**Focus Groups Inform a Family-Based Media Literacy Approach to Improving Youth and Family Nutrition**

Washington State University (WSU) Murrow Center for Media and Health Promotion Research; WSU Extension 4-H; WSU Food $ense; WSU Human Development; University of Washington

**Situation:**
- TV use is a risk factor for children’s overweight independent of (sedentary) TV watching
- TV on during meals 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

**Project:**
5-Year USDA-AFRI grant
- 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Youth 3rd-5th</th>
<th>Youth 6th-8th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chelan-Douglas</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clark</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>Pierce</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spokane</td>
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</tbody>
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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

**Our Team:**
- Co-Project Directors: Erica Weintraub Austin (Lead), Mary Katherine Deen, Jill Armstrong Shultz
- Project Investigators: Shirley Calodich, Louise Parker, Thomas Power, Marilyn Cohen
- Project Members: Dori Babcock, Karen Barale, Brian Brandt, Sandy Brown, Barbara Johnson, Michelle Lain, Terry Perry, Christy Price, Diana Reid, Diane Russo, Gary Varrella, Margaret Viebrock, Ginny Dimick, Miriam Ballejos (Extension); Ming Lei, Michelle Kistler, Shan Xu

**Year 1: Formative Research Method: Focus Groups**

**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 transcripts (Weber, 1990)

**Validity and Reliability of Instruments:**
- Multi-stage peer review and pre-testing of focus group discussion guide and questionnaire, including cognitive pre-testing (Carbone et al., 2002)

**Youth-Parent Shared Ideas for Programs:**
- Cooking: “Hands on for kids, hands-on for adults”
- More Cooking: as experiment; contest; discovery

**Youth are 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...”

**Parents are concerned about...**
- Ways ads attract and persuade kids: “The TV told ’em that, so it’s true.”
- Kids and parents not understanding advertising: “You can’t peel my nine-yr-old away sometimes [from TV]. What has her, when it comes to those commercials?”
- Parent-child differences about ads as information about food choices: “…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?”

**Our Timeline:**
- **Year 1**
  - Create family intervention through focus groups and iterative curriculum planning work groups
  - Develop plan and measures for pilot testing
- **Year 2**
  - Pilot test curriculum at 5 county sites
  - Refine curriculum and evaluation measures
- **Year 3**
  - Field test the revised curriculum across 5 county sites with control groups
  - Field test youth-only version
- **Year 4**
  - Continue field testing
  - Conduct delayed post-tests for family and youth participants and control groups
- **Year 5**
  - Analyze, report, publish data
  - Train and disseminate in Western region and conferences

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