in the town.

Purcell signed the proclamation on July 21, remarking that the entire community has a responsibility to help children grow up healthy, bright, and strong,

and that breastfeeding plays an important role in a baby's health and well-being.

The declaration merited an informative article and photo in the *Pleasanton Express*.

On August 27, Project 53 celebrated World Breastfeeding Day with a special lunchtime gathering in the clinic's conference room.

Promotional materials based on the theme "Breastfeeding: Nature's Way," were also displayed and distributed at the clinic as part of the celebration.



Project 42

Round Rock WIC parades the natural beauty of breastfeeding

To promote World Breastfeeding Day and to show the beauty of breastfeeding as a part of nature, Project 42 WIC staff entered a unique float in Round Rock's 33rd annual Frontier Days Parade on July 12.

Adorned with plants, flowers, jungle animals, and a flowing waterfall that reflected the setting of a tropical forest, the float echoed

World Breastfeeding Day's theme for this year, "Breastfeeding: Nature's Way." A banner decorated with handprints of WIC children, signifying the five food groups, was attached to the float. Staffers Norma Dominguez and Robyn Scharlach marched in the parade, carrying a "WIC: Growing Healthy Families" banner in front of the truck towing the float.

The popular parade through downtown Round Rock featured more than 80 entries, including antique cars and marching bands. Project 42's float involved the presence and efforts of WIC staff and their families, breastfeeding peer counselors and children, and WIC client families.

Flowers and plants on the float were supplied by Murphy's Nursery in Round Rock.

Project 42's breastfeeding float features a working waterfall in a jungle setting.



Project 22

Smalley retires after 22 years in Waco

After 22 years with Project 22 in Waco, WIC nurse Ann Smalley, R.N., retired on May 30. A 1972 graduate of the University of Texas at

Austin, Smalley began her career in public health that year with the Austin-Travis County Health Department.

At Project 22, Smalley has worked as a lead nurse, a competent professional authority, and as manager of the main clinic in Waco. She planned training sessions for the entire Waco-McLennan County health department, including WIC.

Among the funniest memories of her career with Project 22 was the time she asked a small boy, "How old are you?" He responded by demanding to know how old *she* was.

Smalley plans to look for some part-time work in Waco following a welcome summer break.

Smalley will be sorely missed at Project 22, says Julie Helleck, breastfeeding coordinator at the local agency. "She has been a very dedicated worker and friendly face. She said she will come visit us. We will hold her to that."



Ann Smalley waves farewell to 22 years at Project 22.

Project 87

Breastfeeding celebrations include Cooper event, Sulphur Springs 'diary'

To promote public awareness about the health benefits of breastfeeding, Project 87's WIC clinic in the East Texas town of Cooper joined the worldwide celebrations during August in honor of World Breastfeeding Month.

On Aug. 4, WIC staff and participants gathered at the Cooper community center where they held drawings for donated baby items and enjoyed nutritious foods such as WIC-approved fruit juices, milk, cheese, peanut butter, and carrots.

Prizes and foods for the breastfeeding event were donated by David's Grocery Store, Chandler's Grocery Store, Kathy's Kitchen, Martha's Flower Shop, Pat's Flower Shop, Dairy Queen, Bewley's 5&10, Judy Jenkins, Peggy Hervey, Barbara Carroll, and Juanita M. Junkins.

WIC staffers also distributed outreach posters and fliers about WIC in the Cooper area, and sent a press release about the events to the local newspaper, the *Cooper Review*.

Diary of a breastfed child

The following composition was written by Mary Bravo, a breastfeeding peer counselor at Project 87. Her breastfeeding coordinator, Shannon O'Quin, sent it to the breastfeeding-promotion section at Texas WIC, where staffers found it touching and inspirational.

O'Quin reports that she is proud of Bravo's creativity and her service to the moms in Sulphur Springs.

July 8 — I am 30 weeks old today. My mommy doesn't know it, but I am a girl. I am going to have long curly hair

and big brown eyes. I love to hear Mommy's voice and the sound of her heartbeat. I just can't wait to see her face.

September 17 — I was born today at 2:02 a.m. Everything is so bright and so dim. I was really scared until I heard that familiar voice of Mommy's. I couldn't make out her face too well, but I am sure it is my mommy by the sound of her heart. She offered me something really weird, and at first I didn't know what to do with it, but after a few minutes I caught right on. Wow! Wow! Wow! I'm a natural! I really like this. Some warm, sweet liquid came into my mouth and satisfied both my thirst and my hunger. But the best part of this is, I get all of this without leaving the comfort of my mommy's loving arms.

February 17 — I am 6 months old today, and life is truly wonderful. Every day, I get to do new things and learn so much. My day is so full of different activities that I don't find time to do them all! Nursing is still my favorite time of the day. I wish I could tell Mommy how grateful I am that she decided to breastfeed me. My mommy's milk is so perfect for me. It has all of the right nutrients that have kept me healthy till now, but the best part is the feeling I get when I look into her eyes, and realize that she does all of this because she loves me.

23 Years Later — I just got home from my WIC appointment today. Everybody was so helpful and so nice to me. I still can't believe I'm pregnant. I want to be the perfect mom. I'm eating healthy foods and making sure I don't drink alcohol or smoke. I am also getting enough sleep and exercise. My life has been so great. I want to be a good mom just like my mom was with me. One thing is sure: My baby is going to be a *breastfed* baby, just like me.

Project 77

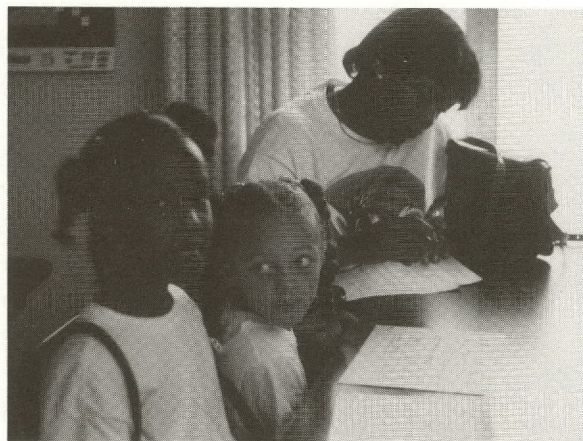
Learning about nutrition through games

Project 77 staffers brought WIC outreach to a Texas Health Steps clinic conducted last summer at Project 77's center in Shelby County.

Texas Health Steps was formerly known as the EPSDT Program.

As children waited for their checkups, WIC staffers conducted community-based nutrition classes with them. In the classes, the children played "Iron Bingo" for fun and prizes.

Participants received WIC grab bags filled with goodies such as



Former WIC kids Bridgett Randle, left, and her sister Desiree Davis play 'Iron Bingo' as their mom, Vanessa Randle, handles paperwork.

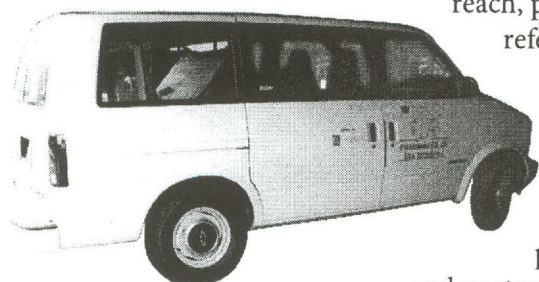
toothbrushes, coloring books, stickers, buttons, and a cookbook provided by General Mills, *Easy Recipes with Big G WIC Cereals*.

Project 26

MOM van reaches out to community

At Project 26 in Houston, the March of Dimes Foundation's MOM (Mobile Outreach Maternity) van is used every Friday to provide outreach, health screening, and on-site education to parents from pre-conception through the baby's first year.

The MOM van allows Project 26 and other program divisions of the Houston Department of Health and Human Services to offer a combination of health services, such as outreach, promotion, education, and referrals, at a single location.



Project 26 is using the MOM van through 1997. Project 26 staffers present educational information on infant care; teen pregnancy; prenatal, infant, and postpartum nutrition; breastfeeding promotion and support; and food demonstrations with selected WIC foods as ingredients. They also promote access to and use of WIC services.

Target audiences from a variety of ethnic groups, communities, and associations in Harris County are being reached at apartment complexes, grocery-store parking lots, shelters, and shopping malls.

Activities in northeast Harris County take place on the first Friday each month; on the second Friday, the van serves the southwest Houston metroplex. It's in downtown Houston on the third Friday and serves the Vietnamese/Asian communities on the fourth Friday.

The MOM van also appears at community gatherings such as health fairs and back-to-school events. Project 26 anticipates using the van to serve clients referred from managed-care systems and other community agencies.

VISTA workers perform community outreach

VISTA workers Claudia Castro and Elizabeth Perez have been assisting Project 26's outreach section. Through health fairs and door-to-door contacts, Castro and Perez have informed community residents about the local agency's new WIC locations. They conducted a promotional campaign for World Breastfeeding Week activities held Aug. 1-7. Castro and Perez set up booths on breastfeeding information at the Sunnyside Multi-Service Center and were in charge of the refreshments.

They accompany the outreach team every Friday, using the Mobile Outreach Maternity (MOM) van to promote, educate, and provide health and nutrition education to target audiences in all community settings. Castro and Perez will both remain with Project 26 through August 1998.



Claudia Castro, left, and Elizabeth Perez stand ready to help anyone with questions about breastfeeding during World Breastfeeding Day activities.

Project 80

Nacogdoches County bulletin boards show photos of breastfed staffers, babies

This summer, WIC staffers at Project 80 in Nacogdoches solicited photos of its "best-fed" babies as part of its World Breastfeeding Day activities. Nutritionist Tanya Lindsey, a 1996 graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University in foods and nutrition, gathered the photos, colored some "Look Who's Breastfeeding" posters, and displayed them on a large bulletin board.

Project 80 is affiliated with East Texas Community Health Services Inc. During the last week in July, photos were taken of all ETCHSI staff who had been breastfed as babies. All WIC staffers had been breastfed, as had all primary and mid-level clinic providers. Lindsey

arranged their photos on another bulletin board, the "Breastfeeding Wall of Fame," which drew much attention from staff and clients.

"We were surprised to learn that many employees said that they didn't know if they had been breastfed," says Georgia Taylor, R.N., Project 80 director. "As more photos went up, others would come forward and 'confess' so that they could be among this elite group."

On Aug. 1, all staffers wore World Breastfeeding Day buttons. Punch was served and all mothers received gift bags. Certificates were presented to breastfeeding moms.

Then, at 9:30 a.m., Taylor notes, "We received a call. One of our



Nutritionist Tanya Lindsey created two breastfeeding bulletin boards.

WIC moms had just delivered at 8:47 a.m. and needed help with latch-on. I went immediately to the hospital to assist. WIC works!"

Project 80's sixth annual Child Health Jamboree was held Aug. 2. Everyone attending received breastfeeding buttons and stickers.

Project 39

On July 11, a new WIC clinic opened at 306 E. Houston in Tyler. It's open the fourth Friday of each month from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. and from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on the first, second, and third Fridays of each month. Its phone number is (903) 533-1319, and its mailing address is:

Smith County Public Health District
WIC Program
P.O. Box 2039
Tyler, Texas 75710.

Project 48

Project 48 recently opened two new clinics. On July 22, the Clear Creek Recreation Center WIC clinic opened at 16511 Diana Lane in Houston. It's open the fourth Tuesday of each month from 12 noon to 6 p.m. Its phone number is (281) 471-5408.

On Aug. 4, a clinic opened at 401 W. Main St. in Tomball. It's open Tuesday through Thursday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The new clinic's phone number is (713) 439-6145. The mailing address for both clinics is:



Harris County Health Department
WIC Division
Attn: Victoria Bowie
WIC Program Director
2223 West Loop S.
Houston, Texas 77027.

Project 58

On July 11, a new WIC clinic opened at 1605 W. Frank in Lufkin. It's open from 8 a.m. to 12 noon on the first and third Fridays of each month. Its phone number is (409) 637-7242. Its mailing address is:

Angela Quillin, WIC Director
917 Ellis Ave.
Lufkin, Texas 75904.

Project 68

Effective July 15, Lu Fayne Helmers, L.V.N., became the WIC director for Project 68 in Camp Wood.

Project 83

El Paso's Project 83 got a new leader Aug. 1 when Mary Lou Morales, R.N., became the local agency's WIC director.

Project 88

Nutritionist Linda Buck, R.D., L.D., became the WIC director for Project 88, headquartered in Corpus Christi, on Aug. 1.

Project 89

On July 15, the Santa Rosa Northwest WIC clinic began offering services. Located at 2829 Babcock Rd., Tower 1, Suite 110, in San Antonio, the clinic is open Mondays and Wednesdays from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Its phone number is (210) 704-4180. Its mailing address is:

Santa Rosa WIC
315 N. San Saba, Suite 1210
San Antonio, Texas 78207.

New information coordinators valuable to customer service, staff morale

By Richard Zelade
Staff Writer

Pilot testing of the Information Partnership Program has provided a strong indication that it can meet its purpose of enhancing customer service and staff morale. The program, formerly known as the Peer Buddy Program, was developed from 1993's *Texas WIC Marketing Study*. It was piloted last summer at Project 26 in Houston, Project 41 in San Antonio, and Project 54 in Tarrant County. Evaluations were conducted in Houston and Tarrant County.

An information coordinator is central to the program. Much like a customer-service representative, the information coordinator greets new

and current WIC participants as they enter the clinic, explains her role in assisting the participant, describes the WIC certification process (such as how long the visit will take and the activities involved), and makes sure that participants have the necessary certification documents. Information coordinators answer questions from clients about eligibility and food-voucher redemption, refer participants to non-WIC services, and bring problems and complaints to the attention of WIC staff.

The information coordinator can also serve as a peer model to WIC participants. Like a breastfeeding peer counselor, this person can be a current or former WIC mom who's hired and trained as a paraprofessional.

The pilot test employed three formats:

1. Hiring current and former WIC clients (Project 26).
2. Recruiting current and former WIC participants as volunteer information coordinators (Project 41).
3. Using current WIC staff — clerks and breastfeeding peer counselors — as part-time information coordinators (Project 54).

In Project 26, about 20 current and former WIC participants were trained and hired as

information coordinators. They were placed in six clinics where clients answered an evaluation questionnaire before and after the program was implemented; the questionnaire was also filled out by clients at six "control" clinics. In-depth interviews conducted with staff and participating information coordinators revealed that the program enhanced staff morale and most likely enhanced customer service. Analysis of the participants' questionnaires will provide additional insight into the program's effect on customer service.

The other formats were not as successful as the one used at Project 26. Project 41's volunteer format never got off the ground; too few participants volunteered. In Project 54, regular job duties imposed time constraints that prevented clerical staff and breastfeeding peer counselors from including the information-coordinator role among their other responsibilities.

However, Project 54 director Ann Salyer-Caldwell remarked that the pilot's customer-service training for her staff resulted in a heightened awareness of the issue and an improvement in service.

State-office training staff developed the program's training. Several local agencies will implement the program this year, hiring WIC moms or using existing staff and training them as information coordinators.

If your local agency would like to join them, contact social-marketing specialist Chris Brown at (512) 458-7532.



Blood-taking tips help avoid re-punctures

By Patti L. Fitch, R.D., L.D.
Clinical Nutrition Coordinator

How many times have you had it happen? You know the clients I'm talking about — you give them the best poke you have ... and no blood. No way. No how.

As you stand there looking at that bloodless finger in dismay, your mind goes through the unspoken monologue common to health professionals everywhere: "Geesh, I hate to stick her again. I *know* I went deep enough. Maybe if I just kind of pressed a little here and there. Yeah, that's it. Just a little pressing. I am *not* milking this finger. Really."

Making it easier

We all know that squeezing or milking the finger causes tissue fluid to mix with the blood, thus diluting the sample. Bloodwork is an important part of the WIC certification process, and we want to avoid causing discomfort to our participants or dilution of the samples. What can we do to prevent the problem? Below are several ideas to help increase the client's bloodflow and make blood withdrawals easier on all of us.

- ◆ Ask the client to warm the puncture site by applying a cloth soaked in warm water or holding the hand under warm running water.
- ◆ Hold the arm straight down and "finger dance" with the hand by wiggling the fingers.
- ◆ Withdraw blood while the client's hand is held down at side rather than up at waist level.

A quick review of proper blood-taking techniques follows. For more details, refer to policies CS:04.5,

CS:04.5.1, CS:04.5.2, and CS:04.5.3 in Texas WIC's *Policy and Procedure Manual* and to the Texas WIC training guide, *Testing for Hematocrit and Hemoglobin Values*.

- ◆ Wear disposable gloves.
- ◆ Cleanse the skin (finger or heel) with an alcohol swab. Dry with sterile gauze — not a cotton ball.
- ◆ Using a manual or mechanical lancet, jab deep enough to allow blood to flow freely.
- ◆ Wipe the first drop of blood away with sterile gauze — not a cotton ball.
- ◆ Wait for a spontaneous flow of blood and collect the blood as instructed for the withdrawal method you are using.

- ◆ Press a sterile gauze pad or cotton ball to the puncture site until bleeding has stopped. Use an adhesive bandage if necessary.

- ◆ Dispose of used needles, lancets, and platforms.

If you have to try again:

- ◆ Do not try to obtain blood from the same site
- ◆ Make sure that you do not get alcohol on the site you'd previously stuck.

Do you know why each of these steps is taken? If you have any questions, you'll find answers in your local agency's copy of *Testing for Hematocrit and Hemoglobin Values* or by calling Patti Fitch at (512) 458-7111, ext. 3598.

Remember, if we are going to do something, we should do it right the first time.

Iron deficiency still prevalent among poor

By Mary Van Eck, M.S., R.D.
Nutrition Education Coordinator

A new study conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics, a branch of the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, found that nearly one out of 10 women and children in the United States still suffer from iron deficiency. Also, about 10 percent of adolescent girls and women of childbearing age are deficient in iron.

Toddlers and young women seem more prone to iron deficiency because of poor diets. Another cause of iron deficiency in women is loss of blood during menstruation.

This national survey looked at the blood levels of nearly 25,000 people. Especially relevant to the WIC population was the finding that iron

deficiency occurs nearly twice as often in poor and minority children as it does among affluent whites.

Iron deficiency is a serious condition that can cause impaired immune response, lethargy, low work performance, and slow mental development in children. It can also lead to a more serious condition, iron-deficiency anemia.

Though WIC nutritionists may tire of teaching about iron, it is still important to educate WIC clients about the value of iron-rich foods, especially for toddlers and young pregnant and postpartum women.

This message is central to WIC's goals. This study once again proves that our job is not nearly done.



Ten things every child needs

By Richard Zelade
Staff Writer

Interaction. Loving touch. Stable relationships. Safe, healthy environments. Self-esteem. Quality child care. Communication. Play. Music. Reading.

These are 10 things that every child needs — 10 things that may seem basic beyond mention — but not all children get them. Our earliest interactions with children influence their brain development and help them develop social, emotional, and intellectual skills. Research has shown that a child's experiences during the first three years of life have a major impact on how his or her brain is "wired."

first three years of life. In contrast to the body's other organs (which are tiny but fully functional at birth), the brain is an undeveloped organ and can be easily "wired" and "re-wired." Rich experiences give infants lots of synaptic connections and larger brains. "Wiring" reaches its peak at age 3, and then the brain begins to shed unwanted cells; children normally lose 40 percent of all the brain cells they're born with by age 5. Babies who don't

Giving children the best start in life has little to do with money and everything to do with personal interaction.

Ten Things Every Child Needs is a one-hour documentary that explains how a child's IQ can be improved during the first years of life if the child receives these 10 things. All 10 have been shown to help a child's brain develop. The program offers a simple, 10-point checklist that parents, teachers, and child-care providers can follow to give children the best start in life.

Hosted by television actor Tim Reid, the documentary features insight and suggestions from brain researchers and child-development experts T. Berry Brazelton, M.D.; Bruce Perry, Ph.D.; J. Felton Earls, Ph.D.; Irving Harris; April Benasich, Ph.D.; and Barbara Bowman.

All parents, regardless of their education or income level, can give their children these things. The important thing is the personal interaction involved.

Children have an incredible capacity for learning. The documentary explains how the infant brain develops according to a "blueprint" for human beings. It shows how nerve cells migrate throughout the body and how neural connections are made.

The human brain is most flexible during the

receive enough stimulation have smaller brains, and MRIs of their brains resemble those of the victims of Alzheimer's disease.

1. Interaction

Interaction, the first of the 10 things, must be consistent, predictable, and comfortable. And it should begin at birth. Brazelton points out that babies can relate to others from very early on. And parents can see what's going on in their baby's mind, if they know what to look for. It's important to match your behavior to your baby's needs.

2. Loving touch

Babies understand and order their world by touching, which helps explain why they are always putting things in their mouths. Touch is how they first know that they are loved, before they can understand words. Touch sends signals to their brains. Massage

helps babies' brains grow, so parents should hold them, cuddle them, and look at them. Children can't fully develop without touch.

3. Stable relationships

Stable relations are essential. The long-term effects of separation from loving care are devastating, as a recent study of Romanian orphans reveals. A young infant's situation is similar to being in a foreign land where no one speaks your language or understands your customs. Without a loving, trusted adult as interpreter, new experiences have no meaning and the infant has trouble making connections.

Infants experience stress too, and when they do, their bodies produce cortisol, a stress hormone. If cortisol levels get too high, a child's abilities to think, learn, and digest food are negatively affected. A loving relationship can prevent these levels of stress.

4. Safe, healthy environments

Parents must understand the input role they play, and provide love and stability. Children need and want guidance and discipline. Parents and caretakers must give children safe, healthy environments where they can explore and use the skill sets that they have developed.

Beyond child-proofed cabinets, stairs, and electrical outlets, a safe, healthy environment is also lead-free. Despite public perception, lead poisoning remains a threat to many children, rich and poor, especially to those who spend time in houses and buildings built before 1978. Lead-based paint is still present in many older structures, from mansions to shacks. Lead poisoning is irreversible and is most damaging

during the first three years of life. Paint flakes often end up on the floor and window sills, where they can be ingested by infants, so damp cleaning with a mop or cloth is recommended.

5. Self-esteem

Self-esteem is also critical, and parents have total control here because they are the models for their children. Children are like sponges; they soak up whatever is around them. But perfection isn't required; as Harris points out, all a parent has to be is "good enough, not perfect."

6. Quality child care

Quality child care is essential. Even in bad neighborhoods, if the home life is good, a child can prosper. A good preschool helps kids learn about themselves, others, and how to interact properly. Parents should look for caretakers who like to deal with babies, and for a ratio of three or four infants per caregiver.

7. Communication

A baby's ability to communicate starts at birth. Newborns can differentiate differences in sound, including their mother's voice. Children learn to talk by listening to those around them.

Parents should talk to children in meaningful words and make them feel that their thoughts and words are important.

8. Play

Play is essential to child development — it's how they discover the way things work and a way of duplicating the reality around them. Play is tied to intelligence and mental development. Expensive toys aren't

necessary. Kids can have fun and learn about the basics of physics just by filling up and emptying plastic cups with water at the kitchen sink. But parents must participate by being a playmate and sharing the experience.

9. Music

Children have an affinity for music. Music brings many learning elements together: coordination, timing, language, math, logic.

It helps parents and kids bond. Parents should sing with their children and let them create their own music; it doesn't have to be serious music.

10. Reading

Reading to kids has a great impact on their development, so reading to them should start at an early age. Parents should show them how reading is important to them. They should make it fun to learn; one way is to have their children dictate a story to them. And it's okay, even good, to read the same book over and over.

Just remember, what every child needs, every parent can give.

Ten Things Every Child Needs was produced by WTTW Chicago and was funded by a grant from the McCormick Tribune Foundation. The video costs \$10 pre-paid. Make check payable to the McCormick Tribune Foundation and send to:

The McCormick Tribune Foundation

Attn: Ten Things

435 N. Michigan Ave., Suite 770
Chicago, Ill. 60611.

The foundation can be called at (312) 222-3512 or visited at its Website at <http://www.xnet.com/~mccormick>.

Recipe cards popular in local communities

Project 76 increases clients' use of WIC foods

By Lynn Silverman, M.A., R.D.

Nutrition Education Specialist



At Texas WIC clinics throughout Project 76's extensive territory in the state's central and northwest regions, dietitians Ann Latham, R.D., L.D., and Robin Pruitt, M.S., R.D., L.D., regularly conduct visits.

While speaking with staffers and clients, they noticed that participants often wanted recipes. They also noticed that the average diet recall often did not list any WIC foods other than milk or juice.

Recipes made with WIC foods

Latham and Pruitt decided that the best way to get participants to consume more WIC foods would be to provide recipes made with WIC foods. They set out to develop quick, easy recipes for economical dishes, using WIC foods and ingredients found in most kitchens.

Their first set of six recipe cards, printed on card stock with an easy-on-the-eye, light-blue border and colorful food graphics, shows how WIC foods fit into yummy, easy-to-make dishes. These recipes fit the requests of participants statewide, according to the results of the Farmers' Market Survey of 1995, which indicated that WIC clients

want recipes with attractive pictures, in pleasant colors, with easy directions, and few ingredients.

Along with the ingredients and easy directions, each card lists its recipe's WIC foods. On the back is information about the client's local agency, services available, a positive health message or logo, and phone numbers. New recipe cards developed since the first batch also list the recipe's key nutrients.

Using the recipe cards

The recipe cards were first used for 1997 community-based nutrition-education activities based on the following themes:

◆ **April: Protein.** Eggs and beans were featured in three recipes, Deviled Easter Eggs, Breakfast Pizza, and Veggie Bean Dip.

◆ **June: Dairy.** Staffers provided milk and cheese

recipes in a lesson showing the differences in fat contents of different cheeses. Recipes included Quick Pizza, Favorite Meatloaf, and Rock 'n' Roll Ice Cream.

◆ **August: 5-A-Day.** Carrots and orange juice were featured along with recipes for Peach Crisp, Corn Casserole, and Hawaiian Pops.

◆ **October: Peanut butter.** Recipes for Chuckles' Treats, Peanut Butter Breakfast Muffins, and Peanut Butter Popcorn are being offered this month with a lesson.

◆ **December: Cereals.** A recipe for Healthy Trash Mix is ready to go. Two other cereal recipes are in development.

In 1998, classes at Project 76 will focus on meal planning. Latham and Pruitt have developed nine meal-planning lessons with three recipe cards to accompany each lesson. A handout, coordinated with the recipe cards and the lesson, will also be given to each participant.

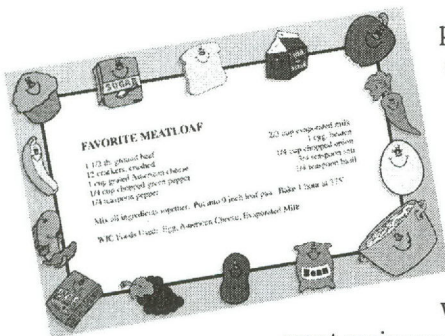
Great response

WIC participants and community members have responded well to these attractive recipes. Latham says this effort has improved vendor relations and has taught those WIC-eligible families that are reluctant to receive food benefits that WIC is a nutrition-education program.

The Rock 'n' Roll Ice Cream recipe really took off, with local churches using it in their vacation Bible schools and requesting enough copies to send one home with each child.

And, best of all, Latham and Pruitt report, the participants' diet recalls now list more WIC foods.

For more information, call Ann Latham at (940) 888-2017, Robin Pruitt at (915) 735-3346, or the Project 76 central office at (806) 371-9446.



Spreading the word about calcium

A bulletin-board kit being offered by the Nutrition Education Services of the Oregon Dairy Council can be used to visually teach your clients about the importance of calcium. The kit can serve as a community-based nutrition-education presentation in hospital cafeterias and waiting areas, pharmacies, libraries, and high school cafeterias and classrooms.

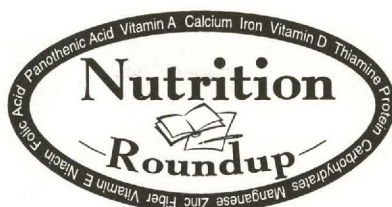
The kit includes seven colorful components about why calcium is important:

- ◆ Why me? What's all this fuss about?
- ◆ What's the right amount for me?
- ◆ How to get more.
- ◆ What about low-fat choices, vegetarian diets, lactose intolerance, and supplements?
- ◆ Osteoporosis.
- ◆ Ways to sneak calcium into your diet.
- ◆ Tear-off cards to order a free personal-assessment brochure and recipes.



The attractive graphics and captions can be assembled on a bulletin board or wall space that's 28" by 36" or larger. For more information or to receive an order form, call (503) 229-5033 or fax (503) 245-7916, or write to:

Oregon Dairy Council
Nutrition Education Services
10505 S.W. Barbur Blvd.
Portland, Ore. 97219.



By Rachel Jule Edwards
Nutrition Education Specialist

Have you seen the new nutrition-education materials?

New nutrition-education materials were sent to all Texas WIC local agencies on Aug. 1 with memorandum No. 97-056. The mailout included information about the following items:

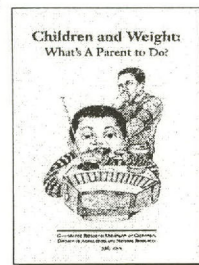
Childhood Obesity: Lily Faces a Problem — Sent to your local agency directly from the Altschul Group Corporation, this video is available in English and Spanish on the same videotape. Each version is about 11 minutes long and illustrates the importance of healthy eating habits, physical activity, and meal planning for children. Ideas for quick and easy snacks and meals are included. As mentioned in the August memo, the lesson was to have been sent to local agencies in mid-September.

Reading to Children nutrition fact sheet — Use this fact sheet, sent in the mailout, to train staff on selecting books, the importance of reading to children, and age-appropriate activities to do after reading a book.

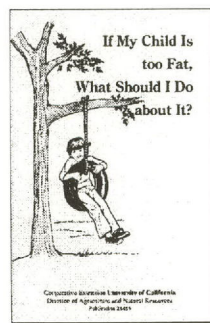
Magnetic pyramid — Use the NutritionTracker, a large magnetic pyramid with small round magnets of foods from all of the food groups, to illustrate the food-guide pyramid in nutrition-education classes or

individual counseling sessions. In August, NutritionTrackers for clinic sites were sent out to Texas WIC local agencies.

Two booklets for parents of overweight children — *Children and Weight: What's a Parent to Do?* is an easy-to-read booklet with pictures and large print, available in English and Spanish for \$1 each. *If My Child Is too Fat, What Should I Do about It?* includes



advice on handling children who are overweight, a list of foods from all the food groups, and different methods of food preparation. It is available in English only for \$3 a booklet. A sample of each booklet was included in the mailout.



For information on ordering these booklets, contact:

The University of California
Division of Agriculture and
Natural Resources
Communication Services –
Publications
6701 San Pablo Ave.
Oakland, Calif. 94608-1239.

You can also call (510) 642-2431 or (800) 994-8849, send e-mail to dancrcs@ucdavis.edu, or fax (512) 643-5470.

Mark your calendars



The 1998 Nutrition Education and Breastfeeding Promotion Workshop is tentatively scheduled for March 1-4, 1998, in Austin.

Be prepared to network, learn new ideas for conducting nutrition education, and have lots of fun!

Clients actively encouraged to breastfeed

Effective promotion brings highest breastfeeding rates to Project 90

By Janet Rourke, M.S.H.P., L.D., C.L.E.
Breastfeeding Promotion Coordinator



A column addressing the concerns of Texas WIC's breastfeeding coordinators

Texas WIC Project 90, located with Los Barrios Community Clinic in Dallas, boasts the highest born-to-WIC breastfeeding rate in the state, with 54.9 percent of its WIC babies nursing.

How have WIC director Maria Arroyo and the

Project 90 staff achieved such high breastfeeding rates? They actively encourage their WIC moms to consider breastfeeding.

Clinic staff immediately refer their pregnant moms to WIC services. At certification, WIC staffers, all of whom breastfed their own babies, recommend breastfeeding. The first class the new clients receive is a breastfeeding-promotion class. They are told to call WIC if they have any questions about breastfeeding.

In the breastfeeding-promotion class, staffers emphasize that infant feeding is the parent's choice. They discuss the benefits of breastfeeding and give information about the process of breastfeeding so that parents can make an informed decision. A variety of breastfeeding materials are available for mothers to take home and share with family and friends.

The postpartum visit

Pregnant women due to deliver within the next month are given only one set of food vouchers and are told to call for an appointment as soon as the baby arrives. These new moms are given priority and are seen within a few days of their call.

At the postpartum visit, each mom is asked how breastfeeding is going. Once the mom is comfortable with the staff, she is asked if she would like to go to the breastfeeding room to

breastfeed while she is being recertified.

While staff complete the recertification, clerk Blanca Gonzalez observes the mom breastfeeding and watches her interactions with her baby. Many of the moms are having problems with positioning. After asking permission, staffers take this opportunity to help the mom get comfortable, position the baby correctly, and answer any questions the mom has about breastfeeding.

Ongoing management

The mom then gets another month of food vouchers and is scheduled for a class in breastfeeding management for the following month. At that next visit, the mom is asked how breastfeeding is going and if she has any problems, concerns, or questions. She then gets two months of food vouchers for herself.

At the breastfeeding-management class, the moms get a breastfeeding certificate and a breast pump if they are going back to work or school. Exclusively breastfeeding moms receive a nursing bra. Since nursing bras are a recent addition, Arroyo has not had time to determine their impact on the incidence and duration of breastfeeding.

If a mom is still breastfeeding at six months, she receives another certificate. The clinic lobby has a

Always call an event's contact person before finalizing any travel plans.

bulletin board dedicated to breastfeeding information. In the classrooms, breastfeeding information is abundant.

Sample formula is only given upon request.



Maria Arroyo

A personal beginning

Arroyo became interested in breastfeeding promotion while working at Project 7, also in Dallas. Arroyo had given birth to a premature daughter in February 1992, and she was finding it frustrating to breastfeed her baby.

She started talking with other mothers of preemies, gathering tips to share with WIC participants.

Arroyo was inspired to help other moms after observing Nadirah Muhammad, breastfeeding coordinator for Project 7, counseling moms with breastfeeding problems. It was a little awkward at first to discuss breastfeeding with others, says Arroyo, but now it comes naturally.

With the whole staff now actively involved in promoting breastfeeding, the efforts of Maria Arroyo and her staff at Project 90 are certainly paying off.

October

Oct. 6-9 — "Stephen Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," San Antonio. For personal and professional effectiveness, call (512) 406-0740.

Oct. 14 — "Seven Habits Advanced Applications," Dallas. Effectiveness training for graduates of "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People" course. (512) 406-0740.

Oct. 14 — Mini Breastfeeding Basics Workshop, San Antonio. For more information, call Missy Hammer at (512) 406-0744.

Oct. 15-17 — Second annual Immunize Texasize Conference, San Antonio. For more information, call Candy Cates at (512) 458-7284.

Oct. 15-17 — Intensive Course in Breastfeeding, Phase II, San Antonio. In-depth training follow-up to Phase I session. Call Missy Hammer at (512) 406-0744.

Oct. 17 — "Housing and Welfare I: Tenant Access to Employment, Training, and Supports," a "Welfare Interface" audio conference from the Center for Law and Social Policy. Call (202) 797-6535 or see the CLASP Web page at www.clasp.org.

Oct. 20-22 — "Forging New Directions Into the Next Millenium," Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition biennial national conference, Baltimore Hilton and Towers Hotel, Baltimore, Md. Strategies for improving the health status of women, children, families, and communities. Call (202) 863-2441.

Oct. 22-24 — "Hermanos Unidos — Levantando Nuestra Voz; Partners — Lifting Our Voices," Texas Homeless Network state conference, Holiday Inn Airport, San Antonio. CEUs available. Call (800) 531-0828.

Oct. 24 — "Substance Abuse and Welfare," a "Welfare Interface" audio conference from the Center for Law and Social Policy. For more information, call (202) 797-6535 or see the CLASP Web page at www.clasp.org.

Oct. 29 — Lactation Management Workshop for Physicians, Dallas. Four-hour workshop to improve physicians' management of breastfeeding problems, special circumstances, and medications. \$15. Call Missy Hammer at (512) 406-0744.

Oct. 29-31 — Intensive Course in Breastfeeding, Phase I, Dallas. Three-day course prepares health-care providers to promote and support breastfeeding. \$45. For more information, call Missy Hammer at (512) 406-0744.

November

Nov. 7 — Lactation Management Workshop for Physicians, Fort Bend County. Four-hour workshop to improve physicians' management of breastfeeding problems, special circumstances, and medications. \$15. Call (512) 406-0744.

Nov. 7 — Mini Breastfeeding Basics Workshop, Fort Bend County. For more information, call Missy Hammer at (512) 406-0744.

Nov. 7 — Hepatitis C Teleconference. Call (800) 252-9152 for more information.

Nov. 7 — "Housing and Welfare II: Housing Providers' Role in Maintaining the Safety Net," a "Welfare Interface" audio conference from the Center for Law and Social Policy. Call (202) 797-6535 or see the CLASP Web page at www.clasp.org.

Nov. 14-15 — Texas Immigration and Refugee Coalition state conference, San Benito. Cross-border issues, plus culture and arts. Call (214) 946-4889, ext. 246.

Nov. 18-20 — Competent-professional-authority orientation, Austin. Three days on screening techniques, breastfeeding promotion, high-risk conditions, allowable foods, formula determination, nutrition education, counseling, outreach, and civil rights. Call Liz Bruns or Anita Ramos at (512) 406-0740.

Nov. 19-20 — Patient Flow Analysis Phase II, Dallas Regional Training Center. Provides instruction for analyzing PFA study results and for putting solutions into effect in the clinic. Available only to attendees who have completed Patient Flow Analysis Phase I. For more information, call Carol Filer at (512) 406-0740.

If you'd like to include an event in this calendar, call Shelly Ogle or Richard Zelade at (512) 458-7532.

A look at the facts

Is breastfeeding protective against breast cancer?

By Nancy Liedtke, M.S.

Breastfeeding Promotion Nutritionist

In the United States, one in eight women will develop breast cancer sometime in her lifetime.

Though 80 percent of all cases of breast cancer in the United States are among women older than 50, it is a disease of concern to women of all ages. As the second most common cause of death for American women, breast cancer is a major public health issue.

Breastfeeding may be a protective factor

Many research studies have sought to identify both the risk factors leading to breast cancer and the protective factors against breast cancer. One of the protective factors may be breastfeeding.

In some but not all studies, a decreased risk of breast cancer has been associated with women who breastfeed. In the studies where breastfeeding was found to be protective, the protection was mostly against breast cancers that occur before a woman goes through menopause.

In addition, a recent study has shown that baby girls fed breastmilk early in life had a slightly decreased risk of developing breast cancer later in life.

Despite these findings, women of childbearing age are not commonly told about breastfeeding as being protective of women's health.

Why? Maybe it's because not all studies have found a significant protective effect.

Maybe it's because premenopausal breast-cancer patients only

account for about a quarter of all breast-cancer patients.

Maybe it's because the greatest protection is seen among women who nurse for longer periods of time, like a year or two.

Or maybe it's because the information hasn't reached the vast majority of health-care workers and educators.

Whatever the reason, it is one of the responsibilities of health-care workers and educators to inform patients of the facts so they can make the most informed decision possible on whether to breastfeed, and for how long.

Odds of getting breast cancer at a specific age

Age	Chances
20s	1 in 2,500
30s	1 in 233
40s	1 in 65
50s	1 in 41
60s	1 in 29

American Cancer Society
Surveillance Research 1995

Facts to share with clients

What are the facts about breastfeeding and breast cancer, and what can we tell our clients?

Edward Newton, M.D., an obstetrician and the director of labor and delivery at Hermann Hospital in Houston, shares some of his advice on the subject in his answers to the following questions. Newton is also a professor in the

Department of Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences at the University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston.

Q: How strong is the evidence that breastfeeding and being breastfed are factors that reduce the risk of breast cancer?

A: The evidence is moderately strong. There are conflicting conclusions.

In general, there is a consistent "dose-response relationship," meaning that longer duration of breastfeeding is associated with more protection from cancer in case-controlled studies.

However, data is less supportive from studies that followed subjects who were 45 years old or older.

Q: Why do we think breastfeeding and breastmilk can protect against breast cancer?

A: The duration and intensity of breastfeeding causes amenorrhea (no menstrual period). With no menstruation, there is a reduction in the monthly changes in the breast associated with higher hormone levels, specifically estrogen.

These monthly changes normally occur when hormones promote cell division in the breast tissue, increasing the risk of cell mutations, which could lead to cancer.

Another theory is that breastfeeding reduces the damage that toxins can cause in the breast. Toxins can alter breast cells so that the cells become cancerous.

Breastmilk contains compounds that enhance natural anti-cancer "killer cells."

These compounds may protect a mother's breast tissue from cancer as well as protect infants receiving breastmilk from some childhood cancers.

Q: How long does a woman need to breastfeed before she benefits from a risk reduction of breast cancer?

A: It is unknown. It probably depends on the duration and intensity of breastfeeding.

A reasonable guess is that the most benefit would come from lactation of sufficient duration and intensity to cause a woman to miss her period — become amenorrheic — for eight to 12 months throughout her breastfeeding history.

Q: How much breastmilk does a baby girl need to receive in order to be protected against getting breast cancer later in life?

A: The amount is unknown.

Q: Is it appropriate to include information about breastfeeding in campaigns to raise awareness about breast cancer?

A: Yes.

Q: Can a woman with breast cancer still breastfeed?

A: This is a complex question. In many cases, yes. But, each case needs to be individualized.

An active breast cancer with concurrent chemotherapy treatment requires tremendous judgment by the physician and the patient.

If a woman has the inactive disease for five years after therapy, then that's another issue.

Q: What else do pregnant and lactating women need to know about breast cancer?

A: Self-examination of the breasts is still important! So is an understanding of personal risk: The family history of breast, colon, or ovarian cancer is important to know.

Do not delay appropriate diagnosis including mammograms, needle aspirations, and/or biopsies. Breast-feeding should continue during the work-up, including when a mammogram and biopsy are done.

.....
<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/lactate/bf1.htm>

Breastfeeding promotion now on the Web

By Nancy Liedtke, M.S.

Breastfeeding Promotion Nutritionist

Breastfeeding promotion is now on-line. If you have Internet access, you can find out about the latest training being offered by the Texas Department of Health's breastfeeding-promotion section at <http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/lactate/bf1.htm>.

You can also order materials, link to other breastfeeding-related sites, and retrieve information on the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative, Texas Peer Counselor Program, World Breastfeeding Week celebrations, Mother-Friendly Worksite Program, and the World Health Organization International Code for Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes.

You can even print out fact sheets on various breastfeeding topics. The Web site also has breastfeeding clip art, a page for kids and their teachers, and a place where people can ask an expert a question.

The site is now up, and will be updated about every two weeks. If you have suggestions about the

For more information on breast cancer and other cancers, call the knowledgeable staffers at the Cancer Information Service of the National Cancer Institute of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

They can be reached by phone at (800) 4-CANCER (422-6237). Or, readers can visit their Web site at <http://www.mci.nih.gov>.

Web page, e-mail Nancy Liedtke at nliedtke@wicsc.tdh.state.tx.us or call her at (512) 406-0744.

If you're not on the Internet, don't fret. Some of the information on the Web page should now be available on the "Healthy Texans" electronic bulletin-board system.

Besides helpful information on breastfeeding promotion, this system also has valuable information on health-related matters and a wide variety of TDH programs.

"Healthy Texans" is free to public and private organizations delivering public-health services in Texas. It is one way for WIC clinics to have more information at their fingertips.

To learn more about how you can get set up with the "Healthy Texans" system, call Aubrey Herzik of TDH's Bureau of State Health Data and Policy Analysis at (512) 458-7261.

Herzik can be e-mailed at aherzik@dpa.tdh.state.tx.us.

Breastfeeding mom prompts poolside progress

By Lisa Marasco, I.B.C.L.C.

Expressly Yours Lactation Services
Santa Maria, Calif.

From Santa Maria, Calif., comes news of a community victory for breastfeeding moms. Earlier this summer, a breastfeeding mom who I've been in contact with was enjoying a Santa Maria public pool with her baby. When the baby wanted to nurse, the mom moved to the side of the pool and nursed him as discreetly as she could.

But not discreetly enough for a lifeguard, who rushed over and told her that she would have to get out of the pool to nurse — preferably in the restroom. According to the mom, he was insinuating that the pool's other patrons might take offense and that her milk might contaminate the water.

Indignant, she left the pool and sought out the pool manager. The manager sided with the lifeguard, whereupon the mom mentioned California's new legislation protecting her right to breastfeed in public. But the manager refused to budge.

The mother chose to leave at that point and was refunded her money.

Later that day, she called La Leche League to find out what she could do. The unpleasant experience had surprised her, since she had previously breastfed in a similar fashion at other local pools without incident. Why was it now a problem?

She and the league leader discussed what the mom wanted to accomplish, and what her options were to achieve those ends. Here's what the mom did:

First, she wrote and faxed a letter to the Parks and Recreation supervisor's office that listed the benefits of breastfeeding and in-

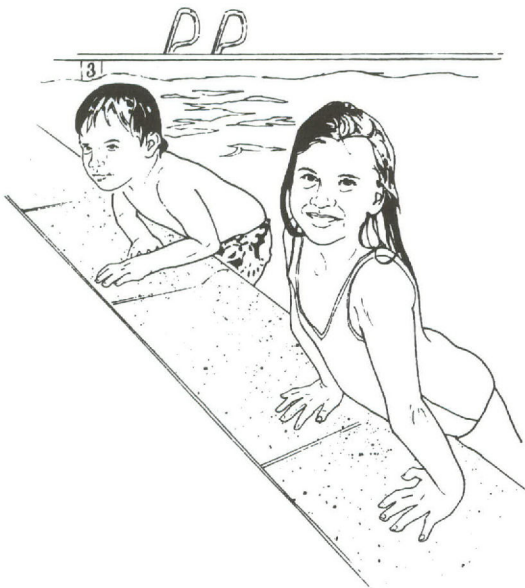
cluded a newspaper clipping describing the new law. She also got on the Internet, posting the story of her pool experience to an attachment parenting listserv, and some of those people reposted her message to other sites such as Parent-L and misc.kids.bfg.

As a result, within 24 hours the parks supervisor's office was flooded with nearly 200 protest faxes. He went home and discussed the matter with his wife, who had breastfed their children. She supported the mom. The supervisor consulted city attorneys about the new law, and then took a series of actions.

He called the mother to apologize verbally and promised a written apology. He also thanked her for her informative letter.

The pool's breastfeeding policy was immediately rewritten, and all lifeguards were scheduled for trainings on the new breastfeeding-friendly policy. A breastfeeding-friendliness message was to be worked into the next social function at the public pool.

Finally, the mom received several free pool passes, so she and her baby could enjoy the pool for the rest of the summer.



Learning from the young

5th-grader demonstrates digestibility of breastmilk in experiment for science fair

By Mark K. Clardy
Staff Writer

Many children participate in science fairs at their schools, but how many students focus their project on breastfeeding?



Eleven-year-old Gina Osterholt did exactly that, and she won a first-place ribbon and certificate for her effort. Gina was a 5th-grader at Roosevelt Elementary School in Chicago Heights, Ill., when she earned the award last year.

Texas WIC News first learned about Gina's project when a WIC staff member read about her on the World Wide Web.

The science project, titled "Digestion," compared the effect of vinegar on human breastmilk, cow's milk, and infant formula. Gina prepared 1/3-cup samples of the three substances, then added 2/3 cup of vinegar to each.

Although many factors are necessary for proper digestion, vinegar was used in the experiment to represent human digestive fluids because the pH of vinegar is similar to the pH of some of the acids present in the stomach.

In Gina's experiment, overall, the breastmilk was least affected by the vinegar. "The cow's milk curdled right away, the formula appeared un-changed, and the breastmilk became slightly thinner and changed colors slightly," Gina observed. "Several hours later, the cow's milk was still curdled and the formula had completely separated from the vinegar, but the breastmilk stayed mixed and had a thin white layer on the top."

Perhaps more important than Gina's experiment on digestibility is the positive message that she sent to her community

about the importance of breastfeeding. One part of her exhibit stated that breastmilk was easier for babies to digest, and listed some advantages of breastfeeding.

Tubes containing the three vinegar mixtures were available for inspection, as was a tube of pure breastmilk. Students visiting the exhibit were challenged to pick up and examine the tube containing the breastmilk. Many visitors encouraged other students to look at the exhibit.

Gina was assisted in the project by her mother, Assunta Osterholt, I.B.C.L.C. Osterholt commented that her daughter's project "created an awareness that did not exist before. Some kids thought it was very mature of Gina to consider such a subject. The reaction I saw was one of surprise first, followed by uncertainty, and then interest."

Parents visiting the booth were given literature from La Leche League about the benefits of breastfeeding. They were also invited to review an article from the March 1997 issue of *Texas WIC News*, "Baby's first food can influence vision, intelligence, motor development," by Texas WIC breastfeeding-promotion specialist Nancy Liedtke, M.S.

WIC mom Kymla Reid – Foster mom, adoptive mom, supermom

By Jane Ulrich
Staff Writer

Any kid would be lucky to have Kymla Reid for a mom. She's loving, encouraging, and patient. She always has time to listen or give a hug. She's there — front row, center — for the big events in her children's lives, in their corner when they have problems at school, on their side when they need a friend, "in their face" when they need a little shaping up.



Kymla Reid was honored last December by Gov. George W. Bush in Dallas when he announced a statewide initiative to make it easier for people to adopt children who have been neglected, abused, or abandoned.

What a mom

A pretty great mom, by any standards. But those qualities take on another dimension when you learn that this 41-year-old, single mother has a grown son, is raising a teenage daughter, has foster-parented 17 neglected or abused children, and recently adopted four siblings and two "crack"-addicted babies.

She's done all that while running two businesses, directing a nonprofit organization for underprivileged children, training other people to be foster parents, leading her church's youth ministry, and singing in the church choir.

How does she do it, and why? Her love for children and desire to make a positive difference in each life she touches has a lot to do with it. "I was adopted myself, and I've always wanted to give back to the community," she says.

But the Dallas resident credits most of her skill at juggling parental responsibilities, civic activities, and two jobs to one thing: "I'm *real* organized," she says, laughing.

So organized that she runs an accounting service and a day care and still has time to attend school functions; go to parent-teacher meetings; take children (her own and dozens

of low-income, abused, or neglected children who are part of her nonprofit organization, Kym's Kids) to cultural events and on field trips; make all of her WIC appointments; get the kids to their doctors' checkups; be active in her church; and cook, clean, help with homework, and teach her little ones their colors and ABCs.

Family chores instill values

It helps that Reid has a day care in her home so that her two babies — Autumn-Star and Joy, both of whom turned 3 in August — are well cared for while she's at her accounting office several hours each day. "I couldn't do all I do if I were working eight hours a day," she says.

It helps that she eats healthy foods, takes vitamins, gets to bed by 9 each night and has virtually no social life. As she told a *Dallas Morning News* columnist last year, "Men find out I have all those kids and want to make a donation instead of marrying me!"

And it helps that she has an energetic teenage daughter who is equally dedicated and loving. "My 17-year-old (Tosha) is a big help," says Reid.

She even has the four siblings whom she recently adopted — Justice, 12, Elizabeth, 10, Michael, 8, and Christopher, 7 — hooked on the idea of helping out. They load the washer and dryer, sort and put away clothes, wash dishes, pick up around the house, sweep, and help with the two little ones.

Reid adopted all four siblings so that they wouldn't have to be separated from each other, as she had been separated from her brothers and sisters during her own childhood. "I didn't plan on having six adopted kids," she says, "but I just couldn't separate those four!"

A chart keeps everyone on track, and "lots of rewards and incentives" make the work more enjoyable. The children receive allowance for chores completed, are docked for chores not done, and can get "extra credit" for completing someone else's unfinished work.

It's a process that Kym believes instills values and fosters healthy competition. "If Michael doesn't clean the dining room (when it's his turn), someone else does," she says. "They even try to do it before the other child does it, and then they say, 'Mom! I did Michael's work!'"

Learning from WIC

It should come as no surprise that Reid, who learned about WIC shortly after becoming a licensed foster parent in 1994, worked with the staff at Texas WIC Project 7's Martin Luther King Jr. clinic in Dallas to "reorganize" her WIC classes. "It was like I was going almost every week," said Reid, who had four foster children on WIC at one time. "It got to be really rough" getting to all of the appointments and classes, says Reid, and "I saw the same videos over and over and over."

The problem was that each of Reid's foster children was considered a "family" and each had his or her own schedule of classes. "We worked that out," said clinic nutritionist Suzette Clark. "We straightened it out so she could get all her



Kymla Reid's family is built on love. Clockwise from center: Mom Kymla Reid holding 3-year-old Autumn-Star; 12-year-old Justice with brothers Michael, 8, and Christopher, 7, and sister Elizabeth, 10; and 3-year-old Joy held by 17-year-old big sister Tosha.

vouchers on the same day."

Reid says she's really learned a lot about raising healthy children from WIC's classes and videos. She's especially appreciative of WIC's nutrition counseling for her two babies with special needs.

Tiny Joy, who weighs just 18 pounds at age 3 and wears clothes for 12-month-old babies, is "exceptionally smart" but physically delayed because her teenage mother was addicted to crack cocaine and had no prenatal care during her pregnancy. "Joy was born at home, severely malnourished, with failure to thrive," said Reid.

Autumn-Star, whose birth mother was also addicted to crack

cocaine, has had different problems. Also age 3 like Joy, Autumn-Star weighs almost 30 pounds and wears size-3 toddler clothes but is severely developmentally delayed. She is legally blind, has a hearing problem, doesn't talk, doesn't know how to hold a cup or use utensils, didn't start walking until last Christmas, and has just learned how to chew in the past few months.

Reid says WIC offered ideas for healthy ways to put weight on Joy and told her how to grind and mash foods so that Autumn-Star wouldn't choke on them.

"I've really learned a lot at WIC!" she says.

Tips and techniques to reduce no-shows

By Carol Filer, M.S., R.D., L.D. and Anna Garcia
Clinic Management Specialist Clinic Management Nutritionist

One of the most common questions asked in classes on patient-flow analysis is, "How can we get our participants to keep appointments?" PFA data frequently pinpoints no-shows as a clinic problem, so we are providing below some ways to increase show rates that have been identified as effective by PFA class participants.

Reminders

Have participants address their own appointment-reminder cards. Organize these by appointment date and mail them at least one week before the actual appointment. Make phone calls one to two days before the appointment. Give out appointment reminders (stickers that can be put on clients' WIC calendars). Put reminder inserts in food vouchers. Send out birthday cards to all participants celebrating their first birthday with a reminder that they are still eligible for WIC.

Clinic procedures

Distribute the appointments equally throughout the month. Develop an appointments policy, educate participants about the policy, and reinforce it. This will give participants an incentive to keep appointments. Be consistent with instructions. Overbook according to the no-show rate.

Have participants call for appointments; don't schedule appointments two or three months in advance.

Reward participants who keep their appointments by giving incentives or prizes, such as honor-

ing a client as the "participant of the month." Hold a raffle for prizes for those who keep appointments. Praise participants who arrive on time. Service participants by appointment rather than arrival times. Start class on time.

Give applicants a choice of appointment times (day of week, time of month, or part of the day).

Conduct surveys to determine the best times for providing service. From the survey, find out why participants are not showing up, and then make adjustments accordingly. Accommodate participants by offering appointment times and dates that meet their needs.

Consider the school and community calendars when scheduling. If the show rate has historically been poor on the first day of school, schedule a staff-development day or schedule participants who do not have schoolchildren. Tell participants to send a proxy if they can't keep their appointment. Reschedule the previous month's no-shows.

Accessibility

Adjust scheduling by providing extended hours to make appointments more convenient for participants. Open additional clinics in the community or on bus lines.

Transportation problems? Provide transportation. Participants who have transportation problems can be scheduled at the same time as friends or relatives who are also on WIC and who can offer the client a ride. Work with volunteer organizations to provide transportation. Conduct home visits.



Waiting for no-shows can add up to inefficiency in a clinic.

Make WIC attractive. Offer additional services. Combine with other community programs such as Head Start to provide nutrition-education classes. Provide creative nutrition-education classes. Emphasize the nutrition value of WIC foods. Provide participants with self-paced educational modules as an alternative to attending a class. Conduct classes more frequently. Emphasize the importance of keeping appointments.

Outreach

Continue to do outreach. Advertise WIC on inserts stuffed into monthly utility bills. Educate the public about WIC being a program for working families. Distribute attractive, updated health-promotion fliers. Work with schools to get pregnant teens or teens with children onto WIC. Get volunteers to do outreach. Put up fliers in grocery stores. Ask your local theaters to make announcements about WIC.

And more

Set up special times for fostering families. Entertain the children with videos, busy beads, etc. Tell participants about everything that they need to bring. Develop a calendar with a page that lists the items needed for a WIC appointment.

Charities can't replace food lost to welfare reform

A national analysis recently completed by the Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty, and Nutrition Policy for an anti-hunger group, Second Harvest, found that private charities are extremely unlikely to be able to make up the difference when federal Food Stamps Program spending is cut by \$27.7 billion over the next six years under the nation's new welfare-reform law.

The study sought to determine whether the extensive national community of private emergency food-assistance providers served by the Second Harvest network could collect and distribute enough food to cover the shortfall resulting from Food Stamps funding cuts.

Texas stands to lose \$2.5 billion in funding through 2002, surpassed only by New York's projected loss of \$3.88 billion and California's loss of \$3.98 billion. Translated into real-life terms, this comes to more than 1.8 billion meals lost, or 1.7 million people who could be fed three meals per day for one year.

Put another way, it would take 430,000 trucks, at 5,000 pounds per truck, to carry all of Texas' lost food. The convoy formed by those trucks would stretch nearly 54,000 miles, at eight trucks per mile, completely filling every mile of interstate highway and U.S. highway in Texas, with trucks to spare.



Et cetera

Compiled by Richard Zelade
Staff Writer

Child-safety seats recalled

About 1.4 million Evenflo child-safety seats have been recalled by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for failure to meet federal safety standards. One recall targets Evenflo Champion seats with model numbers beginning with 224, and Scout seats with model numbers beginning with 229. When used in the forward-facing, fully upright position, these seats allowed greater-than-permitted chest forces.

Owners should call Evenflo at (800) 490-7497 for a recline arm-replacement kit. The new recline arm prevents the seat from being used in the fully upright position.

A second recall includes Evenflo Champion, Scout, and Trooper models with model numbers beginning with 219, 224, 225, or 229.

These seats failed to meet standards for the distance by which a child's head can move forward when the seat is used in a forward-facing position.

Owners should call Evenflo at (800) 233-5921 for a free replacement of the harness adjuster.

Stove tip-over hazards

Stove tip-overs don't occur very often, but when they do, they are often catastrophic, especially when the stove is turned on. In 1986, a 3-year-old San Antonio girl tipped over a hot stove in her kitchen. One arm was trapped under a hot broiler and had to be amputated above the elbow.

That case and others like it prompted stove manufacturers to adopt new design standards in 1991 that lessen the danger of tip-overs, including anchor and stabilizing brackets and plates, tethers, and bolts. But poor installation and the millions of pre-1991 stoves still in use mean that accidents still occur.

With children, tip-overs usually occur when two or more children are playing together. Some people have been injured when they clean ovens and then grab the stove's top edge to pull themselves back up.

Here's how to test whether a stove is a tip-over hazard: With the stove cold and turned off, with nothing hot on top, open and lower the oven door and apply weight to the door. If the stove begins to tip, it is not properly secured. The stove owner should then contact the manufacturer to request an anchor or stabilizing kit.

Stove manufacturers can be reached as follows:

- ◆ Frigidaire — (800) 451-7007.
- ◆ General Electric — (800) 626-2000.
- ◆ Sears — (800) 473-7247.
- ◆ Whirlpool — (800) 253-1301.

<http://www.tdh.state.tx.us/wic/mainpage.htm>

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