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MATERIALS HELP YOUTH EVALUATE MEDIA MESSAGES

A new after-school program helps kids interpret the messages they receive every day to make healthier choices about food and physical activity. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), one of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), developed the materials, available free at www.nichd.nih.gov/msy. *Media-Smart Youth: Eat, Think, and Be Active!* is designed to help young people ages 11 to 13 become aware of how media may influence the choices they make. The program's fun, hands-on, interactive activities teach critical thinking skills to help young people make smart decisions about what they eat and how they spend their time. "Habits begun in childhood and reinforced in the teen years may become lifelong behaviors," said Duane Alexander, M.D., director of the NICHD. "Media-Smart Youth teaches young people how to evaluate the complex media messages they receive so they can make wise choices about eating and being active." The curriculum consists of 10 lessons and a major project that helps young people acquire knowledge and skills in four key areas:

Media awareness - The curriculum includes materials to help young people recognize attention-getting techniques used in media messages and to evaluate the messages for accuracy and consistency with their own ideas of being healthy.

Media production - Participants express what they have learned through creative projects. These include a series of "Mini-Productions" in which youth develop their own media messages, and a final "Big Production" in which they may work with a local station, newspaper or other media partner to create radio ads, videos, posters or other media products that promote healthy nutrition and physical activity to their peers.

Nutrition - Exercises and activities, such as learning to read and interpret Nutrition Facts Labels, teach young people important concepts for healthful eating and encourage them to practice making informed choices.

Physical activity - Each lesson incorporates discussion and an "Action Break" to help participants develop strategies for becoming more active in their daily lives. They discover that daily physical activity is anything that gets their bodies moving, and that it can be fun.

The accompanying Facilitator's Guide for the 10-lesson curriculum also includes a video tape or DVD featuring a program summary and tips for facilitators, plus youth-focused video segments for use in summarizing key concepts for each lesson.

**To order a free copy of the materials,
contact the NICHD Information Resource
Center at 800/370-2943 or visit
www.nichd.nih.gov.**

NUTRITION, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BOOST SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

An innovative program to increase physical activity and improve nutrition at an elementary school has shown dramatic results over four years, according to research presented at the 53rd Annual Meeting of the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) at Denver, CO. The school logged significant gains on standardized tests, and nurse visits declined by 67 percent during the experiment.

Researcher Benjamin Sibley, PhD, says the program “Making the Grade with Diet and Exercise” (MGDE) rose out of concerns that increased focus on academic performance would lead schools to cut opportunities for physical activity.

Tom Yazvac, principal of Springfield Local Elementary School in New Middletown, OH, first sought to boost academic performance through more traditional academic interventions such as summer school and after-school programs. Poor results led school officials to develop the MGDE program, which now has been implemented at a second school.

MGDE consists of three core components:

1. A 10 - 20 minute period of physical activity at the beginning of each school day
2. A simple but nutritionally sound breakfast for all students
3. Recess before lunch

After the activity period, students pick up brown-bag breakfasts consisting of cereal and/or another bread product served with milk and juice on most days. Other periods throughout the day are shortened by two to three minutes each to make time for the activity and breakfast periods.

Sibley explained the rationale for scheduling recess before lunch. “After sitting in the classroom all morning,” he said, “children are anxious for recess. When recess comes after lunch — a typical format in many elementary schools — stu-

dents are likely to rush through their meal, leaving much of it uneaten, to hurry out to the playground.” Furthermore, he noted, “At the end of recess, students are frequently over-excited and perhaps quarreling, and it may take classroom teachers several minutes to quiet them down. Placing recess before lunch allows students to burn off pent-up energy, then sit down to eat and return to the classroom ready to learn.”

At Springfield, since enacting MGDE, the school has improved from passing two of the state indicator proficiency tests prior to the intervention to passing all five tests. A significantly higher percentage of students earned passing scores on each of the tests compared with pre-MGDE levels:

- Reading (28% increase)
- Writing (23% increase)
- Math (23% increase)
- Citizenship (11% increase)
- Science (29% increase)

Studies are underway to measure the program’s impact on student obesity and physical activity levels. One measure is clear: visits to the school nurse are down 67 percent, with the number of visits “out of boredom” (as determined by the school nurse) specifically declining in frequency.

Over the four-year intervention, the school noted a steady increase in daily attendance (from 94.3 percent in 1999 - 2000 to 95.9 percent in 2003 - 2004). Discipline referrals were down by 58 percent over the same period.

Costs for the MGDE were mainly for food — about \$10,000 annually. Schools with a high percentage of students who qualify for free or reduced meals would have minimal costs in implementing such a program.

For more information, call the ACSM Communications and Public Information office at 317-637-9200 ext. 117 or 127.

LIVING IN POVERTY ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISK FOR TEENS TO BE OVERWEIGHT

Adolescents aged 15-17 years who live in poverty are more likely to be overweight than those not living in poverty, according to a study in the May 24/31 issue of *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The number of overweight adolescents in the U.S. has more than doubled during the past three decades. As the prevalence of adolescent overweight continues to increase, so too will its associated consequences, including type two diabetes mellitus, hypertension, obstructive sleep apnea, poor quality of life, and increased illness and risk of death in adulthood, according to background information in the article. Whether the increasing prevalence is characterized by larger, smaller, or unchanged disparities in overweight status across socioeconomic strata is not known.

Richard A. Miech, PhD, MPH, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and colleagues examined trends in the prevalence of overweight among adolescents aged 12 to 17 years by family poverty status. The researchers used data from four cross-sectional, nationally representative surveys (U.S. National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys [NHANES] of 1971-1974, 1976-1980, 1988-1994, and 1999-2004).

The authors found that trends in the association of adolescent overweight with family poverty differed by age groups. There was a widening disparity among 15- to 17-year-old adolescents from poor families. This trend was similar among male, female, non-Hispanic white, and non-Hispanic black adolescents, resulting in an overall prevalence of overweight in 1999-2004 more than 50 percent higher among adolescents in poor vs. nonpoor families (23.3 percent vs. 14.4 percent, respectively). In contrast, for 12- to 14-year-old adolescents, prevalence did not significantly differ by family poverty status in any of the surveys; although among non-Hispanic black adolescents, overweight prevalence increased faster in nonpoor vs. poor families.

Additional analyses suggest physical inactivity, sweetened beverage consumption, and skipping breakfast may contribute to these disparities. The researchers found that among respondents aged 15 to 17 years, the increase in the proportion of calories from sweetened beverages across the last 2 NHANES surveys (1988-1994 and 1999-2002) was significantly larger in poor families (from 9.2 percent to 15.4 percent) compared with nonpoor families (from 11.1 percent to 12.6 percent). Among older adolescents aged 15 to 17 years, the absolute difference in the disparity across poverty status in the prevalence of breakfast skipping increased from 1.1 percent to 16.2 percent across the last 2 NHANES surveys.

“The observed differences across older vs. younger adolescents are consistent with the greater autonomy that comes with increasing age. Adolescents aged 15 to 17 years vs. those aged 12 to 14 years have more opportunities to purchase their own food and determine their own leisure time pursuits and also have more discretionary income with which to act on their preferences,” the authors write.

“These results suggest that efforts to reduce health disparities in the U.S. require monitoring of population health, so that emergent disparities and their underlying causes can be detected and addressed at early stages of their development.”

For more information, contact the JAMA/ Archives Media Relations Department at 312/464-5262 or e-mail mediarelations@jama-archives.org.

The Food Journal is available by electronic notification by e-mailing foodjournal@tcaa.org.

Archived issues of the Food Journal are available on-line at www.tcaa.org.

The Food Journal welcomes your comments and ideas for stories. Call 800/992-9767, ext. 206, or e-mail comments and suggestions to foodjournal@tcaa.org.

SURGE IN FUEL PRICES INFLUENCING BUYING AND COOKING HABITS

The rapid rise in gasoline prices affects where consumers shop for food and encourages the use of more economizing behaviors, according to the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) report, *U.S. Grocery Shopper Trends, 2006*. The study also shows that consumers seek convenient meal-time solutions, a fast and easy-to-shop store environment and value.

Rising fuel prices are driving shoppers to use more economizing behaviors prior to and during their shopping trips. Nearly half (45 percent) claim that high energy prices have had a direct influence on purchasing habits (52 percent for families with children; 53 percent for single moms). In response, consumers are buying fewer luxury items, cooking more and eating out less. They are also incorporating cost-cutting measures such as:

- Making a shopping list (46%)
- Using frequent-shopper programs (39%)
- Checking newspaper specials (36%)
- Redeeming coupons (28%)
- Stocking up on bargains (23%)
- Comparing prices across stores (20%)
- Buying store or lower-priced brands (17%)
- Combining trips to multiple stores (14%)

Three-out-of-five shoppers (60 percent) like the main stock-up trip to the primary store (the place where the majority of weekly food purchases are made) either somewhat or very much, and only 10 percent dislike this trip to the same degree. For people that enjoy preparing home-cooked meals, 69 percent enjoy the primary shopping trip, compared to 28 percent who do not enjoy cooking. Cooking enthusiasts also spend more per week (\$97.40) at their primary store than those who do not like cooking (\$69.00).

Shoppers are more likely to shop at conventional supermarkets than any other format. Ninety percent have shopped at a supermarket in the past 30 days, followed by supercenters (38 percent) and warehouse clubs (23 percent). Nearly half (48 percent) say that they shop at a supermarket nearly every time, compared to supercenters (19 percent), discount stores (10 percent) and warehouse clubs (6 percent). When choosing a primary store for food purchases, the most important factors to consumers are a clean, neat store (75 percent), high-quality fruits and vegetables (74 percent), high-quality meats (74 percent), accurate shelf tags (70 percent) and low prices (69 percent). However, when selecting a store for secondary or fill-in shopping trips, factors such as a simple store layout and a speedy checkout are more important.

Conventional supermarkets remain the dominant outlet for food products, including meat and poultry (68 percent), frozen foods (63 percent), cereal (61 percent), and natural or organic foods (57 percent). However, they no longer provide the majority of non-prescription drugs (28 percent), paper (37 percent), household cleaning (37 percent) or pet products (27 percent). Shoppers are increasingly turning to alternative outlets for these items.

Shoppers make an average of 2.1 visits to the grocery store each week, including an average of 1.6 visits to the primary store. They spend an average of \$93.40 a week per household, of which \$72.50 is spent at the primary store.

Male and female shoppers behave differently in the supermarket, possess different attitudes toward shopping and use information related to shopping to different degrees. Men plan less, use supermarket information less and emphasize economy less than females. They also place less importance on quality and service, but highly value speed and convenience. Full time working women show marked differences compared with women who work part time or are not currently in the workforce. Working women plan less, put less importance on economizing and spend more on

their weekly grocery trip. Married and single shoppers place different emphasis on grocery shopping. Singles eat out more and cook fewer meals. They pick up grocery items at a variety of places and do not focus as much on economy or planning as their married counterparts.

Shopping habits vary by age. Older consumers report the greatest amount of planning, the highest usage of information and the greatest emphasis on economy when compared to consumers of all other ages. Generation Xers and Boomers spend considerably more per week, driven by household size and income potential. Younger shoppers prepare fewer home-cooked meals and value speed and convenience more than any other group.

Data for the report were collected through online surveys conducted by Harris Poll Online among a nationally representative sample of 2,001 U.S. shoppers. Respondents had to meet the following requirements: minimum of 15 years of age; primary or equally shared responsibility for food shopping; and must have shopped for groceries in the past two weeks.

For more information, visit media@fmi.org.

NEW FOOD STAMP OUTREACH EFFORTS IN TEXAS

The Texas Association of Community Action Agencies, Inc., (TACAA) is pleased to announce its fourth Food Stamp Education and Outreach Program (FSEOP) with funding from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission and United States Department of Agriculture. Building on its successes with the earlier outreach programs, TACAA has awarded five community-based organizations (CBOs) subcontracts for target areas and/or populations in Texas. The primary objective of FSEOP is to increase participation in the Food Stamp Program by high need populations who are potentially eligible for food stamps, but have not applied for the benefits. Since less than half of the eligible popula-

tion in Texas utilizes the Food Stamp Program, the outreach efforts are much needed.

TACAA congratulates the following five CBOs on being awarded the outreach subcontracts.

The North Texas Food Bank

4306 Shilling Way, Dallas, TX 75237

Target Area: Dallas County

Phone: 214/330-1396

tina-marie@NTFB.org

Fax: 214/331-4104

Families Under Urban and Social Attack, Inc.

3353 Elgin St., Houston, TX 77004

Target Area: Harris County

Phone: 713/651-1470 ext. 1285

hstagg@fuusa.org

Fax: 713/651-8045

Deep East Texas Council of Governments

210 Premier Drive, Jasper, TX 75951

Target Area: Hardin, Houston, Jasper, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Trinity, & Tyler Counties

Phone: 409/384-5704 ext. 288

sfuller@detcog.org

Fax: 409/384-5390

Capital Area Food Bank of Texas

8201 S. Congress Ave., Austin, TX 78745

Target Area: Travis and Hays Counties

Phone: 512/282-2111 ext. 205

lcook@secondharvest.org

Fax: 512/282-6606

Rio Grande Valley Empowerment Zone Corporation Inc.

3312 W. Alberta Road, Edinburg, TX 78539

Target Population & Area: Elderly individuals in Aransas, Brooks, Cameron, Duval, Hidalgo, Jim Hogg, Jim Wells, Kenedy, Kleberg, Live Oak, McMullen, Nueces, Refugio, San Patricio, Starr, Willacy, & Zapata Counties

Phone: 956/683-3700 ext. 3745

adela@rgvezc.org

Fax: 956/661-5748

RESOURCES

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Offers New Food Stamp Radio public service announcements (PSAs)** Sound files and scripts for food stamp radio PSAs can be downloaded from the USDA website. Five newly posted PSAs include three in English and two in Spanish. They are available at www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/outreach/radio/.
- **World Hunger Year (WHY) Announces “Serving Up Justice: How to Design an Emergency Feeding Program & Build Community Food Security”** This resource guide for those looking to establish or improve a food pantry, soup kitchen, or other emergency feeding program outlines the logistics of designing and managing a program. It also discusses the various ways programs can promote self-reliance and build community food security. Intended for a national audience, it covers a broad range of topics and provides a foundation upon which to build programs tailored to the specific needs of the communities served. For a hard copy, e-mail NHC@worldhungeryear.org or download the PDF file from www.worldhungeryear.org/comm_conn/serve_up_justice.asp.
- **A Consumer’s Guide to Food Safety: Severe Storms and Hurricanes** This publication provides information and recommendations about keeping food safe during times of power outages and flooding. Available on USDA’s Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) website, www.fsis.usda.gov, the guide provides specific food safety recommendations on what to do before, during and after tropical storms and hurricanes. You can also find answers to your questions about food safety by using “Ask Karen,” FSIS’s virtual representative. “Ask Karen” allows you to ask food safety related questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Visit “Ask Karen” at www.fsis.usda.gov/Food_Safety_Education/Ask_Karen/index.asp#Question.

TEXAS SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM READY TO SERVE CHILDREN

With summer here, thousands of Texas children will be looking for places to meet their friends, have fun and eat healthy snacks and meals. Texas’ Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is ready to meet the demand.

The Texas Health and Human Services Commission’s SFSP is offered statewide by local sponsors who operate sites where children up to 19 years old can get free meals. The service is open to all children, regardless of income. Those 19 years or older and enrolled in school programs for people with disabilities also can receive free meals.

School districts, local government agencies, churches and other private, nonprofit groups sponsor the free meal sites at recreation centers, schools, parks, churches, day camps and community centers. The sites are located in areas where more than 50 percent of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program. Many sites offer recreational activities for children in addition to the free meals.

In 2005, more than 12 million meals were served to Texas children through the SFSP, up more than 880,000 from 2004.

The most up-to-date information on Summer Food meal sites and hours of operation is available statewide by calling 2-1-1.

For more details on the SFSP, visit www.summerfood.org.

FEDERAL REGISTER

- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), 05/26/06, p. 28759.** This rule finalizes the proposed rule, published 11/27/02, implementing the revised collection and reporting of racial/ethnic data by State agencies on persons re-

ceiving benefits from the Food Stamp Program (FSP). The changes comply with new racial/ethnic data collection standards issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) while also providing regulatory flexibility and reform for this area of the program regulations. The effective date is 06/19/06. For more information, contact Barbara Hallman, Chief, State Administration Branch, Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), 3101 Park Center Dr., Alexandria, VA 22302, 703/305-2383, or Barbara.Hallman@fns.usda.gov.

- **USDA**, 05/25/06, p. 30113. USDA invites the general public and other public agencies to comment on a proposed information collection by FNS to revise and extend the information collection requirements associated with initiating and conducting Federal collection actions against households with delinquent food stamp recipient debts. Written comments must be submitted by 07/24/06 to Jane Duffield, Chief, Payment Accuracy Branch, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Dr., Rm. 818, Alexandria, VA 22302. For further information, call Leslie Byrd at 703/305-2472.
- **USDA**, 05/30/06, p. 30561. This final rule implements a provision of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 by creating uniform regulations related to the disregard of overpayments in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). As a result, this rule codifies longstanding policy related to the disregard of overpayments in the NSLP and SBP, and revises CACFP regulations by increasing the threshold for the disregard of overpayments determined in management evaluations, reviews or audits in a fiscal year to be consistent with the NSLP and SBP. The effective date is 6/29/06. For more information, contact Keith Churchill at 703/305-2590.
- **USDA**, 06/05/06, p. 32301. This notice invites the general public and other public agencies

to comment on proposed information collections regarding the NSLP, SBP and Special Milk Program. Written comments must be submitted by 08/04/06 to Melissa Rothstein, Chief, Program Analysis and Monitoring Branch, FNS, USDA, 3101 Park Center Dr., Rm. 640, Alexandria, VA 22302. For additional information or for copies of the information collection, contact Lynn Rodgers at the above address or by phone at 703/305-2590.

- **USDA**, 06/08/06, p. 33343. This rule proposes to revise and clarify requirements with respect to the distribution, management, and use of donated foods in the NSLP and other child nutrition programs, the Nutrition Services Incentive Program, and by charitable institutions. Most significantly, it would establish specific requirements to ensure that school food authorities and other recipient agencies in child nutrition programs receive the value of all donated foods provided to food service management companies for use in providing school lunches and other meals. Comments, identified by RIN number 0584-AD45, must be received by 08/07/06: e-mail to Robert.Delorenzo@fns.usda.gov; fax to 703/305-2420; mail, hand deliver or courier to Lillie F. Ragan, Assistant Branch Chief, Policy Branch, Food Distribution Div., FNS, USDA, Rm. 500, 3101 Park Center Dr., Alexandria, VA 22302; or visit www.regulations.gov. For more information, contact Lillie F. Ragan at the above address or phone 703/305-2662.

TEXAS REGISTER

- **Department of State Health Services (DSHS)**, 05/26/06, p. 4417. The Department of State Health Services withdraws the proposed amendments to §§31.21, 31.32, 31.34 - 31.36, regarding the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, which appeared in the 12/09/05 *Texas Register*. The effective date is 05/15/06. For further information, call: 512/458-7111 ext. 6972.



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