

Sexual harassment education beginning in schools



OLYMPIA (AP) — School kids are never too young to start learning about sexual harassment and how to head it off, a national conference on sex equity in the classroom was told Monday.

Age-appropriate instruction, complete with puppets, posters and anti-harassment cheers, is being offered to children as young as kindergartners in Minnesota, said that state's equity specialist, Sue Sattel.

"We need to begin when the attitudes are being formed," and let children know the bounds of acceptable behavior, she told a seminar called "Elementary is Not

Too Soon."

Minnesota recently became the first state in the nation to require all districts to adopt sexual harassment policies and to urge that all schools offer classes on how to spot harassment, how to prevent it and how to stand up for one's rights.

Under federal law, sexual harassment is illegal in the schools. The Washington Legislature earlier this year voted to require all districts to develop sexual harassment policies by next July 1.

Inquiries about curriculum already are being fielded by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction, said Darcy Lees, the agency's equity specialist. Lees is cochair

of the conference that has drawn 400 educators and presenters from across the nation.

Sattel said nearly half of Minnesota's districts have begun to offer sexual-harassment prevention as part of the regular curriculum, many using state-developed sample lesson plans and approaches. There have been almost no complaints from families, churches or other potential critics, she said.

She said "age-appropriate" instruction includes frank discussion of "anatomically correct names for body parts," and behaviors that violate a child's comfort or safety. Sometimes the teacher uses a turtle hand puppet named "Respect" to discuss "good touch" or "bad touch."

MEXICAN

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right choices," Cain said in a statement. "The low-fat, low-cholesterol items are there. The consumer merely has to ask for them."

The center's nutritionists bought take-out portions of the 15 most popular Mexican dishes at 19 table-service restaurants in Chicago, Dallas, San Francisco and Washington.

Equal portions of the same dish were mixed and a sample of each was sent to an independent lab for testing, in which the Department of Agriculture assisted, said Bonnie Liebman, director of nutrition for the center.

Liebman said there was no single culprit in Mexican cuisine, but that the problem starts with the side dishes — Mexican rice, refried beans, sour cream and guacamole — and is magnified by the added entree.

Of the 15 dishes, the survey found the only "safe bet" to be chicken fajitas with flour tortillas — but only when eaten without the trimmings.

The worst choice was the chiles rellenos platter. "You might as well eat a stick of butter and one and a half teaspoons of salt," Liebman said of the cheese-stuffed, deepfried pepper topped with cheese and red sauce.

The Mexican rice served was often sauteed in oil or shortening before it was cooked in chicken broth, which typically is high in sodium.

Somewhere in the middle were:

- Beef-and-cheese nachos: A serving has more than 1,300

calories and as much fat as an stick of butter. Half an order equals three-fourths of the recommended daily allowance of 65 grams of fat.

- Chicken burritos: Second-best, although fattier than fajitas because of the cheese on top and the refried beans inside.

- Taco salad: Each has a day's worth of fat and saturated fat and 1,100 calories, excluding the dressing. It can be made healthier by skipping the ground beef, cheese, guacamole, sour cream and fried tortilla shell — leaving 3.5 cups of plain lettuce?

- Beef chimichanga platter: The ground beef-stuffed, deepfried tortilla, served with rice, beans, sour cream and guacamole, has 1,600 calories.

Lynn Miller, a spokeswoman for the Chi-Chi's chain of Mexican eateries, said the company's 206 restaurants offer a variety of grilled items, fresh produce, nonfried tortillas, fat-free salsa and low-calorie dressing.

"All of our food is prepared right before we serve it so certainly individuals can make requests if they want," Miller said.

Meanwhile, Jacobson praised the 15-outlet Macheezmo Mouse chain of Mexican restaurants based in Portland, Ore., that grills and steams its meals, uses reduced-fat cheese, adds no fat to its beans and offers vegetables as side-dishes.

In a letter to executives of 13 Mexican restaurant chains, he asked them to consider a number of steps to make their food more healthful, including using leaner ground beef and offering whole-wheat tortillas and brown rice.

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