

Appendix G

Parent's Focus Groups Discussion Outline

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Discussion Outline

Project: "Formative Research of Adults' and Children's Views Related to Promotion of Healthy Food Choices"

**Focus groups with parents of tweens and children ages 2-4
Phases 1 or 3**

Form Approved
OMB No. 0920-xxxx
Exp. Date: _____

Discussion Outline

- I. Introduction: Welcome (10 minutes)**
 - A. Purpose: During the next 90 minutes, we will be discussing some of your ideas about health and eating habits.
 - B. Disclosure
 - Observation
 - Audio and Video
 - C. Ground Rules
 - Need to hear from everyone; one at a time please
 - No right or wrong answers
 - Moderator is impartial, please be candid
 - D. Participant Introduction
 - Name (Ask them to introduce themselves by first name only. Advise them that last names will not be recorded if inadvertently disclosed.)
 - How many children they have and their ages

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II Message concepts: Stories about Eating (30 minutes)

Let's spend some time talking about meal times in your life.

A. Describe a typical dinner time for your family. Unaided, then probe as necessary.

1. At Home

- Does everyone eat together?
- What do you serve?
- How do you decide what to serve? What factors do you consider? Probe exhaustively.
- Who prepares/serves the food? (e.g., you, someone else, or more than one person)
- Where do you typically eat dinner in the home?
- Do you have any household "traditions" when it comes to dinner in the home? (e.g., where you eat, what you serve, etc.)
- What's easy about having dinners at home? What's difficult?
- (if not mentioned unaided) Is dinner time a source of stress/worry for you at all? If so, why? (Moderator will probe for attitudes about mealtime)

2. Dinner out

- How do you decide where to eat when you go out? What factors do you consider? Probe exhaustively.
- How do your children factor decisions about where to eat/what to order? How much of an influence do they have? What kinds of conversations happen between you and your child when you're thinking of going out to eat? Explore.
- Once in the restaurant, how are decisions made about what to order?
- What's easy about dinners out? What's difficult?
- (if not mentioned unaided) Are dinners out a source of stress/worry for you at all? If so, why? (Moderator will probe for attitudes about mealtime)

B. I want to talk more about how decisions about what to buy and serve in your household are made, and what motivates you to buy and serve certain foods.

1. Are household food decisions generally made just by you? Or by

you and other members of the household? Explore.

2. What factors have an impact on your decisions about what to buy and serve? Why do they affect your decisions? Unaided, then probe some of the following.

- Familiarity/skills to prepare it
- Your own tastes/preferences
- Your children's tastes/preferences
- Cultural and family traditions
- Cost/sales/coupons
- Pressure to be a "good parent"
- Child "pestering"
- Concerns about health, health consequences
- Convenience, availability in local stores
- Meal planning
- Other?

3. Describe the role your child plays in household food decisions.

- Specifically, how do you and your child communicate about what foods you buy and serve? Is your child an active participant in food decisions? Moderator will encourage participants to share a few stories about actual conversations/situations.

4. (If not already covered in II-B) Are there things that you buy based on your child's request that you would rather not buy, or wouldn't otherwise buy for the household? If so, give some examples and tell why you think this happens.

III Concept message testing: What is Healthy? (15 minutes)

Now we will spend some time talking about your thoughts about healthy foods, particularly in terms of your children. I'd like to understand how you as a parent communicate about foods you consider "healthy" with your child, and what challenges you may have experienced.

- A. In general, what makes up a healthy diet for a child?

- In your view, what are the most important components of a healthy diet for children? Why?

- B. There are so many foods and dining options available today. How

knowledgeable do you feel about what foods are healthy? How do you decide what is healthy and what's not?

- C. Do you talk to your children about eating healthy foods? If so:
- What kinds of things do you tell them? What advice do you give them? Why?
 - What is their reaction? Do they listen? Explore.
- D. Overall, how important is having a healthy diet, for you personally? How important is it that your child eats a healthy diet?
- E. What areas of your own diet do you think are "healthy"? Why?
- F. What are the less healthy aspects of your own diet? What would you most like to change? Why? What would encourage you to change/eat healthier foods?
- How easy or difficult is it for you personally to maintain a healthy diet? Why?
 - Has there been a time when you made a decision to eat healthier foods for any period of time? Describe the situation as specifically as you can (it could be for one meal or for an extended period of time). What motivated you? What was going on in your life at the time? Explore.
- I. What areas of your children's diets do you think are healthy? Why?
- J. What are the less healthy aspects of your children's diet? What would you most like to change? Why? How could you encourage your child to eat healthier foods?
- Is it easy or difficult to encourage a healthy diet for your child? Explore barriers?
 - Do you try to change your children's eating habits if you think they aren't eating healthy? How?
 - Describe a situation in which your child has wanted to eat something that you don't think is healthy. How do you handle the situation? What are the challenges in this situation? Explore. What kinds of things do you do and say to convince them to eat healthier?

IV. Food Marketing Concepts Discussion (10 minutes)

- A. Think about television, radio, print, and direct mail advertising. Do you think that advertising about food and restaurants affects your decisions about what to eat/where to go out to eat? If so, how? Explore.
- B. What advertising, specifically, have you seen about foods and/or restaurants that has gotten your attention?
- C. (If not already mentioned) Do promotional offers/coupons affect your decision to buy certain foods or visit a restaurant? If so, how? How relevant is this?
- D. Do you think your children pay attention to food advertising? If so, what do they notice? What do they talk about at home? Do they ask you for foods they see/hear about in ads? Explore.

V. Message Testing: Dietary Guidelines (15 minutes)

We just talked about food marketing. The reason why we're here is because the research sponsor wants to make foods like whole grains, fruits and vegetables – items in the lower part of the Food Pyramid – a bigger part of America's diet. They understand that shifting our eating patterns isn't easy these days, especially given the many food options available, and the busy lives we lead. I'd like to talk about what you think it would take to influence your family to eat more food from the lower part of the pyramid as recommended in the new U.S. Dietary Guidelines.

- A. These are some highlights from the new Dietary Guidelines for Americans. (Stimuli to be provided by AED/CDC). For each scenario presented in stimulus material:
 - 1. What is your reaction to this? Probe likes and dislikes.
 - 2. What might make your child likely to make this dietary change?
 - 3. **Brainstorming.** What kinds of messages do you think would get children's attention about this particular part (i.e., servings of fruit, servings of whole grains, etc.)

VI. Conclusion (5 minutes)

- A. Check with clients for additional questions
- B. Thank and dismiss participants.