



# KENTUCKY NUTRITION EDUCATION PROGRAM

## 2021 ANNUAL REPORT: TAYLOR COUNTY

### OUR FOCUS

The Kentucky Nutrition Education Program (KYNEP or NEP) encompasses two separate USDA programs: The Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Both programs provide educational opportunities for limited-resource individuals and families to acquire knowledge, develop skills, and change behaviors for improved health and well-being.

### OUR CHALLENGE

#### Poverty

According to U.S. Census estimates for 2020, the median household income in Kentucky is \$52,256, 20% lower than the U.S. median household income of \$65,712.<sup>1</sup> Kentucky also has higher percentages of overall and child poverty<sup>1</sup> and food insecurity<sup>2</sup> among its population compared to 2020 Census and Department of Agriculture estimates for the United States overall.

	Kentucky	U.S.
<b>Total Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	16.0%	12.3%
<b>Child Poverty<sup>1</sup></b>	20.9%	16.8%
<b>Food Insecurity<sup>2</sup></b>	13.8%	10.5%

In 2020, an estimated 17.9% of Taylor County residents overall lived in poverty, and an estimated 21 were residents under age 18.<sup>1</sup>

#### Obesity and physical inactivity

Today, 60% of all Americans live with at least one chronic disease. These include heart disease and stroke, cancer, and diabetes.<sup>3</sup> These diseases are all associated with obesity and physical inactivity. In 2020, Kentucky ranked



in the top five states in the country for obesity with a rate of 36.6% for adults.<sup>4</sup> The percentage of physically inactive Kentuckians is 32%, ranking it in the top seven most physically inactive states in the nation.<sup>5</sup> A large amount of data show that healthy eating habits and regular physical activity can help people achieve and maintain good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease throughout life.<sup>3</sup>

The County Health Rankings and Roadmaps Kentucky report shows that 39% of Taylor County's adult population have obesity and 37% were physically inactive.<sup>5</sup>

## OUR SOLUTION

Provide hands-on nutrition education to limited-resource audiences, focusing on:

- Buying and preparing healthy foods
- Developing new meal planning and cooking skills
- Adopting new healthy lifestyle behaviors
- Managing SNAP resources

In 2021, 1,432 contacts were made with Taylor County residents who participated in nutrition education programming.

## OUR RESULTS

### IN TAYLOR COUNTY

#### Lifestyle improvements

In 2021, **98%** of adult participants made a positive change in food group choices and **88%** showed improvement in one or more food safety practices. In addition, **88%** showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices and **59%** made changes to be more physically active.



## OUR SUCCESS

### Kindergarten Gardening Program

School gardens help to extend the classroom beyond traditional settings by expanding it outside. This provides students with hands-on learning opportunities while increasing environmental awareness and vital experiences in problem solving. The EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) assistant visited 200 students in eight kindergarten classes at Taylor County Primary Center for monthly classes, using the LEAP (Literacy, Eating and Activity for Preschool/Primary) program. Students listened to books on being healthy and sampled new foods. A favorite of the students was tasting greens like spinach and kale. The kindergarten classes started a small, raised bed project in the 2018-19 school year which complemented their LEAP lessons. The EFNEP assistant and the Horticulture agent partnered with Taylor County Primary kindergarten classes to expand a largely unused courtyard space into a larger classroom garden

space. Grant funds were received from the Taylor County Soil Conservation Service. Taylor County Master Gardeners were involved to help assist in the development of the space. Plans were being made to expand the garden when schools were closed for COVID-19. The EFNEP assistant continued to send support materials to the kindergarten teachers in the form of Chop Chop Magazine's Kids Club weekly newsletter and Wally Cat materials for teachers to use in their online class work for 200 kindergarteners through the end of the school year. The head teacher continued to be in contact with the EFNEP assistant and Horticulture agent and has continued to work in the space through the closure. Plans are to assist the school with this project through the summer so children will have a completed space when school resumes in 2020. When classes resume, we hope to see positive results from the youths being able to garden and eat the food that they grow.



#### University of Kentucky Nutrition Education Program Family and Consumer Sciences Extension

##### SOURCES:

1. U.S. Census Bureau Small Area and Income Poverty Estimates 2020
2. United States Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service
3. CDC National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion 2019
4. The State of Obesity Report 2020
5. CDC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

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