

A Family-Based Media Literacy Approach to Improving Youth and Family Nutrition

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Justification

- TV use is a risk factor for children's overweight, independent of (sedentary) TV watching
- Having TV on during meals is associated with fewer fruits and vegetables (F/V) served at mealtimes
- 1-2 exposures to food ads influence children as young as 2 years of age

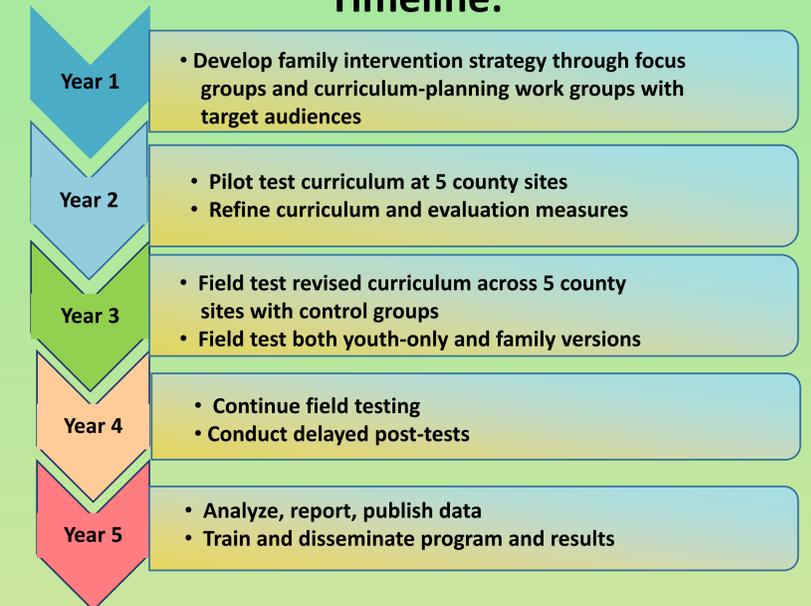
Central Hypothesis

- Improved family media management and message interpretation skills will improve children's nutrition knowledge and behaviors.

Project Goals (Over 5 Years)

- **Develop** a youth media literacy-based nutrition intervention using a family-based model for families with children 9-14 years of age (in 3rd – 8th grades).
- **Test** the efficacy of media literacy education as a nutrition-improvement strategy for children and parents.
- **Identify** differential effects for families over time, and for families at higher versus lower risk.
- **Disseminate** validated media literacy-based nutrition curriculum, training, and research findings through appropriate channels.

Timeline:



Methods

Participant Recruitment:

- Using existing partnerships in Food \$ense* and 4-H

Focus Group Protocol:

- Procedures by Greenbaum (1998)
- Short questionnaire administered at each session
- Audio-recorded sessions transcribed
- Content analysis of transcriptions (Weber, 1990)

Validity and Reliability of Instruments:

- Multi-stage peer review and pre-testing of discussion guide and questionnaire (Carbone et al., 2002)

Participants

Year 1: Formative Research, Stage 1

11 Focus Groups

County	-Number of Participants-		
	Parents	Youth 3 rd -5 th	Youth 6 th -8 th
Chelan-Douglas	9	-	12
Clark	12	-	12
Grant	4	7	-
Pierce	9	10	-
Spokane	10	-	10

Parents reported about their families:

- 45% eat dinner together 7 days per week
- TV turned on during mealtimes sometimes (32%), usually (20%) or always (11%); 37% never or rarely
- 52% in the National School Lunch Program

Educators focus group: Established the potential for and parameters around a media literacy-based nutrition education learning environment.

Year 1: Formative Research, Stage 2

11 target-audience work groups tried out potential curriculum materials

Findings

Focus groups confirmed parents' concerns and interest in the topic:

- Pervasive influence of marketing on kids: "The TV told 'em that, so it's true."
- "You can't peel my nine-yr-old away sometimes [from TV]. What has her, when it comes to those commercials?"
- Confusing/misleading ad claims and packaging: "...My kids try to flip that on me- 'But Mom, it's got...veggies!' - okay, but did you look at what else it all has in it?"

Youth were both believers *and* skeptics

- "Gatorade is important for people who play sports since lots of athletes drink it."
- "I think commercials lie to us a lot..."
- "Frozen yogurt is better for you because the freezing changes the sugar."

Youth and parents were receptive to program ideas and contributed more:

- Cooking: "Hands on for kids, hands-on for adults"
- More Cooking: as experiment; contest; discovery

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* Food \$ense is the brand name used by Washington State University to represent its two federally funded nutrition education programs for low income audiences: Washington State University (WSU) SNAP-Ed and WSU EFNEP. These programs are community-based and implemented collaboratively with community partners.