

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Healthy Drinks for Toddlers

University of Connecticut Rudd Center for Food Policy and Health

Overview

Healthy Drinks for Toddlers is a social marketing intervention designed for caregivers of young children to discourage provision of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) and encourage water consumption. The 45-second videos counter fruit drink and toddler milk marketing messages, inform caregivers about why these drinks are not recommended for young children and include a specific message to parents to “keep it simple, keep it real” by serving water and plain milk to their toddlers once weaned from breastmilk/infant formula. These materials provide SNAP households with young children accurate information about the best drinks to serve during their child’s transition from breastmilk/infant formula to regular table food, a critical time in development of healthy eating habits. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating **Intervention Type:** Social Marketing

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Available in both English and Spanish, Healthy Drinks for Toddlers targets caregivers of all racial and ethnic backgrounds, and materials can be used in a variety of community settings. One of the unexpected benefits of the Healthy Drinks for Toddlers videos is the way in which they appeal to grandparents. In the Facebook dissemination, it was found that grandparents were an audience that heavily engaged with the videos on social media. The videos have been viewed by over 775,000 parents and grandparents on social media. The videos were disseminated to over 100 early childhood organizations, researchers, and public health groups with links to the videos, resource page, and partner toolkit that includes sample social media and blog posts and newsletter article. **Setting:** Community, USDA program sites (not National School Lunch Program), WIC **Target Audience:** Pregnant/Breastfeeding Women, Parents/Mothers/Fathers **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

Healthy Drinks for Toddlers videos are extremely easy to implement or add to existing interventions addressing healthy drink provision. The only critical feature that needs to remain intact is the video itself. The videos have wide, multicultural appeal, are available in English and Spanish, and can easily be shared by SNAP-Ed programs via social media or digitally.

Intervention Materials

Healthy Drinks for Toddlers video resources can be found on their website here: <https://uconnruddcenter.org/healthydrinksfortoddlers/>. Resources include links to videos, toolkit for dissemination, as well as handouts and more information about healthy drinks for young children for parents/caregivers and nutrition professionals.

Intervention Costs

The intervention materials are available at no cost.

Evidence Summary

To develop this intervention, focus groups were conducted with a total of 50 caregivers using community partner contacts with library parent/child groups, childcare facilities, churches, WIC clinics, state breastfeeding coalitions, and local health care providers in low- to moderate-income neighborhoods to recruit focus group participants. Intervention developers also partnered with 1,000 Days (an initiative of FHI Solutions), a nonprofit with extensive experience developing social media content, to ensure that the videos reached the newsfeed of parents and caregivers of toddlers on social media. Video content was informed with the creation of focus group questions and concept sheets which facilitated semi-structured discussions. Pilot testing confirmed video messages were relevant, liked, understood, and remembered by target audiences and an experiment showed intended effects. A randomized controlled online experiment utilizing panel data with 624 parents of children ages 9 to 36 months was conducted. Over 1/3 of participants reported currently participating in SNAP. Parents were told that they would be responding to videos about parenting practices. They were randomly assigned to two conditions. The experimental group viewed the toddler milk and fruit drink videos created and the control group viewed two videos about tips for young children’s screen time. Parents exposed to toddler milk and fruit drink videos had significantly greater negative attitudes toward fruit drinks and toddler milks, lower intentions to serve fruit drinks and toddler milks, and greater intentions to serve plain milk as compared to the control group. **Evidence-based Approach:** Practice-Tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate intervention progress and success.

	Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)	Changes – Medium Term (MT)	Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual	<u>ST1</u>			
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence		<u>MT12</u>		

- ST1: Parents exposed to toddler milk and fruit drink videos had significantly greater negative attitudes toward fruit drinks and toddler milks

- ST1: Parents exposed to toddler milk and fruit drink videos had lower intentions to serve fruit drinks and toddler milks and greater intentions to serve plain milk.

Evaluation Materials

No evaluation materials are currently available.

Additional Information

The Healthy Drinks for Toddlers website, www.uconnruddcenter.org, includes links to video materials as well as additional resources for nutrition professionals and parents/caregivers. **Contact Person(s):** Frances Fleming-Milici Email: frances.fleming@uconn.edu Phone: 860-380-1015