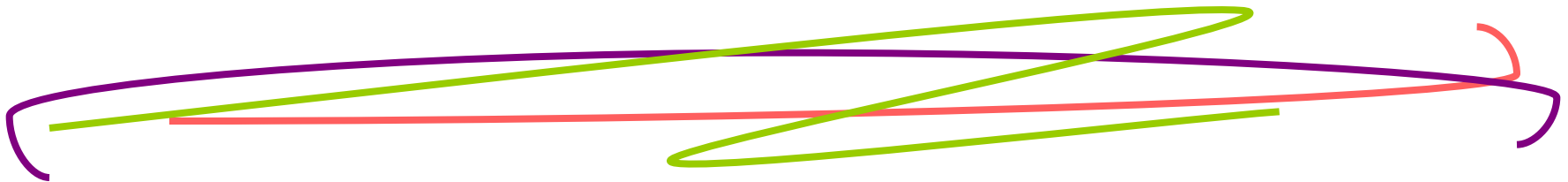




WOMEN, INFANTS & CHILDREN

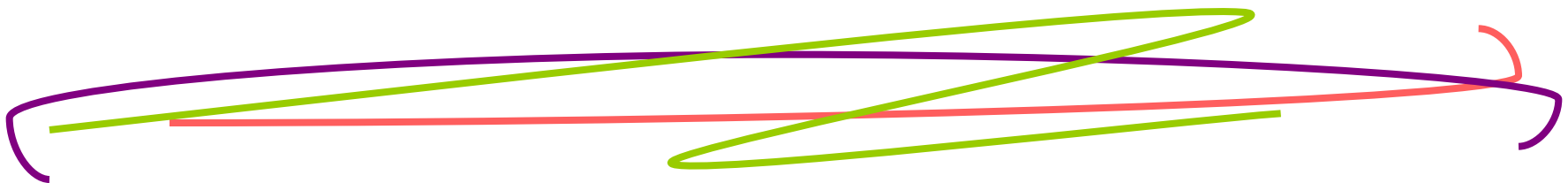
Families grow healthy with WIC





# Replacing Outdated Assessment Tools to Apply Adult Learning Theory

## The California Experience





# Summary of My Talk

- **Doing away with traditional dietary assessment tools forces a discussion about the purpose of assessment;**
- **The two purposes for assessment in WIC are:**
  - Eligibility determination; and
  - What the client wants to learn about;
- **Spending time educating on the participant's interests is worth the effort– VENA allows the time;**
- **Blending the two purposes into an educational dialogue with the participant requires critical thinking skills;**
- **WIC needs to hire and train for these skills.**



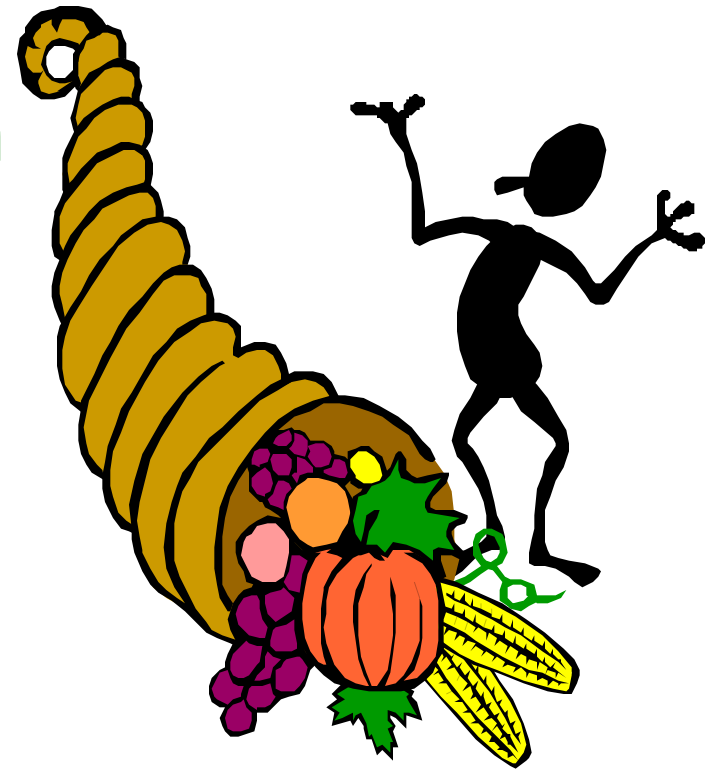
# Institute of Medicine Finding, December 2002

**“Even research-quality dietary assessment methods are not sufficiently accurate or precise to distinguish an individual’s eligibility status using criteria based on the Food Guide Pyramid or on nutrient intake.”**



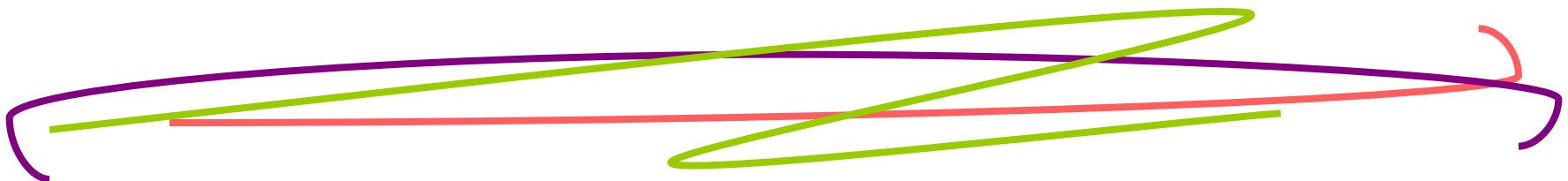
# IOM Recommendation

**“Presume that all women, and children ages 2 to 5 years, ... meet the [eligibility] requirement of nutrition risk based on Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines.”**



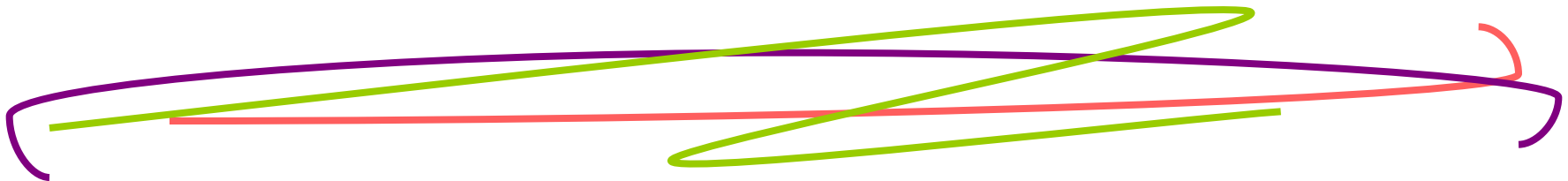
# First Thoughts–

- **No more 24-hour recalls or food frequencies!**
- **No more adding up servings!**
- **No more food models!**
- **No more .....**



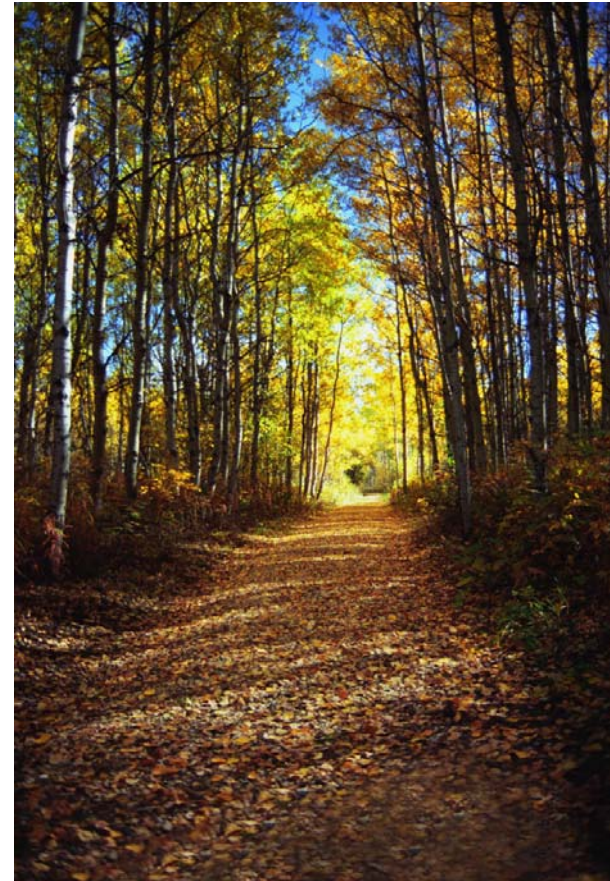
# Second Thoughts–

- ❖ How do I know what to talk about??
- ❖ What if the person I'm talking to goes off about something that's not related to nutrition?
- ❖ What if I don't know the answer, or even what to say next?



# Third Thoughts–

- ❖ **We knew where we were trying to go....**
- ❖ **Learner-centered education methods**
- ❖ **And now, we have evidence that it works.**







# Learner-centered Education (LCE) Evaluation Study

- **USDA– Committed to Revitalizing Nutrition Services**
- **CA WIC–Three-year Special Project grant**
- **UC Berkeley– research-based model**
- **10 Local WIC programs volunteered**
  - **5 Intervention– use LCE approach**
  - **5 “controls– stay with traditional model**



# The Design:

## Intervention

## Control

- ❖ **One-year of staff training in learner-centered education methods, “Finding the Teacher Within”**
- ❖ **An LCE-based Fruit & Veggie class design**

- ❖ **Traditional staff training in usual “lecture-style” classes**
- ❖ **A traditional Fruit and Vegetable class design**

# Study Results

- **Intervention teachers placed more value on open-ended questions and on learner-to-learner education;**



# Study Results



- **Intervention group mothers identified specific reasons why information from the class was important to their lives;**

# Study Results

- More intervention participants increased how often in the last month on average they ate other vegetables (not potatoes).



# Quotes from WIC Learners

- ❖ ***“I think it helps the kids stay regular. She’s hardly ever constipated because of the vegetables.”***
- ❖ ***“And also they end up more satisfied and don’t go around taking whatever else there is, like candy.”***





# Quotes from LCE Learners



***“I never had kiwi until after this class. Certain vegetables, you know, I didn’t know how to prepare ‘em, so now I’m this amazing mom.”***



# Quotes from LCE Learners

**“My children were paying attention to the class and from then on my eldest eats more vegetables. When we shop, she asks me to buy more vegetables and that is what she takes to school, the small carrots.”**





# The Balancing Act

- ❖ **Make sure we meet the federal regulations to conduct a complete nutrition assessment;**
- ❖ **Determine a risk for WIC eligibility;**  
**and**
- ❖ **Start a dialogue with the participant about what s/he wants and needs related to nutrition and health.**





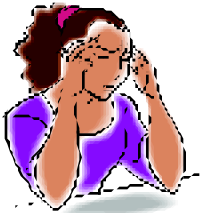
# A Complete Assessment

- ❖ **A = Measure height/length and weight and assess weight status (automated)**
- ❖ **B = Record blood test results and assess for anemia (automated)**
- ❖ **C = Obtain a brief health history to identify any clinical issues (record answers)**
- ❖ **D = Ask screening questions to identify any inappropriate feeding/eating practices**
- ❖ **L = What the participant wants to learn about**

# One Example of a Tool

“Today I’d like to talk about...”

**Discomforts of  
Pregnancy**



**Weight  
Gain**



**Infant Feeding**



“I’m craving...”  
“I can’t  
stand...”



**What to Eat  
during  
Pregnancy**



**I’d rather  
talk about  
something  
else...**



# How This Assessment Tool Gets Us to Learner-centered Education

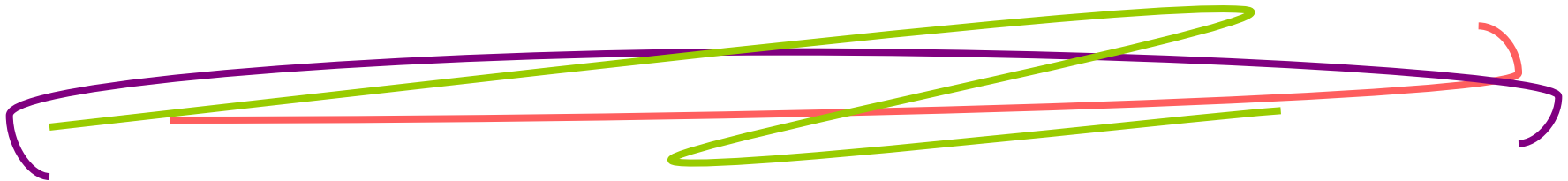
- **Dietary assessment is still needed as part of preparing to educate:**
- **We assess what the client needs– and what s/he wants to know about; then,**
- **The educator must carefully weigh which items of information to convey.**



# LCE and VENA: Lessons Learned

**Training and reinforcement are intense:**

- **Two one-week courses for class designers and trainers**
- **One four-day course for teachers**
- **Constant follow-up and reinforcement**





# LCE: Lessons Learned

## ● Critical Thinking Skills– How to:

- Compile the nutrition and health risks;
- Listen to participant's interests and perceived needs;
- Prioritize topics; and
- Share relevant information only.

# LCE: Lessons Learned

Options for balancing participant interests with identified risks:

- The two are the same
- “Weave” the risk topic into the discussion of participant’s choice;
- Defer until next WIC visit (document): or
- Ask permission to also talk about the risk subject.



# Enhancing WIC Foods





# Healthy Eating, Active Living

WIC education needs to focus on skills parents need to:

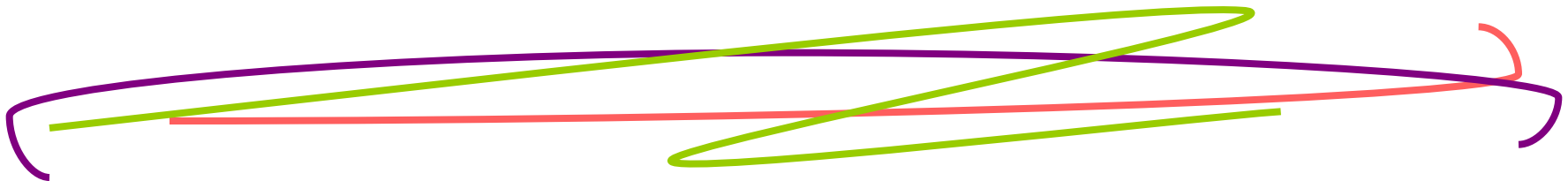
- ✿ Sustain breastfeeding;
- ✿ Transition from milk to complementary foods;
- ✿ Promote the ability of toddlers to recognize
- ✿ hunger and satiety;
- ✿ Model an active lifestyle.





# To Recap My Talk

- ❖ **Doing away with traditional dietary assessment tools forces a discussion about the purpose of assessment:**
  - ❖ Eligibility determination; and
  - ❖ What the client wants to learn about.
- ❖ **Until now, WIC staff has not had time to spend on the participant's interests; now we can and should since— when done well— it works;**
- ❖ **WIC needs to hire and train for critical thinking skills.**



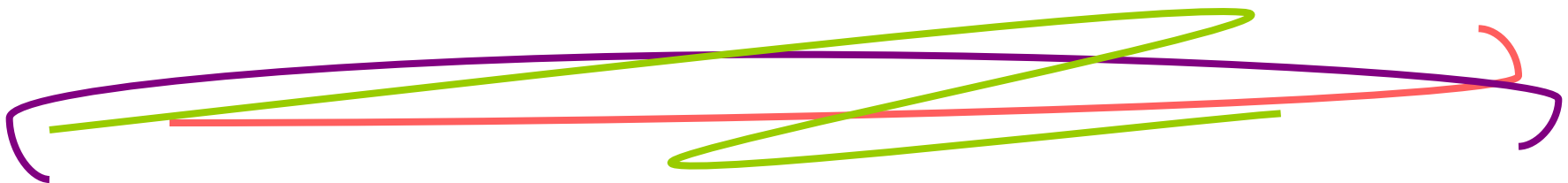


# Contact Information

**Michele Y. van Eyken, MPH, RD**  
**Deputy Chief, Nutrition Services**  
**California WIC Program**

[Michele.van.Eyken@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:Michele.van.Eyken@cdph.ca.gov)

[www.wicworks.ca.gov](http://www.wicworks.ca.gov)





# Families Grow Healthy with WIC

