

Evaluation of a Social Marketing Campaign Targeting Preschool Children

Susan L. Johnson, PhD; Laura Bellows, MPH, RD; Leslie Beckstrom, MS, RD
Jennifer Anderson, PhD, RD

Objectives: To determine the effectiveness of a pilot social marketing program to increase preschoolers' willingness to try new foods. **Methods:** Four Head Start centers participated (2 experimental, 2 control) in a study using a quasi-experimental design. Experimental sites received a 12-week intervention developed using social marketing techniques. The program was evaluated via preference assessments, classroom observations,

and teacher surveys. **Results:** Increased preference for and willingness to try new foods were observed in children from the experimental sites ($P < 0.05$). The program was positively received by Head Start staff. **Conclusions:** A social marketing campaign is an effective method to reduce children's neophobia.

Key words: social marketing, neophobia, preschooler, food preference, Head Start

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