Adequate nutrition during infancy and early childhood is essential to children’s growth, health, and development to their full potential. WIC provides healthy foods tailored to meet the nutrient needs of mothers and their children during pregnancy, breastfeeding, infancy, and childhood, such as whole grains, dairy, fish, peanut butter, beans, and fruits and vegetables.

WIC also provides nutrition education to parents and caretakers. WIC has an important influence on participants’ diets. Studies show that after WIC updated its food packages to reflect current dietary guidance, WIC participants bought and ate more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. For example:

- **CALIFORNIA:** Consumption of whole-grain foods rose more than 50 percent, the share of caregivers and children who usually consumed lower-fat milk rose by 20-30 percent, and nearly 20 percent of WIC families ate more vegetables.

- **NEW ENGLAND:** Scanner data from a New England supermarket chain revealed that WIC participants bought more vegetables (up 9 percent), fruits (up 26 percent), reduced-fat milk (up 56 percent), and 100-percent whole grains (up 211 percent).

- **NATIONWIDE:** Overall diet quality (as measured by the Healthy Eating Index) improved twice as much among children on WIC as children not on WIC.

For more information, visit: www.cbpp.org/wicworks