

Texas Child Feeding Study

Background

The Texas Child Feeding Study was conducted by the University of Texas at Austin Nutrition Education Team (UTNE), in collaboration with the Texas Department of State Health Services WIC Nutrition Education group (DSHS).

Why study child feeding in Texas?

By better understanding the context in which parents feed their preschool-age children, WIC can design relevant nutrition education programs.

What did we learn?

- 1) What are kids in Texas eating and drinking?
- 2) What do parents think about when it comes to feeding their kids?
- 3) How is WIC involvement related to children's food intake and to parents' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors?

What did we ask about?

- **Child food intake:** We asked about children's food intake from the previous week through a food frequency questionnaire. The FFQ included fruits, vegetables, WIC foods, iron-rich foods, calcium-rich foods, sweets, sweetened drinks.
- **Food preparation**
- **Shopping for food**
- **Food security**
- **Parental self-efficacy for feeding fruits and vegetables**
- **Parental feeding practices and beliefs:** Includes subscales related to picky eating, concern about child's weight, concern about child overeating, and using food to calm child.
- **Nutrition knowledge:** Multiple-choice questions related to WIC nutrition education materials.

How did we gather information?

- **UTNE and DSHS developed a survey instrument with input from the Texas Association of Local WIC Directors.** The survey was field tested and piloted with WIC clients.
- **Between September and October 2006, trained interviewers conducted 721 telephone interviews with Texas households with at least one child between the ages of 1 and 5 years.** Households were selected to represent the geographic and ethnic distribution of Texas.

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¹ Results from the Texas Child Feeding Study, conducted by the University of Texas at Austin Nutrition Education Team, in conjunction with the Texas Dept. of State Health Service. Seven hundred and twenty-one (721) Texas households were surveyed. Households had at least one child between the ages of 1 and 5 years and were grouped into the following categories WIC households (n=241); low-income, non-WIC households (n=274); middle to high-income households (n=203). For more information on the study, contact Shellie Shores at: shellie.shores@dshs.state.tx.us.



Whom did we ask?

- WIC households
- Low-income non-WIC households
- Higher-income households
- Income categories were determined based on the reported monthly household income and the number of people in the household. The WIC income eligibility criterion (185% of federal poverty level) was used as a cutoff between low and higher income.

Who answered the survey? See Table 1.

As expected, the higher income group differed significantly from both the WIC and low-income non-WIC group on most demographic items.

The WIC and low-income non-WIC groups were similar in some areas:

- Respondent gender
- Relationship of respondent to child
- Ethnicity
- Household size
- Number of children in the household
- Gender of child

The WIC and low-income non-WIC groups were different in other areas:

- Income
- Employment
- Education
- Marital Status
- Main language spoken at home
- Age of the child

Table 1.
RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

	WIC participants n=241 (33%)	Low-income, non-WIC n=274 (38%)	Higher-income, non-WIC n=203 (29%)
Average age of respondent (add range)	31.3 (±10.86)	33.6 (±10.05)	34.2 (±8.53)
Female respondent	89%	88%	80%
Relationship of respondent to child			
Mother	78%	73%	76%
Father	10%	9%	19%
Grandmother	9%	12%	5%
Other	3%	6%	1%
Ethnicity			
White	19%	26%	49%
Black	13%	15%	6%
Hispanic	60%	54%	33%
Other	2%	4%	8%
Total monthly household income			
<\$1,000	36%	17%	0
\$1,000-\$1,999	46%	34%	0
\$2,000-\$2,999	18%	36%	1%
\$3,000-\$3,999	0	13%	23%
\$4,000-\$4,999	0	0.50%	26%
\$5,000-\$5,999	0	0	14%
\$6,000 or higher	0	0	26%
Education level			
< High school	38%	27%	5%
High school graduate / GED	31%	26%	15%
Some college / college graduate	31%	47%	80%
Marital status			
Single	27%	23%	4%
Married	67%	70%	93%
Divorced / widowed	7%	7%	4%
Do you have a job?			
No	58%	49%	25%
Yes, full-time	27%	42%	63%
Yes, part-time	15%	10%	12%
Average number of people in the household	4.85 (±1.51)	4.66 (±1.32)	4.13 (±1.12)
Average number of children under age 16 in household	2.56 (±1.24)	2.42 (±1.11)	1.98 (±.84)
Main language spoken at home			
English	65%	79%	91%
Spanish	32%	20%	8%
Both English and Spanish	3%	1%	2%
Average child age	3	3.4	3.4
Boy child	54%	51%	51%

For more information about this study series, please visit:

www.dshs.state.tx.us/wichd/nut/riskreport-nut.shtm

