Youth programs in EFNEP and ESNY help youth acquire knowledge and skill mastery toward targeted behavioral outcomes that contribute to nutritional well being and positive youth development. Conducted primarily with groups of youth in after-school, summer camp and other settings, curricula use hands-on teaching strategies to encourage healthy eating and active lifestyles, including food preparation, food tasting, and active games. Several newly developed initiatives are highlighted below.

Choose Health: Food, Fun, and Fitness (CHFFF) is a newly developed FNEC curriculum aimed at 8-12 year old youth that uses experiential learning to teach healthy eating and active play, specifically targeting research-based child obesity prevention behaviors. Each lesson includes interactive nutrition activities, food preparation, active games, goal-setting, and a parent newsletter.

4-H Choose Health Action Teens (CHAT) is a pilot program in which teens help teach the new CHFFF curriculum in after-school and other settings in partnership with a 4-H or FNEC educator. Interested educators attend a 3-day training that includes hands-on use of the curriculum, relevant nutrition content, tips on teen recruitment and training, and effective group leadership skills. Following training, educators recruit and train local teens to teach or co-teach the curriculum under their mentorship.

For those working with after-school programs, the FNEC-developed “Cornell Healthy After-School Environment (CHASE) Self-Assessment Tool” can be used to help after-school staff reflect upon their practices and generate ideas for how to create healthier food and activity environments.

Program Impact
Participation in these programs empower youth to develop leadership skills, gain confidence to apply information about healthy eating and activity choices, and share this information with peers.

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