
Subject: Nutrition Education – Evaluation of Nutrition Education Materials

Effective Date: October 1, 2015

Revised from: October 1, 2013

Policy:

Nutrition education and breastfeeding materials, developed or acquired by local or State Agency (SA) WIC staff, shall be evaluated by the local or SA WIC dietitian before their use with WIC clients. Nutrition education and breastfeeding materials must include current, scientifically valid information and adhere to WIC Policy. Evaluation of the materials will also include an evaluation of the readability and literacy level. No higher than a sixth grade reading level is recommended. A writer's checklist, readability index, or evaluation tool may be used for this evaluation. A copy of the material and its evaluation should be kept on file for review during SA management evaluations.

Reference: § 246.11, WIC Nutrition Services Standards, Standard 9

Procedure:

Follow the steps below to obtain or create nutrition education and breastfeeding materials:

1. Research available materials and information on the desired topic, utilizing reliable, scientifically valid sources.
2. Develop or acquire new materials for use in individual counseling or group class that comply with current WIC Policies and messages.
3. Use your choice of evaluation tools to review the materials for suitability with WIC audiences. Review the materials to see:
 - a. Are the words easy to read?
 - b. Is the piece interesting to the intended audience?
 - c. Is the information accurate and scientifically valid?
 - d. Is the use of abbreviations, contractions, and tables limited?
 - e. Is the font size large enough for ease of reading (12 point or larger)?
 - f. Is it aimed at the right reading level of most clients?
 - g. Does it limit the use of italics, boldface, underlining, and all caps?
 - h. Is it free of sponsor or product bias?
 - i. Is it free of infant formula promotion and infant formula container images?

Subject: Nutrition Education – Evaluation of Nutrition Education Materials

4. Use any reading index to assess the reading level of new materials. The “Fog Index”, for example, could be used as follows:
 - a. Pick a writing sample of 100 words.
 - b. Count words with 3 or more syllables.
 - c. Add the average sentence length and number of words with 3 syllables or more.
 - d. Multiply the sum by 0.4.
 - e. The result will equate to reading grade level.
 - f. Avoid counting capitalized words, proper nouns
 - g. Avoid including verbs made into three syllables by adding –es or –ed.
 - h. Avoid using words that are short-word combos

5. File the new material with its evaluation. Keep for 3 years for review during SA management evaluations.