Farm to Family: Connecting Food, Community & Family Systems to Promote Vegetable Consumption

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Presenter Disclosures

The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:

No relationships to disclose
Connecting systems to make high quality vegetables accessible and affordable

F2F

Families with young children

The Food Project

Local Non-Profits

Head Start Programs

The Food Project

healthy KIDS, healthy FUTURES

The Dimock Center

Bowdoin Street Health Center
F2F Model Basics

- Subsidized CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) model
- Goal: increase access to fresh, affordable vegetables in households with young children
- Vegetables grown by local farm and delivered weekly to community sites
F2F Model Basics

- 16 week program (July-October)
- Families pay $6.25/week for $25 of produce
  - Can pay with SNAP or cash
  - Subsidized portion comes from sister shares, money raised by community partners and grants
- Serves low income families in 3 Boston neighborhoods
  - Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Roxbury
F2F Model Basics: Educational Components

- Weekly bilingual newsletters including recipes, nutrition info, and food preparation and storage tips
- Supplementary nutrition and cooking workshops
- Farm trips for children and families

Featuring Recipe: Simple Salad Dressing

- 4 cups (packed) greens
- 1/4 cup olives (pitted or maintained)
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp garlic
- 1 tsp oil
- 1 tsp prepared dijon mustard

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. Put cooked pasta, salad, and dressing in a blender or ice cream maker and pulse until combined.
3. Tasting a food processor, keep the motor running while you slowly add olive oil, salt, and pepper to the processed vegetables.
4. Taste the pasta sauce: add more oil, salt, and pepper if liked. Add pepper to the dish final serving if so desired.
5. Clean the processor and immediately toss with the pasta.
6. For additional savory, serve with cheese or whole grains.

Kids in the Kitchen!

Simple Salad Dressing

Serves: 4 cups of salad

Ingredients:
- 4 cups (packed) greens
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1 tsp dijon mustard
- 1 tsp garlic
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp pepper

1. Cook pasta according to package directions.
2. Put 1/2 cup mustard, 1 tsp dijon mustard, 1/2 tsp garlic, 1/2 tsp olive oil, and 1/2 tsp salt and pepper in a bowl.
3. Mix until well combined.
4. Pour over the pasta and toss until well coated.
5. Serve with cheese or whole grains.

For more information, visit:
- www.sayyes.org
- www.f2fcenter.org

Featuring Recipe: Simple Salad Dressing

Week 18
F2F Model Basics: Site Coordinators

- 1-2 staff members/site; champion the program
- Selected by the program director
- Roles include:
  - Recruiting participants
  - Receiving and distributing weekly shares
  - Making reminder and pick up phone calls
  - Collecting payments
  - Administering annual survey
- Receive a farm share
- Annual training at the beginning of the season
Development of the F2F Model

- Built from the ground up in collaboration with families, Head Start programs, local farmers and academic partners
- Head Start parent surveys and focus groups used to obtain input
  - 93% of surveyed parents were interested in receiving vegetables through Head Start
  - 67% would be interested if vegetables were offered at a reduced price
  - 59% would be interested if they could use SNAP to pay for the vegetables

Source: Agrawal, Myles, Hoffman et al., 2011
Notes: Parent survey (N=139), parent focus groups (N=4)
F2F by the Numbers

- **Average # of families served/month:**
  - 2011: 115
  - 2012: 128
  - 2013: 76

- **SNAP/EBT usage:**
  - 2011: 30%
  - 2012: 36%
  - 2013: 40%

Notes: 2013 figures are for July & August; There were fewer sites and fewer available shares in 2013 (80 in 2013; 130 in 2011 & 2012).
Introduction to F2F

- Participated Last Year: 23.8%
- Friend/Family Member: 8.3%
- Staff Member: 38.1%
- Flyer: 9.5%
- Saw Veggie Boxes: 4.8%
- Other: 15.5%

Source: 2012 F2F Year End Survey
Note: N=86
Motivation to Participate

Primary reason for participating in F2F:

- Low price (n=44)
- Desire to eat more fresh or local food (n=32)
- Have more fruits and vegetables for their family (n=26)
- Convenience of program (n=13)

Source: 2012 F2F Year End Survey
Notes: N=86; some respondents selected multiple motivations.
Pick Up Rates

- In 2011, parent pick up rates = 74%
- In 2012, 51 families randomized to receive weekly text message reminders or no text reminders
- On time pick up rates were lower for both groups, but slightly higher for text message group:
  - Text message = 69%
  - No text message = 62%
- Overall pick up rates were high for both groups:
  - Text message = 96%
  - No text message = 92%

Source: Cox, Hoffman & Shiyko, 2013
Assessment of Produce

**Amount**
- Just right = 74%
- Not enough = 21%
- Too much = 5%

**Selection**
- Very happy = 46%
- Somewhat happy = 32%
- Neutral = 16%
- Somewhat unhappy = 6%
- Very unhappy = 0%

**Quality**
- Very happy = 54%
- Somewhat happy = 29%
- Neutral = 14%
- Somewhat unhappy = 4%
- Very unhappy = 0%

Source: 2012 F2F Year End Survey; Note: N=86
Consumption of a New Fruit/Vegetable

Adults

- Yes: 67%
- No: 33%

Children

- Yes: 57%
- No: 26%
- N/A: 17%

Source: 2012 F2F Year End Survey
Notes: N=86; new foods included eggplant, squash, yellow watermelon.
Changes in Vegetable Consumption

Source: 2012 F2F Year End Survey
Note: N=86

- MANY MORE Vegetables: 56.6%
- FEW MORE Vegetables: 20.5%
- SAME AMOUNT of Vegetables: 21.7%
- FEWER Vegetables: 1.2%
Participant Experiences

- A lesson in every bag (n=7)
  - “I think there’s a lesson in every bag because you have to figure out, okay now what is this if you’ve never seen it before. Then you have to figure out how do you eat this? What do you eat it with?”

- Takes more time but worth the benefits (n=4)
  - “It takes more time but you have to think about it’s more healthier. If you just open a can and just put it there, the taste is not the same. You don’t want to eat something that you’re not enjoying the taste. I see the difference with the lettuce. I just go to the store and buy lettuce and it’s different. This one, I put vinegar and a little bit of olive oil, little bit of salt, there’s so much in there. It’s different.”

- More of a hassle (n=2)
  - “I just think it’s like more of a hassle when you don’t have the time cause right now I have a bag of it on top of the refrigerator rotting and like I have to clean that bag. I have to go through it and get what’s good out, get what’s not. So I think of the time factor.”

Source: Agrawal, Devine, Hoffman, Wirth, Castaneda-Sceppa (2013)
Note: N=13
Summary

- F2F has been implemented for 3 years
  - Model is feasible within preschool settings
  - Model is acceptable to families

- Strengths
  - Low income families able to access fresh vegetables easily and affordably
  - Opportunities to link home and school food environments

- Challenges
  - Funding
  - Providing support to site coordinators

- Next steps
  - Continue to develop the evidence base for the model with more rigorous research studies
  - Identify additional sustainable funding mechanisms
For more information:

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thefoodproject.org/farm-to-family