

Title: What about the Children? : The Experience of Families Involved in an Adult Focused Diabetes Intervention

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Abstract

Objective: Among adults with diabetes attempting to change their own diets, we explored how these adults approached providing food for their children and how their children reacted to dietary changes in the household.

Design: The research design used semi-structured parallel individual interviews of adults and a child (age 10-17) in their home. Interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, coded and analyzed for themes.

Subjects: Subjects included families in which one inner-city African American or Latino adult with diabetes had completed a diabetes intervention promoting healthy dietary behaviors.

Results: We completed 29 interviews (14 adult-child pairs and one child). Adults approached making dietary changes for themselves and also providing food for their family in different ways, ranging from expecting everyone to eat the same thing to preparing two separate meals. Many children resisted dietary changes while fewer acquiesced. Among children who went along with changes, some reported resisting initially then adjusting, while others did not resist because the food still tasted good or they could obtain preferred foods outside of the house. The intersection of adults' meal strategies and children's reactions to the changes can be used to categorize families into different patterns. These patterns highlight the tension between an adult who must make dietary changes to control diabetes and a child who is not necessarily motivated to change.

Conclusion: From this framework we suggest hypotheses about how these patterns might influence dietary behavior in adults and children. Understanding these patterns could guide interventions to assist parents in successfully including children in their dietary changes.