

Accommodating Children



Children are an integral part of WIC. In many cases, they are the participants. It can be easy to lose sight of this in a classroom with fussy babies and active toddlers. Several things can be done to provide a quality nutrition education experience for parents who choose to bring their children.

Techniques:

- When possible, include children in the group activities or make them the focus of the activity.
- At the beginning of class tell parents that it is OK to leave the room if child needs to be taken out of the room for any reason. Normalize the issue by expressing understanding for normal childhood behavior.
- Consider setting aside a corner of the room for children. Provide child-sized furniture, big cushions or a rug. Bring pictures to color or puzzles to complete.
- Arrange the room with a space for parents to walk with the child and remain in class. Sometimes, walking the children will soothe and eventually quiet them.

Facilitation Strategies

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Techniques continued:

- If the child's behavior is so distracting that the others in the class cannot pay attention:
 - Ask whether the parent would like to take the child outside.
 - Communicate sympathy for the parent's problem. Try not to convey feelings of anger or irritation. The parent is probably trying to do their best.
- Infants and young children usually sit on their parent's lap. If the child behavior becomes a minor distraction, consider using it as a teaching point. If talking about child development, point out something that is typical for the child's age group.

Your ideas:

