

Illinois WIC Program Nutrition Practice Standards (NPS)

Effective Secondary Education April 2024

Nutrition Practice Standards are provided to assist staff in translating policy into practice. This guidance is intended to be used in conjunction with the Illinois WIC Policy Manual, Nutrition Education section to assist in the planning and presentation of secondary education to meet program requirements and participants' needs. For more information on documenting secondary education follow Addenda *I-WIC Flow Sheets* and *NPS Documenting in WIC MIS*.

The local agency must assure that the staff person responsible for providing nutrition education for WIC participants meets the qualification for a Competent Professional Authority (CPA) per Federal Requirements or a trained Competent Professional Authority Assistant (CPAA) per IL WIC PM AD 12.

Frontline staff may issue benefits to children who are not in need of food package changes and are not issued Medically Prescribed Formula (MPF) (Addendum 1). All other categories must have benefits issued by the CPA to ensure required education is offered (Addendum 2).

Nutrition Education Resources

The following resources and educational materials can be used to assist in providing effective nutrition and breastfeeding education. For agencies with significant numbers of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) participants, efforts should be made to include materials in languages other than English, and the reading level of participants.

USDA and Food & Nutrition Services (FNS)

The USDA and FNS have a number of resources to provide local agencies with the tools needed to provide effective nutrition education.

1. [Provide Nutrition Education | Food and Nutrition Service \(usda.gov\)](#): the links on this webpage will provide information, educational materials, and creative ideas to make learning about nutrition fun for all ages.
2. [Explore Resources | WIC Works Resource System \(usda.gov\)](#) is a resource, education and training center for WIC staff. Resources are provided by topic (e.g., breastfeeding, childhood, nutrition education, infancy and health and wellness) and include participant handouts, presentations, guidance and assessment tools, images and videos.

Illinois WIC Resources

The Illinois WIC Program provides nutrition education materials that have been developed to assist local WIC agencies in incorporating concepts that engage the learner and meet the program expectations. Visit the Community Health Training Center website, [Illinois WIC Nutrition Education Materials and Resources](#) page for details on resources available.

DHS Handouts

Printed materials should be easily understood by the participant, culturally diverse and must be consistent with USDA guidance and [WIC Nutrition Services Standards](#). DHS developed education materials meet these expectations and cover common nutrition concerns for each category. It is recommended that all non-USDA and Department educational materials and

audio-visuals be evaluated initially by your Regional Nutritionist Consultant to ensure compliance with Program requirements.

Visit the Community Health Training Center website, [Materials and Resource Library](#) page for details. View, print or scan QR codes of DHS handouts using the WIC Centralized Resource Library excel document. To order handouts complete the WIC Materials Order Form. Review the WIC Centralized Resource Library PowerPoint to learn more about these resources.

Effective Nutrition Education

In providing effective individual nutrition education, there are several resources that can be used, such as Illinois WIC Talks “Topic Cover Page and Overview”, Circle Charts, and Participant Centered Counseling skills. Nutrition education offered must be pertinent to the participant’s category, nutritional needs, and interests.

WIC Talks - Topic Cover Page and Overview: Provides open-ended questions that can be used to facilitate a discussion around a selected topic.

Circle Charts: Pre-filled circle charts are category specific and include key messages with common nutrition related concerns. Each chart provides suggestions on questions to initiate a conversation and guidance to facilitate behavior change around that topic. Blank circle charts are also available.

Participant Centered Counseling: Utilizing counseling skills during individual education visits is important to providing individualized education that facilitates behavior change. For more details, review the *NPS Effective Counseling Skills* and attend regional trainings provided by the Department.

CPA / CPAA staff must ensure required education is offered per Federal Requirements and IL WIC PM NE 5.2 and IL WI CPM SFD 7.5. Handouts to assist in guiding the education are provided as addenda to policy and available to order through the WIC Materials Order Form.

Secondary Education Contacts

There are multiple ways to deliver secondary nutrition education (e.g., individual education, online education, group sessions, and self-study modules). At the time of certification, WIC staff must advise participants of their secondary education options. Whichever method is chosen must incorporate effective nutrition education concepts and guidance.

Online Education

Online education provides innovative and alternative nutrition education to participants and allows the option of learning on your own time and anywhere with internet access. WIChealth incorporates the goals of WIC nutrition education (IL WIC PM NE 2.1) into an internet-based health information website approved for use by the Illinois WIC Program.

WIChealth offers over 50 nutrition education lessons in English and Spanish that are participant-centered, flexible and tailored to the needs of WIC participants. Education is based on the promoting positive behavior change, focusing on where the participant currently is and moving them towards optimal health. Parents or caregivers can complete a lesson on their phone, tablet or computer and this counts for secondary nutrition education.

WIChealth also offers 1500 other resources, coordinated content and support.

Visit the Community Health Training Center website, [Illinois WIC Nutrition Education Materials and Resources](#) page for more information on WIChealth, including a training module.

Following local agency receipt of proof of WIChealth module completion, benefits may be issued remotely per IL WIC PM SFD 8.1.

Individual Education

Individual education may be preferred when several family members are on the program, to accommodate family's scheduling needs and/or to provide a more individualized education visit. Follow-up must be provided from the previous contact, including progress on their nutrition goal, nutrition or health related conditions, medically prescribed formula, referrals, and additional individualized education offered.

There are several different forms of individual education – in person, telephone, or high-risk follow-up.

- *In Person Education* is completed at the local agency. Participants may prefer the easier communication, immediate support and interactive nutrition education.
- *Telephone Education* is completed remotely (staff and/or participant is not in the local agency). It improves access to nutrition education and health professionals, overcoming barriers of time and location. Following completion, benefits may be issued remotely per IL WIC PM SFD 8.1.
- *High Risk Follow Up* follows the same protocol as individual education but also includes updated health data (height, weight, and/or hemoglobin).

Group Nutrition Education

Group education provides an opportunity for parents and caregivers to interact and learn together with a qualified health professional. It also can free up clinic time by completing multiple secondary education visits at one time. Sessions must be interactive, and participant centered and should be no longer than 30 minutes.

Remote group education or support groups have the same benefits to group education but also offer improved access and more comfort in sharing reactions and ideas. Following completion, benefits may be issued remotely per IL WIC PM SFD 8.1.

Group education should utilize facilitated discussion to actively involve the presenter and participants. The goal is to get the group to share/discuss their knowledge, experiences, and ideas while the facilitator leads the discussion, touching on 1-3 key messages for the topic.

- Use at least one open-ended question before or after presenting information to stimulate discussion and get the learners to share what they know or have heard about a particular topic. The facilitator guides the conversation and can refer to the "Sample Responses" as provided in the Illinois WIC Talks lesson plans.
- "*Sample Responses*": are designed to assist the presenter in facilitating the conversation and reinforce key messages. Use phrases such as: "some other ideas are..."; "health professionals also say..."; "some moms tell me..." If no "sample responses" are provided in the lesson plan, allow participants to share, then affirm, add and move on to the next question.

- Facilitated discussion works best under the following conditions:
 1. Large enough space to set up chairs to face one another (circle or half-circle)
 2. 3-20 participants
 3. Participants have some knowledge of or experience in the topic

If using audiovisuals, the length should be no longer than 5-10 minutes to allow for active learning (i.e., facilitated discussion, activities). The audiovisual should complement the session but should not be the session.

Self-Study Modules (SSM)

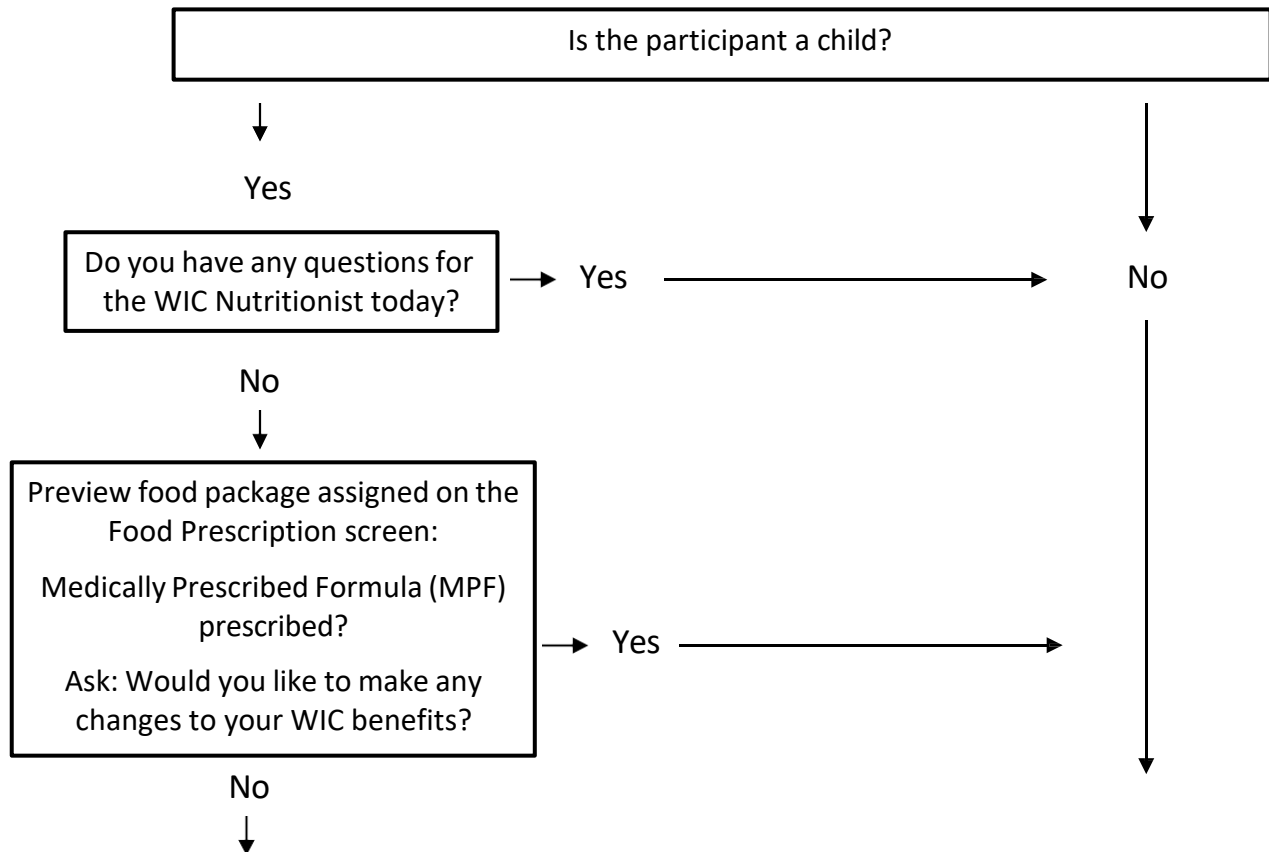
Self-study modules, walk-thru or poster modules may be offered as an alternative education method allowing participants to learn at their own pace while allowing for flexibility in scheduling. Since group, individual or online education options allow the opportunity to personalize the participant's learning experience, these are the preferred methods for effective nutrition education that promotes positive behavior change. When providing SSM, consider using the "WIC Talks", Self-Study Module (SSM) component. Agencies developing their own SSM must ensure it is interactive and includes an evaluation component, which measures both knowledge and behavior change.

CPA/CPAA must see participants following completion of a SSM to allow for an opportunity to ask questions, address any concerns and/or make needed referrals.

Addendum 1

Benefit Issuance by Frontline

- Food packages are *assigned* only by the CPA on the Food Prescription screen.
- Benefits are *issued* to the family's EBT card on the Benefits Issue screen by either the CPA or Frontline.
- Frontline should use the following decision tree to help identify if they can issue benefits.



Frontline can:

1. Issue Benefits
2. Ensure participant has the current:
 - a. Vendor List
 - b. Illinois WIC Authorized Food List
 - c. Family Shopping List (secure transmission)

CPA will:

3. Provide required education
4. Answer any questions
5. Modify food prescription / Confirm need for MPF*
6. Complete steps 1-2

**CPAA must refer MPF to CPA.*

See Addendum 2 to for required education for Exit Counseling (IL WIC PM NE 5.2).

Addendum 2

Exit Counseling Guidance for PG/NP/BE/BP Categories

Internet/WIChealth education

1. After receiving participant's WIChealth certificate, the participant must be contacted by a CPA.
2. Before calling the participant, review the N/Ed screen in IWIC for the WIChealth lesson topic that was completed, as well as any goals identified by the participant in the WIChealth lesson. Also review the certification visit note for any previous education provided and goal(s) identified. This will help tailor the exit counseling session to the participant's needs.
3. Call the participant. The following sample script may be used upon reaching the participant by phone:

"Hi, _____. Thank you for completing your nutrition education lesson online/at WIChealth.org. There are just a few things we wanted to follow up on before issuing your next set of benefits; do you have a few minutes to go over those now?"

4. When participant is ready to discuss:
 - a) Ask about any questions or concerns related to WIC shopping/EBT card use.
 - b) Ask about any changes to food package(s) needed.
 - c) Offer/provide exit counseling using the exit counseling brochure as a guide and offer to send the appropriate brochure (*Stay Healthy & Connected with WIC During Pregnancy* or *Stay Healthy & Connected with WIC After Delivery*) – mail or electronic – to the participant. The following sample script(s) may be used when offering exit counseling after WIChealth completion:

"I see that you recently completed a lesson on _____ on the WIChealth website, and your goal was _____. We also discussed [education topic/health goal(s)] at your certification visit. What questions can I answer about anything you've learned so far?... Tell me about your progress on your goal(s) so far."

Probe for additional needs, if appropriate, focusing on exit counseling messages:

"Can we offer you any information on or referrals to other services, such as breastfeeding support, immunizations, emotional support, other health services?"

Offer to email/mail/text the appropriate exit counseling brochure:

"Is it ok if I send you our handout with information on a variety of nutrition and health topics for you to review later?"

- d) Schedule next appointment, if applicable.
- e) Document that exit counseling was provided on the Nutrition Education screen in WIC MIS. Select the Topic "Exit Counseling" from the dropdown options. If education and/or handout offered and declined, clarify in the note.

Individual secondary education

1. CPAs should utilize participant-centered counseling techniques with an emphasis on exit counseling topics to focus the nutrition education session. Review the appropriate *Stay Healthy & Connected with WIC* brochure with the participant.
 - a. Before starting the secondary education visit, review the certification visit note for any previous education provided and goal(s) identified. This will help tailor the exit counseling session to the participant's needs.

- b. The following sample script(s) may be used when offering exit counseling during an individual nutrition education session, using the exit counseling brochure as a guide to focus the discussion:

“Hi, _____. Welcome back to WIC. Today’s visit is a nutrition education check-in. How have things been going since we last saw you?... At your last visit, we discussed [education topic/health goal(s)]. What questions can I answer today about [nutrition/health/breastfeeding/etc]?... Tell me about your progress on your goal(s) so far.”

Probe for additional needs, if appropriate, focusing on exit counseling messages:

“Can we offer you any information on or referrals to other services, such as breastfeeding support, immunizations, emotional support, other health services?”

Offer the exit counseling brochure to the participant:

“Would you like this handout [we just reviewed/to review later] with information on a variety of nutrition and health topics to take home?”

2. Complete the appointment by addressing any questions/concerns with WIC shopping/EBT card use, making any necessary food package changes, and scheduling the next appointment, if applicable.
3. Document that exit counseling was provided on the Nutrition Education screen in WIC MIS. Select the Topic “Exit Counseling” from the dropdown options. If education and/or handout offered and declined, clarify in the note.

Group nutrition education

1. Group nutrition education for woman category participants should focus on one or more key exit counseling messages and exit counseling topics must be incorporated into the group education lesson plans.
2. The category-specific *Stay Healthy & Connected with WIC* brochure must be offered to all group education attendants.
3. Document “exit counseling provided” in the nutrition education note, along with any other Group Education note details per *NPS: Documenting in WIC MIS*.

Self-study module

The *Stay Healthy & Connected with WIC* exit counseling brochures are designed to be used as self-study modules, if appropriate based on participant needs.

1. Provide participant with a copy of the appropriate exit counseling brochure; instruct them to read/review the content, and complete #s 1 and 4 while they wait to have a brief check-in with a nutritionist.
2. When complete, a CPA will then meet with the participant to:
 - a. Review the exit counseling brochure with the participant – answer questions; provide education, counseling, and/or referrals
 - b. Schedule next appointment, if applicable
 - c. Document that exit counseling was provided on the Nutrition Education screen in WIC MIS. Select the Topic “Exit Counseling” from the dropdown options. If education and/or handout offered and declined, clarify in the note.