Checklist for Evidence-Based Approaches

The purpose of this 4-step checklist is to help States and Implementing Agencies meet SNAP-Ed evidence-based program and practice requirements. An evidence-based approach for nutrition education and obesity prevention is defined as "the integration of the best research evidence with the best available practice-based evidence." Evidence-based allowable uses of SNAP-Ed funds include conducting and evaluating education and social marketing interventions, and implementing and measuring policy, systems, and environmental change strategies that will make it easier for low-income persons to make healthy dietary choices and be physically active.

An evidence-based approach may include a mix of strategies (broad approaches to intervening on obesity prevention target areas) and interventions (specific set of evidence-based, behaviorally–focused activities and/or actions to promote healthy eating and active lifestyles). The *SNAP-Ed Strategies and Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States* contains a listing of many evidence-based strategies and interventions in child care, school, community, and family settings. The *Toolkit* is the starting point for choosing evidence-based obesity prevention programs for SNAP-Ed.

Categories of Evidence-Based Approaches

FNS has identified three categories of evidence for strategies and interventions along a continuum: ***research-tested, practice-tested,*** *and* ***emerging.*** These categories vary according to scientific rigor, evaluation outcomes, research translation, and degree of innovation. Each category along the continuum is vital for expanding and building the knowledge base on effective practices. Movement along the continuum requires that programs are fully implement and evaluated.

Research-tested: The approach is based upon relevant rigorous nutrition and public health nutrition research including systematically reviewed scientific evidence, and other published studies and evaluation reports that demonstrate significant effects on individual behaviors, food/physical activity environments, or policies across multiple populations, settings, or locales.

Examples: Color Me Healthy, Baltimore Healthy Stores, Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care (NAP SACC)

Practice-tested: The approach is based upon published or unpublished evaluation reports and case studies by practitioners working in the field that have shown positive effects on individual behaviors, food/physical activity environments, or policies.

Examples: Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings (New York), Empowering Healthy Choices in Schools and Homes (Georgia)

Emerging: The approach includes community- or practitioner-driven activities that have the potential for obesity prevention, but have not yet been formally evaluated for obesity prevention outcomes. Evaluation indices may reflect cultural or community-informed measures of success.

Examples: Eat Smart in Parks (Missouri), Fit Business Kit Worksite Program (California)

Identify Strategy or Intervention Name:			
Step 1	Many strategies or interventions have already been reviewed for their effectiveness for nutrition education and obesity prevention. To begin, check if the approach is recognized as evidence-based by at least one government or scientific agency, or listed in a registry reviewed by experts and researchers in nutrition education and obesity prevention.	**Yes**	**No**
	National Collaborative for Childhood Obesity Research: *SNAP-Ed Interventions Toolkit*		
	Food and Nutrition Service: Nutrition Evidence Library		
	National Cancer Institute: Research-Tested Interventions Program		
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: *Guide to Community Preventive Services*		
	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: Rural Obesity Prevention Toolkit		
	What Works for Health: Policies and Programs to Improve Wisconsin's Health		
	University of North Carolina Center of Excellence for Training and Research Translation		
	Other (specify:)		
If you answered to yes to any of the above, congratulations, your strategy or intervention has been certified as research- or practice-tested! If you answered no, go to Step 2.			
Step 2	Search for evaluation results for your intervention or strategy with a university or public health partner using the following guidelines.	**Yes**	**No**
A	Is there at least one peer-reviewed[1], scientific journal article that concludes your approach has significant positive impacts on individual behaviors, food/physical activity environments, or obesity prevention policies?		
B	Was the approach tested and compared against some type of control condition present (e.g., a similar venue or population that does not receive the intervention or strategy) with significant positive effects?		
*If you answered yes to **both** items A and B, your approach is **research-tested.*** Else, go to item C.			
C	Is there at least one evaluation report or case study that shows your approach has positive changes in individual behaviors, food/physical activity environments, or obesity prevention policies?		
*If you answered yes to item C, your approach is **practice-tested**.* Else, go to Step 3.			

[1] Peer-reviewed articles have been critiqued by the author's peers, who are experts in a given field or academic discipline. Articles published in peer-reviewed journals meet standards of excellence in scientific research. Examples of peer-reviewed journals with SNAP-Ed articles include: *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* and *Preventing Chronic Disease.*

Step 3	Many strategies or interventions have the potential for obesity prevention, but have not been thoroughly tested. The following criteria will help categorize an emerging approach.	Yes	No
A	Does the approach align with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, the *Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*, and/or *Healthy People 2020* objectives for Nutrition and Weight Status?		
B	Does the approach reflect the budgetary and time constraints of the low-income population?		
C	Does the approach reflect solutions that would make healthy eating and physically active lifestyles easier and more appealing to SNAP-Ed participants? (*Solutions that make healthy choices easier may include changes in food retail, food distribution, or recreation facilities, including hours of operation, price, promotion, placement, marketing, communication, and related operations and policies)*		
D	Will the approach be evaluated for changes in individual behaviors, food/physical activity environments, or obesity prevention policies?		
If you answered yes ***to items A – D, go to item E. Else, your approach is not considered emerging for SNAP-Ed.***			
E	Does the approach reflect the social, cultural, and/or linguistic needs and resources of the low-income population(s) served?		
F	Does the approach address the results and implications of a state or community needs assessment?		
G	Does the approach address state or local priorities/strategic plans?		
If you answered ***yes*** *to* ***items E, F, or G (any one of them)****, your approach is* ***emerging.***			

	Step 4. *For implementation purposes:* There are different expectations for program implementers when choosing among research-tested, practice-tested, or emerging approaches. Research-tested programs, and some practice-tested programs, have existing guidelines, materials, and tools for implementers to use upon appropriate training on program delivery. For certain emerging programs, there may be a need for development and audience testing of new strategies and concepts, which may be cost prohibitive. For each of the following criteria, you can use the symbols to the right to help identify what is required, preferred, or possible.	**Research-Tested**	**Practice-Tested**	**Emerging**
1	Use SMART (simple, measurable, attainable, realistic, timely) objectives	Required	Required	Required
2	Justify that the reach of the SNAP-Ed population warrants the cost of the intervention	Required	Required	Required
3	Justify the use of a novel or creative approach	Possible	Preferred	Required
4	Use existing materials, implementation guides, and resources	Required	Preferred	Possible
5	Conduct formative research, including audience testing	Possible	Preferred	Required
6	Conduct a limited duration pilot test, and refine strategy	Possible	Preferred	Required
7	Gain stakeholder input and put into place partnership agreements to support implementation and sustainability.	Required	Preferred	Preferred
8	Ensure facilities and support provided by partners are available on a consistent basis	Required	Preferred	Preferred
9	Train staff to implement the intervention	Required	Preferred	Possible
10	Assess that staff have a clear understanding of the nature of the intervention, how it is being implemented, and their role	Required	Preferred	Preferred
11	Determine whether implementation occurs as intended	Required	Preferred	Preferred
12	Replicate across multiple populations and venues	Required	Preferred	Possible
13	Evaluate outcomes with appropriate follow-up period based on program model	Preferred	Preferred	Required

Required *Preferred* *Possible*

References:

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