

Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together

Promoting Healthy Weight in Children



The goal of this project is for the Massachusetts WIC Nutrition Program to provide culturally-sensitive education and to enhance coordination with the medical community and other partners in the promotion of healthy eating behaviors and healthy weights in children, particularly for Dominican and Puerto Rican children.

This project was developed through the assessment of anthropometric and body composition measures of nearly 400 children and with information from 24 focus groups of over 300 WIC mothers regarding the beliefs, diet environment, growth, and body image related to weight in children 2-5 years of age.

The *Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together* provides WIC nutrition staff with guidance, messages and material to use in discussing the sensitive topic of weight with parents and tools to utilize in coordinating services and promoting consistent messages with health care providers.



Weigh of Life...Taking Action Together materials include:

- ✓ **Project Implementation Manual** – a resource and training tool for all WIC nutrition counselors. This manual includes focus group findings, guidance and materials for effective coordination with health care providers, instruction on a new nine-step approach - that is more sensitive and connecting - to use when initiating discussions with families about a child's weight.
- ✓ **Emotion-Based Nutrition Education Messages** – to effectively communicate healthy weight messages
 - **Six key messages** that resonate with Hispanic families
 - Wall posters for health care providers
 - Mini-posters for WIC nutrition counseling sessions
 - **Child-size placemat**
- ✓ **Provider Toolkit** – for establishing successful partnerships and promoting consistent messages with WIC
 - Behavior change prescription pad, includes referral to WIC for parents to receive help on how to feed young children
 - *Steps to Healthy Weight in Children* – age-appropriate messages for use by both health care providers and WIC.
 - CD with printable nutrition and physical activity materials



Project funded through a 2001 USDA Special Projects Grant, *Cultural Perspectives of Childhood Overweight Among Hispanic WIC Participants in Massachusetts*.