

memo

DATE: June 26, 2019
TO: WIC Coordinators
FROM: Nutrition and Clinic Services Unit
SUBJECT: Best Practices with Education Choice

This memo is the first of a 3-part series to provide more information about Education Choice to Local Agencies. Previous Wednesday Update memos, [Introducing Education Choice: Part 1](#) and [Introducing Education Choice: Part 2 – Lessons Learned & Preparation](#), provided an introduction to Education Choice. This series of memos will delve further into Education Choice. In this week's memo, we are sharing best practices learned by the agencies who piloted Education Choice.

Best Practices shared by agencies using Education Choice:

- **Prepare!** Have a plan for how your agency will offer Education Choice.
 - Provide training for staff. Have staff practice telephone counseling, and consider observing staff once your agency rolls out with Education Choice.
 - Use the [Guidelines for Phone Education](#) as a script, or create your own for staff to use!
 - Train staff on how to use the phone system and transfer calls.
 - Work with IT to ensure that “**WIC**” is displayed on the participant’s phone screen when a call is received from WIC. When **WIC** is displayed, participants are more likely to pick up or call back if they missed the call.
 - Encourage participants to put the WIC number into their phone, so they recognize the number when WIC calls them.
- **Start small.** Limit the number of participants who are offered Education Choice in the early stages and expand as you go.
- **Keep it simple.** Use simple scripts to promote Education Choice, e.g., the [Appointment Menu Flyer](#). Think about how to promote Education Choice and how choices are displayed or verbally promoted. Participants tend to choose the first option offered or the option that staff most enthusiastically promote.
- **Set clear expectations.** Tell participants what to expect. For example, participants will need to set up a log in and password for wichealth.org, when to expect a call from WIC, etc.
- **Do not over promise.** Participants using Education Choice might come into clinic fewer times per year; however, avoid statements that promise coming to WIC only “twice a year.”

BEST PRACTICES USING EDUCATION CHOICE

- **Accommodate participant needs.**
 - Be flexible when working with families to help determine the best choice for them.
 - Whenever possible, if a participant calls in for an Education Choice phone follow-up or is returning a message about Education Choice, take the call rather than taking a message and returning the call at a later time. It can be a challenge going back and forth leaving messages.
- **Send reminders.** A phone call or text message reminder before the scheduled Education Choice contact is helpful. Specify the appointment type (in-person, online, phone) for appointment reminders.
- **Be Flexible!** Processes are continually evolving; it may take time to determine what works best for your agency.

To learn more about Education Choice and resources available, visit the [Education Choice information](#) on the MN WIC website. Look for additional memos about Education Choice later this summer!

If you have any questions about Education Choice, please contact your State WIC consultant.