

The Influence of Nutrition Education on Preschool Children

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Abstract

Adequate and balanced nutrition have a crucial role in supporting children's health and the life quality. This research study was designed in an experimental nature to investigate the impact of an activity-based nutrition education on the perceptions of five-year-old children related to healthy and unhealthy foods. The participants were five years old and attending five different classrooms in the same preschool on the north coast of Türkiye. A total of 111 children participated, of whom 62 were in the experimental group and 49 were in the control group. Nutrition education was provided by means of a picture book and its following activities in the experimental group. The activities were implemented as a part of the classroom routine, and all the children in the classrooms volunteered to participate in the study. As a post-test, data were collected by means of the adapted Healthy Food Knowledge Activity. In order to explore differences in nutrition-related perceptions between experimental and control group, independent sample t-tests were carried out. As a result, it was found that there is a statistically significant difference in the mean scores between the experimental and control group in favor of the experimental one. Moreover, an independent sample t-test was also conducted on experimental group children's healthy food perception scores with respect to the gender, and a statistically significant difference was reached in the mean scores in favor of the girls. As a result, nutrition education was suggested for contributing to preschool children's awareness of healthy and unhealthy foods.

Keywords: early childhood education; healthy; nutrition; nutrition education; unhealthy