

**FOOD BANK OF SOUTH JERSEY:**  
**Evaluation Report**  
**Camden County**

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## REPORT OVERVIEW

During the spring of 2016, Creative Research & Evaluation, LLC was engaged to conduct an evaluation of nutrition classes and demonstrations provided by the Food Bank of South Jersey (FBSJ) at five sites in Camden, New Jersey. This report summarizes data from the research process and builds upon an evaluation completed in the summer of 2015.

FBSJ provides food assistance to low-income individuals and families. In addition to food distribution, FBSJ's Healthy Living Initiative (HLI) provides nutrition education to ensure that people are provided access to knowledge about healthy eating and cooking. This evaluation analyzes the retention of the information contained in Healthy Living Initiative (HLI) courses and behaviors that participants report changing after attending programs. These programs include Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters® courses and FBSJ signature classes including one-time demonstrations.

The evaluation draws on an evaluation approach known as Utilization Focused Evaluation. This approach is designed to maximize cooperation between the evaluator and evaluation stakeholders in order to ensure that the evaluation is focused on the actual needs of stakeholders and that data and findings generated by the evaluation will provide information and insights that are useable and relevant to stakeholders. Qualitative tools were developed in consultation with FBSJ staff and volunteers assisted with focus group administration and relationships with participants.

**Chapter One** provides background information about the program, about nutrition generally in Camden, New Jersey and about the methodology utilized. This mixed-method evaluation utilized focus groups with children, teens, and adults to ascertain participants' perceptions of HLI initiatives. It also utilized pre- and post-survey data administered by FBSJ staff, a questionnaire developed by the evaluator, and secondary data in the form of existing reports and documents.

**Chapter Two** provides an analysis of the findings. Evaluation findings reveal that participants appreciate the HLI courses, that participants retain nutrition information and skills taught during the courses and demonstrations, and that participants continue to practice what they have learned such as trying new foods, reading labels, and cooking with new ingredients.

The majority of focus group participants, regardless of the class or program they attended, describe their experiences with FBSJ as positive. Participants enjoy the content of the courses as well as the food prepared. More details about the evaluation's findings are presented in Chapter 2.

**Chapter Three** provides a summative analysis of findings, best practices, and recommendations. This year's report also includes a complete list of recommendations broken down by adult or child as well as by site to provide a clear picture of similarities and differences across HLI programming.

Appendices of assessment tools used during the evaluation follow this chapter.

# CHAPTER ONE: Project Background and Context

## Overview of the Food Bank of South Jersey

According to its website, FBSJ operates on one simple premise: food should not be wasted when hungry people are in our midst. Their food distribution program links over 10 million pounds of food with more than 200 charitable food providers, such as food pantries, community kitchens and shelters.



In addition, every year, FBSJ provides a variety of courses for children, teens, adults (caregivers and teachers), and families, ranging from one-time demonstrations for parents and signature courses for teens, to six-week courses for families based on *Share Our Strength's* Cooking Matters® curriculum.

### *Share Our Strength's* Cooking Matters®

**Cooking Matters®** aims to provide low-income families with the skills to stretch their food budgets so children can eat healthy meals at home. Along with six-week hands-on cooking courses, Cooking Matters® provides interactive grocery store tours and online educational tools. Class participants are taught to use nutrition information to make healthier choices, and to

purchase and prepare affordable meals. Different curricula are geared to reach adults, child-care professionals, families, children, and teens.



**Cooking Matters for Parents®** teaches low-income parents how to prepare and shop for healthy meals on a limited budget. **Cooking Matters for Families®** brings school-aged children and their families together to learn about healthy eating, planning meals as a family, and working together in the kitchen. **Cooking Matters for Kids®** teaches children in third grade through fifth grade how to prepare healthy meals and snacks and make smart choices wherever they are.

**Cooking Matters for Teens®** teaches adolescents in sixth grade and above how to make healthy food choices and prepare healthy meals and snacks for themselves, their families, and friends.

Each **Cooking Matters®** class uses interactive lessons to teach cooking, food safety and food resource management using the USDA's MyPlate guidelines and the *Dietary Guideline for Americans* as the foundation for basic nutrition. **Cooking Matters®** curriculum is based on the premise that food is to be enjoyed. Recipes emphasize food that is delicious, satisfying, and healthy. By teaching families to shop for and prepare healthy, low-cost meals, the negative health and economic effects of hunger and poor diet can be avoided.

### ***United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) MyPlate Guidelines***



The USDA first published MyPlate guidelines in 2011 as a replacement to the food pyramid schema. MyPlate is visualized as a round plate divided into 5 food groups: 40% vegetables, 30% grains, 20% protein, 10% fruits, with a small circle meant to represent your dairy serving. MyPlate guidelines include recommendations such as “make half of your grains whole,” “make half of your plate fruits and vegetables,” and “vary your protein food choices.” Guidelines also promote portion control and reductions in sugar and sodium intakes. Like Cooking Matters®, MyPlate also asserts that food is to be enjoyed.

### ***FBSJ Signature Courses***

In addition to the Cooking Matters® courses mentioned above, the FBSJ has developed signature courses based on MyPlate guidelines, including Youth Nutrition Outreach Training (YNOT), a course for students ages 14-19 that teaches healthy cooking and public speaking. In this course, participants learn general nutrition concepts, safe food handling, and how to conduct a successful public cooking demonstration.

FBSJ has also developed what they call “Healthy Home and School” workshops for parents and students and a series of demonstrations that couple skills training (such as reading a food label) with games and the preparation and tasting of a recipe. All of these signature courses utilize the nutrition guides set forth by MyPlate in an interactive hands-on way that stresses that food preparation and consumption can be fun.



### *Nutrition in Camden, New Jersey*

Nationwide we are experiencing a historically high demand for food assistance. Unemployment and poverty rates have remained high since the 2008 economic recession. The number of households receiving nutrition assistance from the federal government's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program increased by approximately 50 percent between 2009 and 2013.

A city of 8 square miles, Camden has a population of 78,000 with 23,000 children and a child obesity rate of 42%, 10% higher than the national average. Camden has a Food Insecurity rate of 35%. Food insecure households are those that are uncertain of having, or are unable to acquire, adequate food to meet the needs of all of their members because they have insufficient money or other resources for food. The food system in Camden is primarily comprised of a network of 150+ corner stores.



**Figure 4: Participants of KIPP's Saturday programs**



## *Campbell Healthy Communities*



In 2011, Campbell Soup Company started the *Campbell Healthy Communities*, a collaborative effort to “measurably improve the health of the young people in our hometown of Camden, New Jersey by reducing childhood obesity and hunger by 50 percent.”

*Campbell Healthy Communities* collaborates with local partners including FBSJ, the Food Trust, the Center for Environmental Transformation, and the FoodCorps on programs in four strategic areas: ensuring access to affordable and fresh foods, increasing physical activity in a safe environment, supporting healthy lifestyles through nutrition education and partnering with the community to advance positive social change.

Programs include increasing fresh food options at corner stores through the Healthy Corner Store Network. In addition, FBSJ has collaborated with the Food Trust, Center for Environmental Transformation, and FoodCorps to support nutrition education activities.

In this report, we examine FBSJ activities at 4 sites: 1) Center for Family Services Head Start at Pine Street (food workers training), 2) KIPP Norcross Academy, 3) Caregiver School, and 4) Cooper B. Hatch School.

## **EVALUATION METHODOLOGY**

Data sources for the evaluation of HLI courses consisted of qualitative data collected from:

1. Five focus groups conducted at four sites in Camden. Focus groups were conducted with parents, caregivers and teachers, middle school and high school students, and food service providers who participated in a variety of HLI courses between August 2015 and June 2016. Each focus group was designed to gain the insight of a different constituency in order to provide a broad assessment of the impact of HLI curriculum: Cooking Matters for Kids, Cooking Matters for Parents, Cooking Matters for Teens, Health Cooking demonstrations, and a new session developed this year on standardized recipes for the CFS-Head Start's Professional Development Day.
2. Interviews with site staff (one teacher and one program administrator) at two different sites.
3. Conversations with Food Bank volunteers and staff.

Table 1 on the following page provides the location, title, participants, and date in each HLIF course investigated, along with an overview of the participants in the focus group for this course. Please note that we provide an overview of the age category, gender mix, and role of focus group participants.

**Table 1: Overview of Focus Groups**

Site	Course	Course Participants	Course Dates	Focus Group Participants
<b>KIPP Norcross Academy</b>	Healthy Cooking Demos with tastings	Adults and children	Sept-May 2015-2016 (Saturdays throughout the year)	8 adult women
<b>Cooper B. Hatch Family School</b>	Cooking Matters for Teens	12 teens	Winter 2016 (6 sessions)	8 teens (mixed gender)
<b>HB Wilson</b>	Cooking Matters for Parents	17 caregivers	Spring 2016 (6 sessions)	7 caregivers (all women)
<b>HB Wilson *At Campbell</b>	Cooking Matters for Kids	4 <sup>th</sup> grade HB Wilson students	Spring 2016 (6 sessions)	4 <sup>th</sup> grade HB Wilson students (mixed gender)
<b>Center for Family Services (CFS)</b>	Lesson on recipe consistency; use of recipe book by food service staff; followed by demo and cook off	16 Head Start and Aramark staff	Winter 2016 (1 session)	9 staff members (mixed gender)

Each focus group was modified to ask participants questions specific to the program under discussion. Qualitative data reveals the perspectives of HLI participants in their own words, their thoughts about the courses, opinions about the challenges of making changes to healthy cooking and eating, and recommendations on how to improve the courses. At sites that hosted multiple activities or courses over a long period of time, some focus group participants' responses also included comments about other programs than the ones under discussion.

In addition, the evaluation reviews a breadth of secondary and quantitative data including:

1. Relevant background documents and prior evaluations.
2. Background information on each site, classes conducted and curriculum for each course.
3. End-of-course reports prepared by Food Bank staff which include their reviews of pre- and post-survey data collected for each course.
4. Questionnaires the evaluator administered in three out of the five focus groups (those with adults). The questionnaire provides supplemental data such as favorite recipes and behaviors that have changed since attending a demonstration or completing a course. An example of the questionnaire is included in the appendix.

## ***Research Questions***

The evaluation was organized to ascertain two basic things: 1) Knowledge – what do participants remember learning from HLI courses and demonstrations? 2) Behavior – in what areas do participants report change after experiencing these programs? As a result, evaluation tools were designed to answer the following questions:

1. What nutrition concepts do participants of different courses report retaining 1 to 12 months after completing HLI programs?
2. Do participants report changing healthy cooking, label reading and mindful shopping (where applicable) 1 to 12 months after completing HLI programs?
3. What specific foods do participants report consuming more often (or less often) after completing HLI classes?
4. What are participants' perceptions of the format, style and content of the classes offered and the recipes practiced or sampled during classes?

In addition, this year's evaluation included data about community partners' perceptions of collaborating with the Food Bank.

5. What are site staff perceptions of partnering with the Food Bank?
6. What are recommendations for improvements/modifications?

## CHAPTER TWO: RETENTION AND REPORTED CHANGE



Findings below are divided into five sections: 1) what participants report learning (retention) and 2) what they report changing (behavior) after taking or completing HLI courses; 3) perceptions of the courses themselves; 4) other reported impacts; and 5) challenges to making nutrition changes

Participants learned new nutrition information based on MyPlate and new skills including label reading. Many participants reported changes in how they purchase, prepare, and consume healthy food after completing a course. Participants report that they shared what they learned with other family members, friends and co-workers.

### Section One: Participant Retention of HLI Courses and Demonstrations

Adult, child, and teenage participants who completed HLI courses and demonstrations were able to identify specific nutrition skills that they learned, from selecting healthy foods to preparing new recipes. Focus group participants recall basic food sanitation and the proper way to hold a knife. Focus group participants also recall demonstrations and lessons clearly and in detail:

*“[The instructor] did a science experiment she grabbed wheat bread and white bread and she put orange juice into containers and she put the white bread in one container and filled it with orange juice and it broke down really fast. The one with the wheat bread in the other container it broke down really slow.”*



Figure 7: Learning about MyPlate at KIPP Norcross Academy

When asked what they remember the most about the courses, focus group participants cite either the importance of label-reading or nutrition concepts associated with MyPlate first. These tools are the backbone of HLI curriculum and what participants remember most vividly.

## MYPLATE

Focus group participants identify the information in MyPlate as important to understanding nutrition. Guidelines emphasize portion control, reductions in salt and sugar intake, and increases in fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. HLI courses present alternatives to common foods and demonstrate recipes that meet MyPlate guidelines.

When asked to explain MyPlate, fourth grade focus group participants reported:

*“MyPlate is different types of food groups.”*

*“MyPlate keeps your body healthy.”*

*“It keeps track of what you eat that's healthy.”*

*“MyPlate helps us to get a lot of nutrients.”*





When asked why MyPlate is important, adult and child focus group participants responded:

*“It is important to have the MyPlate because these are these are things that you need for your body.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®).*

*“I like the education and the information such as discussing the different food groups. MyPlate helps you know how to balance the meal, how to prepare each meal, and how to use different food groups throughout the week as you’re preparing the meal so you’re not lacking in any area.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos).*

*“Instead of just fish sticks on the plate, I can balance with a vegetable—MyPlate is having that vegetable and really just trying to balance out the plate.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos).*

### ***Substituting healthier options***

HLI curriculum introduces ways that participants can meet MyPlate guidelines, including switching one ingredient for a healthier alternative. Focus group participants share:

*“The classes make it easier to still eat the food that you love just a healthier version, like black beans in your brownies.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®).*

*“We learned to use something that is healthy in place of something that is not healthy like we used blueberry syrup instead of regular syrup because regular syrup has a lot of sugar.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®).*

*“If you eat unhealthy food every day, it teaches you to start putting snacks aside that are healthy for you so you can do it slowly” (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids).*

*“I learned about using peach salsa and tortilla chips instead of the regular potato chips and dip and all that kind of stuff with all the salt.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“I learned to prepare different foods from different groups that you maybe don't like and to make a healthy version that you do like.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®).*

## **LABEL-READING**



Across all of the sites and courses, focus group participants cite label reading as key to changing what they put in their bodies. Most participants report not having label-reading skills prior to taking courses and not understanding the potential differences between what is advertised on the front of the product (low-fat, low-sodium) and what the product may actually contain. As mentioned below, label reading is also the behavior that participants report changing the most after HLI courses.

*“Reading the labels helps you to see if you're eating right or wrong.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens).*

*“It's good to read labels so you know how many calories are in the food how much sugar and fat.” (Adult, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“They taught us to look on the side of the first one or two ingredients and that's really what you're eating that's really the base of the product.” (Food Worker, Center for Family Services.)*

*“They were also able to explain to us with salt and sugar where they use different names like high fructose corn syrup to trick you.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

## ***Identifying Whole Grains***

Both adult and child focus group participants also specified label reading as an important tool for identifying whether a food product contains whole grains:

*“On the back of the bread, it has to say whole-grain in the bottom of the nutrients or it's not.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

*“If it don't have whole wheat in the nutrition on the back of the box, it's not good for you.” (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)*

*“We had to try Goldfish and one said whole-grain and it didn't really have a whole grains in it. On the side with the ingredients, you can see what it really has in it.” (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®).*

*“The lesson that was most important to me was learning about the whole grains, learning that the box said it was whole-grain but it wasn't whole-grain! Here I am trying to teach myself how to eat healthy and I'm getting stuff that says whole-grain and they showed me that oh no it's not necessarily whole grain!” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“The most memorable activity is when the kids learned the difference between whole grains, whole wheat, what is most healthiest to eat.” (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos).*

## ***Product Comparison***



Focus group participants also reported using labels to identify nutrition differences between brands of the same food. Participants recalled being surprised to learn that name brand products are not necessarily better for you than less expensive or less well-known brands:

*“We compared products basically the most cheap product was better for you than the name brand.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

Checking labels to compare products is an important skill:

*“We learned that certain orange juice is having way more sugar than other kinds.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

## ***Reducing sugar, salt, and portions***

MyPlate encourages the use of label reading as a tool to reduce daily sugar and salt intake, and to learn about portions and portion-control. Focus group participants report:

*“I say the classes were good because they helped us learn about things that we should eat and things that we shouldn't eat, like things that have a lot of sugar and stuff.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

*“I learned about the portions. We're so used to eating until we're stuffed. I know now when you break it down, you eat smaller meals and fruits for a snack.” (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

## Section Two: Participants' Reported Behavior Change

### *Shopping Habits*

For adults, HLI courses resulted in behavior change at the food store. Several focus group participants in the Cooking Matters for Parents® class discussed how much they valued taking a trip to the grocery store as part of the class. Since this lesson, participants have changed not only what they buy and where but, how much time they spend in the store.

Data from a focus group with participants in Healthy Cooking demonstrations also reveals changes in shopping habits, including avoiding aisles in the grocery store with processed snack items. Children from Cooking Matters for Kids® report that they request different foods from caregivers, but few have control over what is purchased in their homes. A few teenaged participants from Cooking Matters for Teens® reported avoiding soda and McDonalds, and buying healthier snacks at the corner store on the way home from school.

*“It used to take me 10 to 15 minutes to go shopping. Now it takes me 45 because I read everything before I buy it now. I have to read all the prices and check all the ingredients now.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I spend a lot more time at the grocery store asking questions, like this meat says it's meat but what is it really? I spend a lot more time thinking about what is going into my stomach.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I've changed where I shop. It's further away and I have to go the extra mile and it's a little more expensive but it's healthier food and they have a lot of good sales.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I'm different in the supermarket now. Some aisles I take my time picking my fruit and picking my vegetables. And some aisles I'm like, let's go, let's go, let's go! I put the pedal to the metal and we speed down the aisle with the fruit juices and soda.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“With my son he says I want that and I'm grabbing it and throwing it in the cart. So then with the classes, now he says I want that and I grab it and I say ‘Hold on!’ I am more nutrition label conscience.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

## ***Cooking and Eating Habits***

For adults, reported changes in cooking and eating habits include substituting healthier ingredients, eliminating high-sugar foods such as soda, reducing salt on cooked and uncooked food, using seasonings instead of salt, using Pam instead of animal fat, baking instead of frying, and avoiding convenience foods.

*“I was using salt before putting on my food even before I cooked it. I'm not doing that anymore.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I have changed because I'm dealing with high blood pressure and I'm a diabetic. I found myself changing my eating habits when I took this class. I really learned different substitutes. For example, instead of frying the cabbage with the grease and the fat back and all that, what I do instead is take the pan and some Pam, and I put it in there. And instead of using grease I use vinegar. I have seen a change not only with me but with the health of my daughter.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“After learning about all the sugar, I went home and got rid of all the soda in my house.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“Since I started taking this class I stop my granddaughter from eating at McDonald's. The fat content in those burgers will make you as big as a house.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“If you use salt you can use a substitute like Dash. I never touched that stuff and I just put it on there now and it is a good flavor.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I used to put salt-and-pepper on my food. If I don't have that, I use butter but in here [at the classes] they had different spices and taught you how to mix the different things for different seasonings.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“My bread I changed it to whole wheat. I changed my tortillas to whole wheat. With milk I don't even do 2% anymore, I do almond milk.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

Qualitative data from focus groups as well as a supplemental questionnaire administered during focus groups indicate that one-time demonstrations and workshops can have a great impact on parents and children.





When asked on a questionnaire (see Appendix 2) if they have changed any shopping habits because of a demonstration, 6 out of 8 adult respondents answered yes. When asked what they have changed, replies included:

*“More fiber.”*

*“I am buying the whole grain breads, brown rice because it breaks down easier in your digestive system.”*

*“I buy more fruit.”*

*“I am now buying almond milk and not afraid to try healthier products even though they may taste different.”*

*“Buying whole wheat and almond milk.”*

When asked on a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) if they have changed any **cooking** habits because of a demonstration, **8 out of 8** adult respondents answered yes. When asked what they have changed, replies included:

*“Less salt.”*

*“Less sodium and portions.”*

*“I bake more.”*

*“Less salt, less sugar, less fried foods.”*

*“No pork, less red meat.”*

*“More baking, less frying (fats).”*

*“Everything is baked or steamed now.”*

When asked on a questionnaire (see Appendix 1) if they have changed any **eating** habits because of a demonstration, **7 out of 8** adult respondents answered yes. When asked what they have changed, replies included:

*“More black beans and healthier snacks.”*

*“Smaller meals and fruits for a snack.”*

*“Trying healthier snacks.”*

*“Adding more healthy choices at each meal (balancing food groups).”*

*“Less juice, more water, less starch and more greens.”*

**8 out of 8** adult respondents reported that they have shared what they learned during demonstrations with friends or family. Similarly, parents of children who have completed Healthy Home and School workshops shared what their children have learned about healthy food has impacted what food they buy and prepare.



When asked if they thought HLI courses and demonstrations were important and if so what they thought was valuable about them, focus group participants discussed learning about prevention as a key take-away. Participants from each site mentioned learning about diabetes as vital. Several focus group participants discussed dealing with diabetes themselves, or having diabetes “run in the family.” Learning about reducing sugar emerged as theme:

*“These classes are important because if somebody don't know if sugar is bad or good for you, they might get a disease” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

*“I think it's important because we don't want to end up having or causing diabetes because you're eating too much sugar.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

*“So kids when they eat lots of sugar, if they eat too much sugar they will get sugar diabetes and it's not good for them it's not good to have diabetes, their blood pressure is going to be high.” (4th grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)*

*“I would recommend a class because kids they can have cavities just from eating lots of sugar.” (4th grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)*

*“The course will help your muscles get stronger and if people want to eat cupcakes they can try the cupcakes without sugars so they don't eat that much sugar.” (4th grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)*

### **Section Three: Participants' Perceptions of HLI Courses and Demonstrations**

Both MyPlate guidelines and Cooking Matters® curriculum put forth that food is to be enjoyed. Changing nutrition habits, while challenging, can also be fun and can introduce people to new taste experiences. Recipe demonstrations aim to have participants try foods that they may not have tasted before, like blueberry syrup.

Participants of courses and demonstrations report really enjoying at least one new recipe. Most report that there was not a recipe that they didn't like. Children report trying foods that they had never tasted before, including mushrooms, hummus, and tofu.

Favorite recipes for children and teens include:

- Quesadillas (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)
- Blueberry French Toast (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)
- Chinese Veggies and Rice – Stir Fry (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)
- Veggie Burger (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)
- Smoothie (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Cupcakes (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Dessert Hummus (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Stir Fry (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Fruit Sushi (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Brownies (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Soup and Vegetables (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Tacos (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)
- Whole Grain Salad (4<sup>th</sup> grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®)

Favorite recipes for adults include:

- Bean Burger (HB Wilson, Cooking Matters for Parents®)
- Soup (HB Wilson, Cooking Matters for Parents®)
- Macaroni and Cheese (HB Wilson, Cooking Matters for Parents®)
- Peach Salsa (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos)
- Fruit and Yogurt (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos)

## Water Ice (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos)

Children also reported feeling very excited about cooking new foods that they had never tried before, such as:

Cupcakes without sugar

Sushi out of seaweed

Fried cabbage and carrots together

Adults were equally excited about trying products they had never tasted, such as:

Healthy water ice

Peach salsa

Almond milk

For many participants, trying new foods is a path to discovering something that they like. For adults, trying new foods also allows them to determine if they want to purchase the food. As one adult focus group participant from Healthy Cooking demonstrations shared, “Sometimes we have the opportunity to try things that I may be afraid to buy so that way I have the option to know what choices I have” (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos).

Another adult focus group participant corroborated that trying new foods prompted her to make changes in what she purchases: “I tried almond milk for the first time and all the different kinds, all the brands. When I saw that I had an opportunity to try it, I noticed I was able to figure out that I liked certain ones and was then able to buy those for my family” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos).

This statement underscores the importance of HLI classes that showcase diverse recipes and allow participants to try new foods. This practice, in turn, gives participants the confidence to purchase previously unfamiliar ingredients at the store. For many, trying new foods is also a budgeting concern: people do not want to spend money on food if they are uncertain they or their family will like it. Learning how to prepare as well as taste new foods is crucial to adult participants buying healthy ingredients for themselves and their families.



Cooking Matters® focus group participants report that HLI courses are fun: they engage students in the process of learning nutrition information.

*“The best part of the classes for me was that we had fun.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

The structure of HLI courses, their use of hands-on facilitation techniques means that participants are “doing” rather than simply observing. The visual, kinesthetic and sensory aspects of class participation are fun and valuable to children and adults alike:

*“The best thing about the classes with was the actual cooking that you get to make with your hands.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*

*“We were able to cook and then taste but we made it ourselves.” (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)*



The classes are interactive and engaging. For adults who are not often in classroom settings, the fact the classes do not “feel like school” is important. The comfort that instructors have with the material is apparent to participants.

Focus Group Participant #1: I loved all three of our instructors they were so much fun.

Focus Group Participant #2: They made the whole class so interesting, right?

Focus Group Participant #1: Right, right! They made it interesting. They was professional and you could tell they love what they do.

Focus Group Participant #3: And that made us love and want to learn.

Focus Group Participant #2: It made us want to learn and it made us comfortable.

Focus Group Participant#3: It's like you were learning and didn't realize you were learning

Focus Group Participant#1: It was just so involved.

Focus Group Participant#3: You only realized that you learned something after you left, when you went home and tried it and you're like oh yeah!

Focus Group Participant #2: Everybody was so involved and they were so good that it wasn't like you were learning; you were learning without realizing.

Focus Group Participant#3: Every time we came we learned something. It was an enjoyable experience because everybody was involved.

Instructors distinguish themselves through at-ease and welcoming approaches and generosity with time and knowledge. Focus group participants expressed that they felt the instructors valued their previous life experiences and recognized their existing knowledge.

*“They don’t use the big words that go over your head, like if there was an ingredient on there they would explain what the ingredient really is.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“A lot of times we held up class because we were asking questions and they answered them all.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

## Section Four: Other Reported Impacts

FBSJ programs in schools and community centers can influence nutrition activities in the home. Child and teenage focus group participants reported trying recipes they learned during class at home, including tacos, fruit smoothies, black bean salad, and fruit sushi. The provided food gave them an incentive to test the recipes at home. For some younger children, trying a recipe at home was also an opportunity to cook with caregivers and to be in the kitchen together.

*"Everyday that we came home from the program I cooked it for my mom. She liked it."*  
(Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)

*"My family cooked it because I showed them and because they gave us the stuff for it."*  
(Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)

*"I had help. My mom cooked it with me because we had to use skillets and she didn't want me to burn my hand."* (Teen, Cooking Matters for Teens®)

One child had a "taste test" at home with six different types of hummus she had learned to cook during the course: "I made all of the hummus and my family tried them out to see which one they liked" (4th grade student, Cooking Matters for Kids®). The family favorite was the dessert hummus, and this student reported that she "definitely want[s] to make it again."

Adults also reported introducing recipes they learned with other family members:

*"[At a family cookout] they were cooking hamburgers and I was like I don't eat hamburgers like that no more. So I said I wanted to make a bean burger and my sister and her daughters were like, what? And I made the bean burger. I put it on the grill and they gave the first ones to the kids. When the kids asked for some more then they tasted it and it was a hit."* (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)

HLI classes are arranged through partnerships between FBSJ and schools and organizations serving southern NJ residents in need. HLI classes are open to the people served by these organizations. Collaborations provide a space for skill sharing and a way for community partners to showcase what they do well.



Data from interviews with two site administrators and a teacher reveals that partners see the relationship with FBSJ as an asset for their constituencies. FBSJ creates responsive programs in collaboration with their partners. A program administrator shared:

*“I sat down with [FBSJ] and I was like here is some of the things we are dealing with, here's some of the stuff that we can improve. And they were really receptive to all of that and they came back what ended up being a really great program and addressed everything that we had talked about.”*

With a grant from Campbell, this year FBSJ developed a class on standardized recipes for the CFS-Head Start's Professional Development Day. The lesson focused on the effect of recipe consistency on child acceptance of new foods, using positive encouragement with foods, and gathering practical feedback on how to restructure the recipe books utilized by food service staff to increase their use. A program administration shared:

*“From an organizational standpoint the Food Bank has been one of my best partners with ease of excess ability and communication. A lot of the programs that we have with the Food Bank or with the Campbell's Healthy Living Initiative and what they're doing is above and beyond that.”*

## Section Five: Challenges to Nutrition Changes

In discussing the ways that HLI courses inspired them to make nutrition changes, participants also articulated the challenges that they face when attempting to make these changes. Some of these challenges are ones that many people face, such as breaking individual eating habits and making healthy choices even when other family members do not make the same choices. Other challenges are more specific to people who live in an area where there are less healthy food options.

### Habit and taste

When asked what makes it challenging to make nutrition changes, many focus group participants mentioned that it is difficult to eliminate unhealthy foods (especially salt) from their diets because of taste:

*“You just get so used to eating what you want and what you like.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“We get addicted to salt.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“Salt is a taste that you always crave.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“Taste is the biggest challenge because we learned what to eat as a child. And if you had parents or grandparents teach you how to cook, that's the way you're gonna cook. At least that's what happened with me. My parents and my grandparents taught me and it was always salt, salt, salt.” (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

### Food cost, access and available time

Many residents rely on corner stores for groceries and quick meals. While some corner stores have fresh fruits and vegetables, many do not. Even armed with nutrition information, finances play a part in decision-making:

*“I'll tell you what it is [the biggest challenge], it's how much access you have to foods. If you were in the city of Camden, in the city most of it is little corner stores and that's the basic problem because people have to go where their money will go the furthest. For instance, you go to Cousins you get three boxes of big cereal for \$10. That will feed a lot of kids. Compared to buying a dozen eggs that's two dollars and some cents. Then you need other stuff, you can't eat a plain egg for breakfast, you need stuff to go with it. So it's the access to food in general which makes a big difference. When you have access or if you can drive to the store or what not. You can't change a habit if you don't have*

*access to the food. It's been a whole lot of people go to McDonald's and Burger King because they can get there.” (Caregiver; Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

*“I think food availability is a large issue like making sure the recipes that we use that our families can access at a corner store.” (Food Worker, Center for Family Services)*

*“I think families suffer because if they don't have transportation to get out to the market to get the sales than afford to take whatever little coupons they get to get and pay twice as much at the mom-and-pop bodega store.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

*“It's the economic difficulties that we are experiencing that make it hard, with people out of work and everything is going up but our paycheck. It's tough when you have to decide if I'm gonna pay my light bill or if I have got resources to put food on the table. Even people with jobs, we are just bogged down by so much debt and just trying to stay afloat.” (Food Worker, Center for Family Services)*

Many focus group participants also cited time as a major factor in their decisions around purchasing and preparing food:

*“It's a lot easier to eat bad than it is to eat healthy especially the time consumed preparing it. I don't have time I'm always on something, always running around.” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos).*

*“I think one of the biggest challenges the families are dealing with is that food that they're eating is mostly processed stuff that if it can't be microwaved or finished in two or three minutes then they're not interested.” (Caregiver; Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

## CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS, BEST PRACTICES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### ANALYSIS

#### Impact of HLI curriculum

Responses to open-ended questions during focus groups about retention of course material is slightly different this year than last, likely reflecting natural changes in instructional emphasis during the teaching process, different instructors, or different participants' interest and responses to course materials, all of which are normal parts of responsive pedagogy. Commonalities and differences of data findings between last year and this year reflect a non-static approach to meeting community needs.

#### Differences between children, teenagers, and adults

Data suggests that all classes are welcome opportunities for participants to learn about basic nutrition in an accessible way. Courses comprised of children were more consistent with attendance, which likely contributed to the participants' comprehensive recall. Likewise, parents who attended demonstrations with their children, and parents of children who attended workshops report that their children are most impacted by the course content. Parents report that after attending courses, children often insist on nutrition changes at home. This suggests that providing opportunities to try new food leads to positive changes for children and, in turn, families. Children are often catalysts for nutrition change in the home. One-time demonstrations and workshops open the door for further nutrition changes.

Differences emerge between participants with regular attendance, or those who have participated in multiple courses. The potential for impact is greater for those who attend more classes. Those who attended multiple class meetings tended to have sharper and more detailed recall of course concepts. For some, the courses are the first time they have encountered nutrition education, for others the courses enhance and reinforce healthy nutrition habits. For children and most teens, the courses result in fewer behavioral changes in shopping and cooking, mostly because they are not yet responsible for these activities. The youngest participants are the ones who express the most excitement about trying and liking new foods. For participants with existing health concerns, the courses can have a dramatic impact on their health:

*"I lost 5 pounds by taking this class. I only know that because I went to the doctor this morning and he weighed me. 5 pounds is a lot and it has allowed the doctor to put down my diabetes medicine a few milligrams and my blood pressure was also down. It's done a lot for me. I have more energy." (Caregiver, Cooking Matters for Parents®)*

#### Strengths and challenges

HLI courses attempt to meet participants "where they are at," meaning that programs intend to work with the challenges that exist for many people who live in Camden, NJ. The challenges that participants articulated during focus groups are the very ones that FBSJ already



strives to address in its programming, including providing food samples to taste, ingredients to bring home, money cards, and quick and easy-to-replicate recipes.

FBSJ's ability to partner with community organizations, schools, and other entities to intervene at strategic access points is a strength of its programming. Their approach of meeting community partners "where they are at" is a respectful practice and one that partners appreciate. Realistically, this approach also means that partners' available resources impact FBSJ HLI courses. This is most apparent in recruitment; FBSJ relies on partners to advertise courses and to secure enough participants for courses to run successfully. For elementary school sites, adequate participation is less of a concern as children are usually in attendance. It gets trickier with after-school courses for teens who may have conflicting commitments or no transportation. According to conversations with community site staff, the process of gaining attendance can be challenging. While focus group participants express a desire for more courses and express interest in attending multiple courses, recruitment for new participants remains challenging due to the same challenges that participants express, such as lack of transportation or lack of time.

## **Best Practices**

Taken together, the findings detailed above reveal that FBSJ engages "best practices" in the development, design, delivery, and oversight of strategic programming intended to provide nutrition awareness and improve health among the impoverished communities it serves.

### **Development**

1. FBSJ engages existing community strengths to advance shared goals with partnering institutions.
2. FBSJ works with partners to determine how to best serve their constituencies.

### **Design**

3. FBSJ creates programs to address structural challenges posed by participants' limited access to healthy food-buying options (such as few full-service grocery stores and fresh-food stands). Participants use nutrient dense ingredients including fresh produce, whole grains, and lean dairy products during classes and demonstrations.
4. FBSJ creates programs to address social and economic barriers faced by local community members. These barriers include lower household income, long-working hours, and limited access to nutrition education opportunities. Recipes are intended to be low-cost and easy to replicate. Participants also receive food to take home.

### **Delivery**

5. FBSJ programs are delivered to meet participants "where they are at." Programs provide information in accessible ways using accessible language and all programs contain an experiential component.

6. FBSJ instructors utilize facilitation skills that help participants feel comfortable and respected.

### **Oversight**

7. FBSJ collects pre- and post- survey data from participants in multiple-week courses and assembles an end-of-course report for each class that highlights successes and challenges.

### **Recommendations**

Appendix #1 contains a complete list of participants' recommendations. Below are eight recommendations that emerged from the analysis of data.

### **PROGRAM DESIGN**

1) For sites with one-time demonstrations that happen over time, consider having course participants recommend topics of interest. This can be done through a one-time brainstorming session, or over time as participants' interests emerge and develop in response to FBSJ programming. During a focus group with parents and caregivers who attended KIPP Saturday school, participants initiated a discussion about nutrition challenges followed by an informal brainstorming session about how Food Bank classes could help them with these challenges. Some of the topics that participants mentioned include:

- a) How to get your kids to eat vegetables when they don't like them.
- b) How to get your kids to try new foods.
- c) What to do with your kids when you take them grocery shopping and they want to buy unhealthy snacks.
- d) How to get other family members on board with making healthy nutrition changes in the household.

Adding opportunities for participants to suggest topics could enhance a responsive curriculum that is audience-specific. As well, it could create additional opportunities for parents to share perspectives and tips with one another and to strengthen a sense of community. Participants can provide other participants with support while making nutrition changes. For example, during the focus group, participants shared "tips" with each other, such as helping kids eat vegetables by "disguising" them with other foods.

2) Consider expanding curriculum to include more advanced courses for adult participants who have completed "beginner" courses or who have healthier nutrition experience/s. As with last year's evaluation, participants unanimously agreed that they would recommend FBSJ courses to other participants. This year, adult participants also mentioned wishing that "the courses were

twice as long,” that “each session was longer,” that “they covered even more topics” and that they could “take other courses.”

Participants expressed interest in building upon skills beyond one or two courses. As one adult focus group participant shared, “I know you try to get a lot of nutrition information out there and to get the nutrition ball rolling. But some people are really like, “Okay, now what do I do? I'm learning healthy habits but I want to know more. Like, take it to the next level and go into the different meats and what's in them for example and what do all these ingredients mean?” (Adult, Healthy Cooking Demos).

FBSJ could consider creating a certificate program in which participants work towards taking different classes, or an incentive system where adult graduates of a course can then assist in program delivery. Teens who participate in YNOT courses reported enjoying demonstrating what they have learned for other teens and for public audiences. This may hold true for adult participants as well.

Sequential courses may also help participants sustain changes over a longer period of time, and for the Food Bank to better track what challenges and successes participants face as they implement more permanent nutrition changes. One participant at KIPP found her way to Food Bank HLI courses through CFS Head Start programming the previous year. She shared, “Before I started attending here [at KIPP] my son was at Headstart so I was already in the movement of transitioning to change certain things because of the classes there. When I got here and they were doing this every Saturday I just learned so much more. It is helping me along the way. It definitely helped to go from one class to another.”

3) Consider having participants add “goals” to the courses. At the start of a course, participants could share nutrition challenges or specific aspects of health that they would like to change or improve over the course of the class. Self-directed goals could inform course content as well as provide motivation for participants. These “intent-to-change variables” could also provide another data point for evaluation- a way to gauge whether courses are helping participants meet their nutrition goals.

## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**

4) Consider advertising classes and courses outside of specific sites. As with last year’s evaluation, participants this year requested more classes and often suggested adding elements to the courses they completed that are already part of other courses (Cooking Matters for Kids participants suggested learning how to teach other students; Cooking Matters for Parents participants suggested including children in the course). These recommendations suggest that participants would engage in multiple courses for themselves and/or their families given the opportunity. As well, participants expressed that they did not know about other Food Bank activities or courses that happen in their communities. As one Cooking Matters for Parents participant shared, “A lot of people in the community, if they knew they could go to classes I'm sure they would go. Unless you have a kid in school, most people aren't going to the classes, but if they have them available it might change a whole lotta people's eating habits.” Consider, as well, this excerpt from a focus group with KIPP participants:

*Focus group facilitator: Do you have any recommendations to improve the classes or demonstrations you have attended?*

*Participant #1: I actually wish it was a bigger thing.*

*Participant #2: It's like nobody really knows about the classes unless they already come to the classes or someone is telling another person. But it needs to be bigger and it needs to be known more. Not too many people know about the Food Bank classes.*

*Participant #3: Right, people know about the distribution of food but they don't know about healthy eating habits. Nutrition-wise they don't know about it.*

*Participant #1: People don't know how much the classes will help you change a lot of things.*

*Participant #2: I just feel like it's a great program and more people should know about it. More people should be involved and there should be more events more cooking classes. (KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demos)*

5) Continue creative incentives. As mentioned above, while participants express interest in more classes, ensuring adequate participation in new courses remains challenging. FBSJ attempts to encourage participation through incentives such as providing food cards, ingredients, and cookbooks. Participants mention appreciating these benefits and see them as a positive aspect of the courses.

## **PROGRAM OVERSIGHT**

6) Consider beginning the external evaluation process earlier in the fiscal year to ensure comprehensive focus group data. Staff turnover, school testing, end-of-year events, and competing priorities make scheduling focus groups and ensuring adequate participation in the focus groups challenging. Lengthening time for data collection and allowing time for follow-up with different sites could improve the qualitative data collection process.

7) Continue to collect survey data to capture immediate impressions about HLI courses. Survey data can be examined in relation to qualitative data from focus groups to determine the reasons why participants attended each type of course. As well, survey data—if examined systematically—could clarify what percent of participants complete courses, whether this varies by course, by site, or by demographic characteristics of participants. Having clearer information about who the participants are in each course will make generalizations and interpretations of impact and outcomes more meaningful. With this data, participants can be better selected for qualitative focus groups, interviews or case studies that address the specific courses and topics they encountered. As well, this data could inform targeted outreach should the Food Bank decide to expand its curriculum.

8) While it is clear from focus group data that participants **retain** nutrition information from courses and demonstration, it is less clear how this information results (or doesn't) in **behavioral**

**changes over time.** In addition to the pre and post survey, FBSJ could introduce a further follow-up assessment three or six months after the course is completed to determine longevity of potential changes. FBSJ could utilize information obtained through pre and post surveys and a later follow-up assessment to help determine the impact of classes on participants over time.

## **Concluding Comments**

As documented in the findings presented above, participants have overwhelmingly positive perceptions of HLI classes and demonstrations provided by FBSJ. Participants of courses, one-time demonstrations, and workshops all report learning new nutrition information such as the importance of healthy eating, label reading, and portion control. Learning new information, in turn, has resulted in behavioral changes after the courses such as eating healthier snacks or reducing salt intake. These behaviors have been proven to reduce food insecurity and improve overall health. These results indicate that FBSJ courses contribute to *Campbell Health Communities'* goal of supporting healthy lifestyles through nutrition education. As one participant expressed, "The Food Bank is phenomenal. They make themselves available not only to our organization but to local charities and organizations in the community. They're always so generous with the less fortunate and giving of their time and resources and of their products and merchandise. They really impact a lot of peoples' lives." A fellow focus group participant agreed: "As long as the resources allow them to do so they should continue the great work that they do because a lot of people suffer."

## APPENDICES

### **Appendix #1: Participant Recommendations** (organized by site)

#### **Hatch School, Cooking Matters for Teens®**

*"They should come back and do it more with us."*

*"I think that they should show every class in the school."*

*"I think they should take us different places, like to real kitchens."*

*"I think it should take us to the Food Bank so that we can see how they do it, how they give out food and stuff."*

*"They should bring different kids so we can teach them to make the things that we learned to make, or to have other kids come in and teach us what they learned some place else."*

*"I think they should start taking it to more students because it will help them with their nutrients and how to get their health up."*

*"Some people don't have any food so you could have the homeless people cook with us and then they could have food too."*

*"One thing I would change is that for them to come back more often and to come and cook with us all the time"*

*"One thing I would change is if they can go to every classroom and show them how to cook."*

#### **CFS, Professional Development for Food Workers**

*"In my opinion, any new food item that is added to the menu needs a demo because we all come from different walks of life, we all come from different ethnicities, different cities. We all cook differently so I think that that would be helpful to have more demonstrations."*

#### **KIPP, Healthy Cooking Demonstrations**

*"I have a lot of questions about meat. I think a lot of stuff is artificial or bad. I want to know how we can tell the difference, if we should be choosing different brands. I was watching the news and they said that everything was supposed to be organic really wasn't. Like how can we choose? We are trying to get healthy for trying to buy organic, it's not really organic."*

*"Choosing the right fish."*

*"I'm hearing a lot of stuff on the news about certain things and I'm so worried about you know mercury levels in tilapia."*

*“I think it would be really great to have people who have tried things, who have take a class come and tell us how much they enjoyed it or trying to things with us or with other community members.”*

## **HB WILSON, Cooking Matters for Parents**

*“I think that they should have summer classes for parents and option for them to come to their kitchen and learn to cook.”*

*“Kids really need classes and they need them young, starting in second, third grade because it can have an influence on the parents. What is a good learning about when Washington crossed the Delaware? We need to learn about health. The kids can do more to change parents than the parents can do to change kids. You would be surprised how much the kids can teach parents.”*

**Appendix #2:** Short Questionnaire Template (modified slightly for each site).

### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**WELCOME!** Please answer the following questions.

1) Which Food Bank course/s have you attended (please circle).

Healthy Baking      Cooking Matters      YNOT

2) How many sessions did you attend for each course?

Healthy Baking:

Cooking Matters:

YNOT:

3) What demonstration or activity is the most memorable to you?

4) Do you have a favorite recipe from the activities?

YES      NO

4b) If yes, what is it?

5) Have you made this recipe again?

YES      NO

5b) Why or why not?

6) Have you changed any **shopping** habits after taking this course?

YES      NO



6b) If yes, what are you doing differently? If no, why not?

7) Have you changed any **cooking** habits after taking this course?

YES NO

7b) If yes, what are you doing differently? If no, why not?

8) Have you changed any **eating** habits after taking this course?

YES NO

8b) If yes, what are you doing differently? If no, why not?

9) Have you shared what you learned with other people in your life?

YES NO

9b) If yes, who have you shared with?

10) How easy is it for you to make changes in your shopping, cooking, or eating?

Very Easy Somewhat Easy In the middle Somewhat Difficult Very Difficult

Do you have any other comments about the Food Bank courses?

**Appendix #3:** Basic Focus Group Template (modified significantly for each focus group based on curriculum.)

### **General retention**

What do you remember the best from the course? What really stands out?

What did you enjoy the most?

What do you remember learning about MyPlate?

### **Recipes**

What recipes do you remember?

What recipe/s did you like the most? Why?

Have you made the recipe again or used it in your teaching? Why or why not?

### **Label reading**

What do you remember learning about label reading? Why is it important?

Did you read labels before the course? Do you read labels now? When and how often?

### **Healthy shopping, cooking, eating**

Do you think that you **shop** healthier since taking this course?

In what ways? If no, why not?

Do you **buy** different foods since taking this course?

If yes, what is different? If no, why not?

Do you think that you **cook** healthier since taking this course?

In what ways? If no, why not?

Do you **cook** different meals since taking this course?

If yes, what is different?

Do you think that you **eat** healthier since taking this course?

In what ways? If no, why not?

Do you **eat** different foods since taking this course?

Do you **buy, cook or eat** different snacks or beverages since taking this course? If yes, what is different?

Do you swap out foods that are less healthy for healthier options? Like what?

What about portion control? Has this changed?

Has anything else changed about how you buy, cook, or eat food?

### **Food resource management**

Before taking this course, did you plan your meals ahead of time or make shopping lists?

Has this changed since taking this course?

What do you remember learning about choosing best-priced forms of fruits and vegetables?

Do you feel more confident that you can cook and buy healthier food on a budget since taking this course?

What about “stretching” ingredients?

### **Family**

Do you think what you learned during the course has impacted your family in any way?

How do you think your children have been impacted by you taking this course? How do you think your family has been impacted by your child taking this course?

Shopping? Do you involve kids or other family members?

Cooking?

Eating?

What happens when you eat away from home?

Did you share what you learned in the course with others?

### **Course format and style**

What did you think about the form and style of the course?

What worked well for you?

What would you change?

Would you recommend this class to someone else?

Do you have any other comments?

### **Behavior change based on MyPlate**

Have you increased your fruit and vegetable consumption?

Have you increased your whole grains consumption?

Have you reduced your sugars consumption?

How confident are you that you can discuss the difference between healthy and unhealthy fats?

Do you prepare recipes using herbs and spices instead of salt?

Do you prepare recipes with foods from multiple food groups?

Do you prepare recipes with different forms of fruits and vegetables?

Pros and cons of fresh, frozen, and canned?

How confident are you that you can identify healthy beverages?

How often do you practice proper hand washing?

How often do you practice basic knife safety?

### **Challenges**

What do you think are the biggest nutrition challenges for local families in general?

What do you think families do well in meeting these nutrition challenges?

Where do you think most people shop? What is it like to try and get healthy foods in local neighborhoods?

What do you think are the biggest challenges to buying nutritious food?

What do you think are the biggest challenges to preparing nutritious food?

What do you think are the biggest challenges to changing the way that we shop and eat?

What changes do you think would help kids be healthier? How could this happen?

What do you think about nutrition at the school? What would make it better?

What gets parents involved?

In what way do you teach nutrition in the classroom?

How often do you teach nutrition in the classroom?

What topics have you covered?

How do students respond to nutrition activities in the classroom?

Did this course help you think about how to teach nutrition in the classroom? If yes, in what ways? If no, why not?