



United States
Department
of Agriculture

MYPLATE FOR MY FAMILY

SNAP NUTRITION EDUCATION



EDUCATOR'S HANDBOOK

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education is an initiative of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The educational and promotional materials are designed for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) participants and low-income individuals eligible for means-tested Federal assistance programs with children ages 2 through 18. The project also includes educational materials for persons delivering SNAP Nutrition Education (SNAP-Ed). However, these materials can be used in other settings with similar target audiences, such as the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); and National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs, to help parents and families follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and improve eating and physical activity behaviors.

FNS wishes to thank local, State, and Federal staff from SNAP who provided input and reviewed content on these materials. A special thank you to the following Regional Office staff who provided guidance for the successful completion of this project.

SNAP-ED COORDINATORS:

Martha Cavanaugh, Northeast

Nancy Ranieri, Midwest

Sally Jacober-Brown, Mid-Atlantic

Star Morrison, Mountain Plains

Veronica Bryant, Southeast

Andrew Reisenberg, Western

Richard Burley, Southwest

PROJECT LEADS:

Donna Johnson-Bailey (Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion)

and Jane Duffield (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

PROJECT TEAM:

Gerry Howell and Usha Kalro (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

Janie Fleming and Hannah Mitchell (Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion)

November 2014

WHAT'S IN THIS HANDBOOK?

MYPLATE FOR MY FAMILY: SNAP NUTRITION EDUCATION	4
DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS AND MYPLATE	6
A LOOK AT THE MATERIALS	11
ADDRESSING LOW LITERACY SKILLS	16
THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL NORMS ON NUTRITION HABITS	18
GETTING THE KIDS INVOLVED	19
DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH SNAP AND OTHER NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS	20
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES	22





▶ MYPLATE FOR MY FAMILY: SNAP NUTRITION EDUCATION

MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education provides educational and promotional materials to help nutrition educators in their work with English- and Spanish-speaking families with children ages 2 through 18. The resources offer tips and information to help families stretch their food dollars, prepare easy and healthy meals, and be more physically active.

This Educator's Handbook provides an overview of *MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education* and information on how to use the materials.

This Educator's Handbook serves the following functions:

- Helps nutrition educators implement *MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education*.
- Provides an overview of the educator and participant resources.

▶ SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education provides SNAP participants with access to nutrition education based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and includes resources from ChooseMyPlate.gov. This user-friendly toolkit can support low-income individuals and families by offering tips and tools for making better food choices and being more physically active. The toolkit is designed to promote the following behaviors:

- Eat foods from all five food groups every day
- Eat less solid fats, added sugars, and sodium every day
- Be physically active

▶ SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS AND PROFESSIONALS

Providing nutrition education to many different types of people who often are going through hard times can be a challenge. This toolkit offers materials especially for the SNAP-Ed audience that include the following:

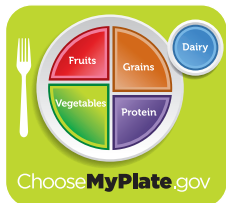
- Background on audience educational needs
- Guidance for teaching relevant, understandable, and achievable behaviors
- Resources to support nutrition education efforts





▶ DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS AND MYPLATE

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are the basis of Federal food, nutrition education, and information programs. They provide science-based advice to promote health and to reduce risk for chronic disease through diet and physical activity. The recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines are for healthy people¹ over 2 years of age and support the basic premise that nutrient needs should be met primarily through consuming foods.



The MyPlate symbol is a simple reminder to help people eat healthier. The symbol is supported by behavior-specific messages to help consumers make positive food and physical activity choices. Educators can find more information by visiting ChooseMyPlate.gov.

¹ Individuals with a chronic health condition should talk with a health care provider to determine what dietary pattern is appropriate for them. Pregnant women should also follow the advice of their health care provider regarding food and physical activity recommendations.

▶ BEHAVIOR-SPECIFIC MESSAGES

- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.
- Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk (dairy).
- Make at least half your grains whole grains.
- Compare sodium, sugars, and saturated fats in foods and choose the foods with lower numbers.
- Enjoy your food, but eat less.
- Avoid oversized portions.
- Be active your way.
- Drink water instead of sugary drinks.

▶ CALORIE LEVELS

Throughout this toolkit, a 2,000-calorie level is used as a reference for consistency with the Nutrition Facts label on food products. Although this calorie level is used as a reference, recommended calorie intakes will differ for individuals based on age, gender, and physical activity level. For example, the chart below shows three different calorie levels and the amount of food from each food group that might be appropriate for a young child (8 years or younger), a woman (19-50 years), and a teenage boy (14-18 years).

DAILY AMOUNT OF FOOD FROM EACH GROUP*			
Calorie Level	1,400 (young child, 8 years or younger)	2,000 (woman, 19-50 years)	2,800 (teen boy, 14-18 years)
Fruits	1.5 cups	2 cups	2.5 cups
Vegetables	1.5 cups	2.5 cups	3.5 cups
Grains	5 ounce-equivalents	6 ounce-equivalents	10 ounce-equivalents
Protein Foods	4 ounce-equivalents	5.5 ounce-equivalents	7 ounce-equivalents
Dairy	2.5 cups	3 cups	3 cups

**These are approximate amounts and may vary depending on exact age, gender, and physical activity level of each person.*





► [CHOOSEMYPLATE.GOV](https://www.choosemyplate.gov)

ChooseMyPlate.gov is a comprehensive website that offers resources and tools to help guide your nutrition education audiences. The site provides detailed information about all of the food groups including commonly eaten foods, the amount of each food group needed per day, health benefits, and tips to help participants make good choices. Information about preparing foods and an extensive number of consumer-friendly recipes are also available to help participants apply what they learn during their educational experiences. Participants can access printable resources that focus on relevant nutrition and physical activity topics throughout the lifecycle including pregnancy, breastfeeding, early childhood, school age, and various stages of adulthood.



Professionals and educators will find diet and physical activity information for each participant to help them conduct nutrition education sessions or expand information for their nutrition education programs. You are encouraged to review and become familiar with ChooseMyPlate.gov and related content.

ChooseMyPlate.gov can help participants and educators to:

- Work independently to address questions raised during nutrition education sessions.
- Obtain information for other family members.
- Select educational items and activities for children.
- Identify healthy lifestyle options for the entire family.

ChooseMyPlate.gov offers resources for Spanish-speaking consumers. Click on the “En Español” link in the consumer section.

For participants who don't have access to a computer or the Internet, you can help them by downloading resources and offering them as handouts. Keep in mind that some of the information may not be appropriate for all literacy levels.



▶ CHOOSEMYPLATE.GOV HIGHLIGHTS

[Dietary Guidelines 2010 Consumer Brochure](#)—*Let's Eat for the Health of It...* provides concise information about how to build a healthy plate; cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt; eat the right amount of calories; and be more physically active.

[Selected Consumer Messages](#)—Seven key consumer messages from the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans that support the Dietary Guidelines Communications Initiative.

[10 Tips Nutrition Education Series](#)—A series of tip sheets that address simple ways to make changes to improve nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

[SuperTracker](#)—An online diet and physical activity tracking tool available through ChooseMyPlate.gov that allows participants to enter their age, gender, and activity level and generate a plan that is specific to their calorie and nutrient needs.

[Recipes, Cookbooks, and Menus](#)—Recipes from a variety of nutrition assistance program sources including the SNAP-Ed Connection to help you conduct food demonstrations, provide healthy samples for participants, or share handouts to reinforce the information provided during nutrition education sessions.

[MyPlate Community Toolkit](#)—USDA toolkit to help communities to get involved in addressing the trend of childhood obesity and creating healthier environments.

[Daily Food Plans](#)—Plans for individuals based on sex, age, height, weight, and physical activity level. All Daily Food Plans and their associated worksheets are available for download.

[MyPlate Graphics Standards](#)—A style guide that explains how to use the MyPlate icon.

[Nutrition Facts Label](#)—An important educational tool available on food packages or products.

[Healthy Eating on a Budget](#)—A resource to help families plan, purchase, and prepare meals, available at ChooseMyPlate.gov.

[MyPlate Mini-Poster](#)—Provides information about what and how much to eat from all five food groups based on a 2,000-calorie food plan.

[MyPlate Kids' Place](#)—Provides online resources and tools for children to help them make wise choices in a fun and appealing way.



▶ A LOOK AT THE MATERIALS

MyPlate for My Family includes an informational brochure, the Educator's Guide, four Discussion Sessions, take-home handouts with recipes, and resources from ChooseMyPlate.gov. This Educator's Guide is provided to help you understand how to deliver *MyPlate for My Family* to your audiences. The sections of the handbook called *Addressing Low Literacy Skills* (page 16) and *Cultural Considerations When Working With Spanish-Speaking Participants* (page 17), provide additional information to assist clients with limited English skills and diverse social needs. The information below details the materials available for clients and educators. Related resources from ChooseMyPlate.gov are also listed to complement your nutrition education efforts.





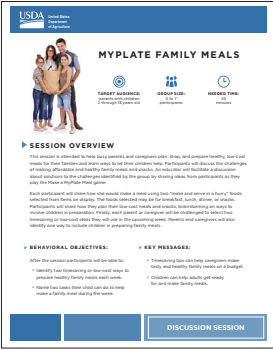



► EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

MyPlate for My Family: SNAP Nutrition Education brochure provides an overview of the toolkit and highlights nutrition behaviors that are important for achieving a healthier lifestyle. Based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, this brochure offers information to help educators facilitate nutrition education sessions. Organizations or agencies can place local contact information on the brochure to assist with program efforts. Share this brochure with clients or participants to remind them about the nutrition education opportunities and reinforce nutrition and physical activity behaviors.

The four Discussion Sessions and participant handouts include resources to help you conduct educational sessions with SNAP participants and eligible consumers. The Discussion Sessions and handouts are designed to help the adult learner use the nutrition information and offer tips to help them take action to improve eating and physical activity behaviors. The handouts also provide suggestions to help your audiences apply what they've learned at home. Handouts from ChooseMyPlate.gov are also included with the Discussion handouts to further support session topics. All of the Discussion Sessions are planned for groups of 5 to 7 participants, and each session can be completed in about 45 minutes.



The behavioral objectives for each Discussion Session are listed below.

DISCUSSION SESSION	BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES
 <p>MYPLATE FAMILY MEALS</p> <p>SESSION OVERVIEW</p> <p>This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers plan, shop, and prepare healthy, low-cost meals for their families and make it fun for their children to eat. Participants will discuss the importance of planning, shopping, and healthy family meals and snacks. An educator will facilitate a discussion about children's role in the kitchen and how to get them involved in the kitchen. Participants will also play the game "MyPlate Family Meals".</p> <p>BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to save time when preparing family meals. Identify ways to save money when preparing family meals. Identify ways to involve children in the kitchen. <p>KEY MESSAGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to plan meals together as a family and involve children in the kitchen. Healthy family meals on a budget. Involve children in the kitchen to make mealtime fun and healthy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and use at least two timesaving or low-cost ways to prepare healthy family meals each week. Name two tasks a child can do to help make a family meal during the week.
 <p>HOW MUCH FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?</p> <p>SESSION OVERVIEW</p> <p>This session is intended to help parents and caregivers understand the importance of healthy meals and physical activity for their families. Participants will discuss ways to plan and prepare healthy meals and ways to get their children physically active. An educator will facilitate a discussion about healthy meals and physical activity. Participants will also play the game "How Much Food and Physical Activity?".</p> <p>BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals. Identify ways to get their children physically active. <p>KEY MESSAGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning for meals and physical activity. Healthy meals and physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals. Identify and commit to at least one action to get the right amount of food from all five food groups. Identify and commit to at least one action to help family members be physically active during the week.
 <p>VEGETABLES AND FRUITS - SIMPLE SOLUTIONS</p> <p>SESSION OVERVIEW</p> <p>This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers understand the importance of healthy meals and physical activity for their families. Participants will discuss ways to plan and prepare healthy meals and ways to get their children physically active. An educator will facilitate a discussion about healthy meals and physical activity. Participants will also play the game "Vegetables and Fruits - Simple Solutions".</p> <p>BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals. Identify ways to get their children physically active. <p>KEY MESSAGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy meals and physical activity. Vegetables and fruits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify at least two new vegetables and two new fruits to eat during the upcoming week. Identify at least one way to encourage children to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Recognize what 1 cup of vegetables and 1 cup of fruits look like.
 <p>FAMILY TIME ACTIVE AND FUN!</p> <p>SESSION OVERVIEW</p> <p>This session is intended to help busy parents, caregivers, and their families to move physically active. Participants will discuss ways to plan and prepare healthy meals and ways to get their children physically active. An educator will facilitate a discussion about healthy meals and physical activity. Participants will also play the game "Family Time Active and Fun!".</p> <p>BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> After the session participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals. Identify ways to get their children physically active. <p>KEY MESSAGES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular physical activity is key. Healthy meals and physical activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and commit to two ways to get 2½ hours of physical activity during the week. Identify two ways to help their kids be physically active, every day.





► TOOLS FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

The take-home handouts reinforce important nutrition information in a way that is appropriate for both English- and Spanish-language speakers. The handouts help participants understand relevant Dietary Guidelines recommendations for a healthier lifestyle. These handouts provide information about the amount of food to eat each day from each food group; tips on buying foods on a budget; making small, simple changes; motivating children to eat healthier foods; and being physically active every day.

Optional MyPlate take-home handouts are suggested for all of the Discussion Sessions. The handouts focus on children to help them adopt healthy eating or physical activity behaviors. The MyPlate mini-poster is also useful for most of the Discussion Sessions. Find the mini-poster and optional handouts at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov/myplateformyfamily.html.

DISCUSSION SESSION

TAKE-HOME HANDOUT (ENGLISH AND SPANISH)

MYPLATE FAMILY MEALS

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers plan, shop, and prepare healthy, low-cost meals for their families and make time for their children. The participants will discuss the challenges of creating nutritious and healthy meals at home. The facilitator will provide additional information about solutions to the challenges identified by the group by sharing ideas from participants as they discuss the ideas in their group.

Each participant will share how the facilitator made a meal using the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section. Participants will share how they plan their own meal needs and snacks, understanding an easy-to-use meal plan and grocery list, and how to prepare and store meals and snacks. Participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

- After the session participants will be able to:
 - Identify how shopping on-line can help to prepare healthy family meals and snacks.
 - Have a better idea of how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Remember to use take-home samples made daily and healthy meals made on the budget.
- Children can help with grocery list and make family meals.

DISCUSSION SESSION

1. Make Easy and Healthy Family Meals
2. Make Half Your Grains Whole Grains
3. Get Your Dairy
4. Look for Lean Protein Foods

Optional MyPlate handout:

[MyPlate Coloring Page](#)

HOW MUCH FOOD AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers understand the appropriate meals and snacks for ensuring their family meets recommended physical activity goals. The participants will discuss ways to plan and prepare meals for their families and how to ensure their children get the right amount of food and physical activity. The participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

Each participant will share how the facilitator made a meal using the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section. Participants will share how they plan their own meal needs and snacks, understanding an easy-to-use meal plan and grocery list, and how to prepare and store meals and snacks. Participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

- After the session participants will be able to:
 - Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals.
 - Identify how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section.
 - Identify how to use the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Remember to use take-home samples made daily and healthy meals made on the budget.
- Children can help with grocery list and make family meals.

DISCUSSION SESSION

1. Find and Make Healthy Foods In a Snap
2. Watch Your Solid Fats, Sugars, and Sodium
3. Food and Physical Activity Checklist

Optional MyPlate handout:

[MyPlate Snack Tips for Kids](#)

VEGETABLES AND FRUITS - SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents and caregivers include the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables in their family meals. The participants will discuss the challenges of including fruits and vegetables in their family meals. The participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

Each participant will share how the facilitator made a meal using the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section. Participants will share how they plan their own meal needs and snacks, understanding an easy-to-use meal plan and grocery list, and how to prepare and store meals and snacks. Participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

- After the session participants will be able to:
 - Identify ways to plan and prepare healthy meals.
 - Identify how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section.
 - Identify how to use the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Remember to use take-home samples made daily and healthy meals made on the budget.
- Children can help with grocery list and make family meals.

DISCUSSION SESSION

1. What Counts as 1 Cup?
2. Choose Your Veggies
3. Keep Fruits Handy

Optional MyPlate handout:

[Word Search: Have Fun With Fruits and Vegetables](#)

FAMILY TIME ACTIVE AND FUN!

SESSION OVERVIEW

This session is intended to help busy parents, caregivers, and their families to enjoy physically active time together. The participants will discuss the challenges of finding time for physical activity with their families. The participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

Each participant will share how the facilitator made a meal using the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section. Participants will share how they plan their own meal needs and snacks, understanding an easy-to-use meal plan and grocery list, and how to prepare and store meals and snacks. Participants will also discuss how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section from Snap or sharing the foods section from the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES:

- After the session participants will be able to:
 - Identify how to use the "Take and Store in a Flash" foods section.
 - Identify how to use the "Healthy Snacks, Sips, and Snacks" section.

KEY MESSAGES:

- Remember to use take-home samples made daily and healthy meals made on the budget.
- Children can help with grocery list and make family meals.

DISCUSSION SESSION

1. Be Active Today

Optional MyPlate handout:

[Be a Fit Kid](#)



▶ ADDRESSING LOW LITERACY SKILLS

People fall into a literacy continuum for different types of skills. The materials for participants within this toolkit have been developed and designed to facilitate learning for those with limited reading and literacy skills. According to the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL), released in 2006 by the U.S. Department of Education, 30 million adults struggle with basic reading tasks.

The assessment² also found that nearly 9 out of 10 adults may lack many of the skills necessary to sufficiently manage their health. Low health literacy can affect a person's ability to locate health care providers and services, fill out health forms, share personal health information with providers, manage chronic diseases, and engage in self-care. Some of the key design features to make the *MyPlate for My Family* participant materials more user-friendly include:

- Reading levels that are at or near 5th grade level.
- Full-color images to help communicate key information.
- Use of real world examples and tips to make the instructions clear.

Some individuals participating in SNAP have low literacy skills that may make it difficult for them to understand information offered during a nutrition education session. The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education provides more insights about the needs of this audience and resources to assist educators and professionals in delivering services. The Literacy Information and Communication System (LINCS) is an initiative of the U.S. Department of Education designed to expand evidence-based practice in the field of adult literacy. LINCS features development opportunities, training, and resources that can be obtained by visiting the website, <http://lincs.ed.gov/>.

² Kutner, M., Greenberg, E., Jin, Y., and Paulsen, C. (2006). *The Health Literacy of America's Adults: Results From the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NCES 2006-483)*. U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

▶ CULTURAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN WORKING WITH SPANISH-SPEAKING PARTICIPANTS

MyPlate for My Family provides nutrition education information to Spanish-speaking SNAP participants and eligible consumers. Culture can affect how people understand and respond to health messages. Some factors that influence nutrition education for Spanish-speaking participants are related to their values and literacy skills in both English and Spanish. Hispanics in the United States are a multicultural population, having migrated from different countries with a variety of cultural values and language needs.

While the *MyPlate for My Family* is not designed as a cultural competency training, the materials reflect messages based on findings from the SNAP research phase of the previous version of the *MyPlate for My Family* (formerly known as *Loving Your Family, Feeding Their Future*) development. To better reach Hispanic audiences, seek advice from local groups and community organizations that provide services to your audiences. If you are not fluent in Spanish, develop relationships with a qualified translator who can assist you.³

Below are several cultural considerations to help you deliver effective nutrition education to Spanish-speaking audiences.

- Help people to share and discuss personal experiences
- Encourage extended family to participate in the education (i.e., include grandparents if they provide care for a participant's child)
- Build on Hispanic cultural values and attitudes
- Support practices that promote cultural traditions
- Engage relevant community services and role models
- Use plain language that includes clear descriptions and specific terms (e.g., chicken, rather than poultry)
- Use images that are culturally relevant to the audience
- Add culturally familiar foods or activities to educational sessions

³ Simply Put: A Guide for Creating Easy-to-Understand Materials. Third Edition. (July 2010). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Office of the Associate Director for Communication; Division of Communication Services.



► THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL NORMS ON NUTRITION HABITS

Society and cultural norms influence participants' abilities to adopt healthier lifestyles. Generally, contemporary, fast-paced lifestyles and the media influence food patterns and physical activity practices.

Preparing food at home can help parents provide healthier meals and snacks for their children. Encourage parents to think about the foods they offer their children and discuss ways that busy parents can provide quick meals on hectic days. Help parents think about how food is advertised to their children and provide alternatives to inexpensive, high-calorie foods.

Many modern conveniences make it easier for families to avoid physical activity in the course of everyday lives. These conveniences include cars, elevators, television, computers, mobile devices, and fewer labor-intensive jobs. Use the resources included in this kit to help families plan physical activity with their children and find solutions to challenges presented by participants.

Media Influences on Children

- Food advertising and promotions are prominent features of the commercial mainstream.
- Children are often the targets of food advertising that promotes high-calorie foods.

▶ GETTING THE KIDS INVOLVED

Children often influence which foods are purchased and how they are prepared at home. Encourage parents to engage their kids in healthy food practices and active lifestyles. Below are some suggestions to help parents and caregivers get kids involved.

- **Kids will follow a parent’s example, if it is consistent.** When parents choose healthier foods and are more physically active, their kids are more likely to do the same. Encourage parents to adopt healthier practices, so that their children can learn from them.
- **Encourage parents to have healthier foods in the house.** Discuss how SNAP benefits can empower families to purchase healthy, affordable foods. During sessions, demonstrate how to prepare meals and snacks so that parents learn how to make healthy food at home. *Additional Resources* are listed at the end of the Educator’s Handbook to assist you in conducting food demonstrations.
- **Share the benefits of family meals.** Meals are a valuable way to spend time together, break up busy days, and provide opportunities for families to “catch up on things.” Parents can also use meal times to talk about foods and plan fun active time. Parents can encourage children to discuss foods they like to eat or activities they would like to try. Family meals also provide an opportunity for adults to model good eating habits or introduce new foods.
- **Teach parents the value of being physically active with their children.** Parents can help their children to be more active by participating in activities with them and modeling fun, easy, activities every day.
- **Discuss ways that parents and caregivers can play with children and keep them active.** Offer suggestions such as outdoor games like basketball, soccer, or playing tag with friends. Provide information about free or affordable local programs that offer physical activity.

- Kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- Adults need at least 2½ hours of moderate-intensity physical activity during the week.
- Regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.



▶ DEVELOP PARTNERSHIPS WITH SNAP AND OTHER NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

SNAP nutrition education is often provided at locations other than where recipients receive SNAP benefits. The result is that program participants are not aware of the relationship between SNAP benefits and available nutrition education classes. Communicate and network with the various SNAP staff members who work with participants to build a partnership that strives to achieve common goals associated with nutrition education. Reach out to SNAP offices to identify referrals for nutrition education.

SNAP participants come in contact with many organizations, institutions, and individuals that can promote nutrition education resources and services. Use this toolkit to influence and work with partners at the local, State, and national levels. Develop partnerships with other nutrition assistance programs and organizations that work with SNAP participants. These programs and organizations could serve as potential sites where nutrition education may be provided. Partners can also help improve awareness about SNAP nutrition education and support your effort to provide services in your community.



To improve partnerships:

- Provide the informational brochure, *MyPlate for My Family*, to frame the initiative as a nutrition education offering to local SNAP offices, FNS nutrition-related programs, and other community sites.
- Meet with non-nutrition, professional, paraprofessional, and clerical staff to introduce the initiative, review the value of nutrition education, and solicit support.
- Hold in-service orientations for local staff associated with other nutrition programs, such as WIC and Child Nutrition Programs.

► POTENTIAL SITES FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION SESSIONS

ADULT SETTINGS:

- Local SNAP and employment training offices
- Food banks and pantries
- Job training centers and work sites
- Housing authority locations
- Faith-based organizations
- Farmers Markets that accept Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)
- WIC clinics
- Grocery stores that accept EBT
- School PTAs in low-income schools
- Head Start centers
- Health clinics and public health programs

CHILDREN'S SETTINGS:

- Low-income public schools (K through 12)
- Childcare centers
- Preschool programs
- After school programs
- Summer food programs
- Head Start centers
- Youth recreation programs

▶ ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

MyPlate for My Family offers the following additional resources to help you deliver nutrition education to SNAP audiences.

Dietary Guidelines for Americans

<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov>

MyPlate Resources

<http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov>

SNAP-Ed Connection

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov>

What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov>

Team Nutrition

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

WIC Works Resource System

<http://wicworks.nal.usda.gov>

HealthierFinder.gov

<http://www.healthfinder.gov>

Federal Resource for Nutrition Information

Nutrition.gov

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

<http://www.cdc.gov>

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA)

<http://www.fda.gov>

The National Agricultural Library (NAL)

<http://www.nal.usda.gov>

Simply Put: A Guide to Creating Easy to Understand Materials

http://www.cdc.gov/healthliteracy/pdf/simple_put.pdf

SNAP Food Demonstration Tips

<http://snap.nal.usda.gov/recipes/food-demonstration-tips>

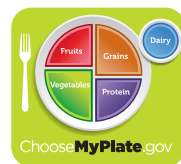
The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers, employees, and applicants for employment on the bases of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity, religion, reprisal and, where applicable, political beliefs, marital status, familial or parental status, sexual orientation, or if all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program, or protected genetic information in employment or in any program or activity conducted or funded by the Department. (Not all prohibited bases will apply to all programs and/or employment activities.)

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities and wish to file either an EEO or program complaint please contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish).

Persons with disabilities who wish to file a program complaint, please see information above on how to contact us by mail directly or by email. If you require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) please contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).

USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



November 2014
Food and Nutrition Service
*USDA is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.*