Farm to Family Pilot Evaluation

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Program Partners:
• Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures
• The Food Project
• ABCD Head Start
F2F Model Components

- Local produce at a low cost, bilingual educational materials, classroom farm trips
  - Full value of each farm share: ~$15.00/week.
  - Participants could purchase boxes @$5.00/week (July-Nov).
  - $10.00 subsidized through funds raised by The Food Project.
  - Monthly payment due on the 3rd week prior to the following month.
  - Payment options: SNAP, cash, check or money order.
  - Option to sign up for one or multiple months.
F2F Model Components

- On-site staffing and support at Head Start program sites.
  - 4 site coordinators (1 per site) designated by the Head Start program director.
  - Site coordinators received deliveries, made reminder pick-up and payment calls, collected cash and check payments, provided ongoing feedback.
  - Communication between site coordinators and The Food Project managed by Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures project manager.
F2F Model Components

• Outreach to parents/caregivers and Head Start staff
  – The Food Project conducted on-site outreach during pick up and drop off times at each Head Start site to inform parents and staff about the program.
  – After on-site outreach, Head Start programs received application packets for each child and staff member and flyers to post at the site.
F2F Model Components

• Delivery Logistics
  – Weekly drop-off scheduled for Tuesday afternoons at each site.
  – Drop-offs at Head Start sites where ≥ 10 individuals enrolled.
  – When site enrollment was < 10 individuals, farm shares were delivered to one of the shared kitchens for delivery to the site.
HKHF and TFP attend F2Pre-K breakout @ CFSC meeting
Meeting with Head Start program directors
Subsidizing funds raised by TFP
Assessment findings reviewed by HKHF and TFP. Key project elements codeveloped.
Program implementation July–November 2011

Oct. 10
Nov. 10
Dec. 10
Jan. 11
Feb. 11
Mar. 11
Apr. 11
May. 11
Jun. 11
Jul. 11
Aug. 11
Sep. 11
Oct. 11
Nov. 11
Dec. 11

TFP and HKHF meet to discuss F2Pre-K in Boston
Data collected to assess Head Start parent & staff interest
On-site outreach at Head Start sites
Program evaluation
Program evaluation and planning meeting with HKHF, TFP and Head Start
Evaluation Goals

1. Assess participation rates
2. Understand strengths/challenges from the perspectives of The Food Project and Head Start staff
3. Examine families’ perceptions of the program
4. Explore short-term changes in health behaviors
Evaluation Procedures

• Participation rates (parents and staff)
  – Overall participation
  – Pick-up rates
  – Drop-out rates

• Open-ended interviews
  – 3 site coordinators from Head Start
  – 3 farming and outreach staff from The Food Project

• Pre-/post-test parent surveys
  – Family health behaviors
  – Perceptions of the program
Participation

• Overall participation = 87 individuals
  – 42 parents (12% of parents at 4 Head Start sites)
  – 45 staff members (49% of staff at 4 Head Start sites)

• Average drop-out rates
  – 52% parents
  – 27% staff

• EBT usage
  – 67% parents
  – 11% staff
Average pick-up rates:
• 74% parents
• 97% staff

Parent pick-up rates breakdown:
• July/August:
  – Extended Day (class in session): 81%
  – Half Day (class not in session): 57%
• September: 71%
• October: 89%
• November: 82%
Farm Share Contents

# Weeks

- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Onions
- Winter Squash
- Peaches
- Apples
- Summer Squash
- Lettuce
- Cucumbers
- Turnips
- Peppers
- Kale
- Tomatoes
- Collards
- Cabbage
- Parsley/Cilantro
- Leeks
- Garlic
- Popcorn
- Peas
Feedback from Head Start Site Coordinators
Site Coordinator Feedback

- Time commitment = 1.5-2 hours/week on the program.
  - storing and unpacking the farm shares, recruiting families, making weekly reminders and collecting payments
- Is this program important for families?
  - strongly agree = 2; agree = 1
- Is it worthwhile to invest the time and space required to carry out the program?
  - strongly agree = 1; agree = 1; disagreed = 1
- Should the program be continued next year?
  - strongly agree = 1; agree = 1; neutral = 1

“It is my pleasure serving [foods] to the families because…they can get a better quality life with this program.”
Program Strengths

1. Providing families with opportunities to eat vegetables in new ways
2. Low cost of the produce
3. Quantity of produce
4. New approach to educate families about how to cook healthier
5. Families could “swap” produce they would not use
6. Produce was grown without pesticides
7. Tools to organize their coordinator duties (list w/ participants’ names/contact information, farm information, educational handouts, schedule for collecting payments)
8. Deliveries were reliable
9. Used unclaimed foods in school meals (when sites had a kitchen)
Program Challenges

1. At times it was difficult to get the parents to pick up the food and to make the payments

2. Maintaining program participation
   – Some families dropped out each month and coordinators tried to recruit new families

3. Some discomfort collecting money and reminding families about payments
Program Strengths

1. Overcoming start-up/implementation challenges associated with a new pilot program such as the amount of produce for each share, delivery logistics, and weekly newsletters in English and Spanish

2. Seeing how enthusiastic participants were about what they were receiving

3. Seeing the interest in the program among the community partners

4. The variety and amount of produce being provided
1. Farmer-consumer disconnect regarding variability in the types of produce delivered each month
2. Month-to-month recruitment difficulties that resulted in lower participation in summer months when the produce was most plentiful
3. Collecting money from participants each month
4. Food spoiling at one site that did not have a kitchen when parents did not pick-up their farm shares
5. Communicating with multiple Head Start sites
6. Some staff turn-over at the farm that resulted in inconsistent communication with Head Start
Farmer-Consumer Disconnect

“People are unfamiliar with the produce and you know, there’s a level of education that needs to happen…Everyone wants tomatoes, corn, watermelon, peaches every week and that’s not how farms work. The grocery stores have distorted our understanding of seasonality. Not all [participants] are familiar with what grows in Massachusetts and that not everything is available every week…so then we need to do more education so people aren’t disappointed and [they] understand that actually they’re getting the freshest produce they could possibly get, but they’re not going to get the same thing every week.”
"[Community supported] agriculture is a challenging thing in and of itself because it’s a seasonal arrangement with the farmer and the customer. So always when we have first year folks...there’s some grumbling. Some people don’t totally understand what they’re getting into...[people] hop[e] they’re getting a full smorgasbord of produce and then it’s not really the reality of the farm...we’re a small farm and we have seasonal produce so we can’t have everything all the time or even have favorite vegetables all the time...In this area of the world you get tomatoes for two months or less and that’s it, you know. That’s kind of it."
Pre-/Post-Test Parent Surveys
**Pre-/Post-Test Parent Health Habits**  
(*N* = 14; 45% participation rate)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-Test Mean (SD)</th>
<th>Post-Test Mean (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># nights cook dinner at home/week</td>
<td>5.57 (1.79)</td>
<td>5.57 (1.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># nights cook veg. for dinner/week</td>
<td>4.43 (1.95)</td>
<td>4.79 (1.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># nights eat dinner prepped out of home/week</td>
<td>1.00 (0.78)</td>
<td>1.00 (0.88)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq. child F&amp;V consumption/day</td>
<td>4.50 (2.41)</td>
<td>4.36 (2.53)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq. child SSB intake/day</td>
<td>1.57 (1.45)</td>
<td>1.50 (0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily child screen time (in hours)</td>
<td>2.29 (0.99)</td>
<td>2.21 (1.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freq. of child PA (&gt; 60 min/day)/week</td>
<td>5.07 (2.34)</td>
<td>5.79 (1.42)</td>
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Notes: Subsample of parents participating in July and August
## Parent Program Perceptions

*(N = 14; 45% participation rate)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% agree/ strongly agree</th>
<th>% neutral</th>
<th>% disagree/ strongly disagree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The F&amp;V were fresh and high quality</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My children enjoyed the F&amp;V</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased with the amount of food received</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used all the F&amp;V most weeks</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happy with the types of F&amp;V received</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would have liked more F&amp;V each week</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I liked the recipes*</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children liked the recipes*</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recipes were easy to use*</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan to use recipes in the future*</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>33%</td>
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</table>

Note: 36% of families reported using recipes that came with the farm shares.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% agree/ strongly agree</th>
<th>% neutral</th>
<th>% disagree/ strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pick up times were convenient</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaging was appropriate</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td></td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of F&amp;V was a good value</td>
<td>93%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall, this program made a difference in my family’s eating behaviors</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I would be willing to participate in the program again next year.</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td></td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
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Parent Program Perceptions (cont.)

• “How did F2F help your family?”
  – to eat more fruits and vegetables ($n = 8$);
  – to access fruits and vegetables at a low cost ($n = 5$);
  – to obtain fresh fruits and vegetables frequently ($n = 5$);
  – to eat a wider variety or new types of fruits and vegetables ($n = 4$);
  – to improve the family’s health ($n = 2$);
  – to learn to use new recipes ($n = 1$).
Parent Program Perceptions (cont.)

• “Any other feedback about the program?”
  – more fruit \( (n = 6) \)
  – more variety \( (n = 3) \) in the boxes.
Suggestions for Future Improvement

• Provide a cookbook (English/Spanish) w/ week 1 share.
• Get additional fruit from another farm
• Improve registration system
• Encourage whole-season sign up
• Work on participant education (CSA expectations)
• Are Head Starts w/ low August enrollment a good match?
• Community partner sites could purchase the shares from The Food Project and then collect payment from the participants to reimburse themselves. Whatever the partners can’t collect they would cover in funds they had budgeted for this purpose. TFP would still work on funding the 2/3 subsidies.
Expanding the F2F Model for 2012?

• Additional components to consider:
  – Classroom curriculum
  – More demonstrations and sampling
  – Integrating the produce into school meals
  – Others????
Contact Information

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