

## Attachment J

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### **USDA/FNS Message Testing Focus Group Moderator's Guide (Low-income Mothers) Child Feeding Practices – Evaluative Round (February 2011)**

#### **I. WELCOME AND GROUND RULES (5 minutes)**

Welcome everyone. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am an independent marketing researcher. Thank you for coming for this discussion. Before we begin, I'd like to explain a few things about the discussion.

1. First of all, I want everyone to know there are **no wrong answers**. (We want to know your opinions and those opinions might differ. This is fine. We want to know what each of you thinks about the topics we will be discussing.)
2. You have probably noticed the microphones in the room. They are here because we are **audiotaping** the discussion. Afterwards, I have to write a report. I want to give you my full attention and not have to take a lot of notes. Also, because we are taping, it is important that you try to **speak one at a time**. I may occasionally interrupt you when two or more people are talking at once in order to be sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that responses are accurately recorded.
3. Behind me is a one-way mirror. Some of the people working on this project are observing this discussion so that they can hear your opinions directly from you. However, your identity and anything you personally say here will remain confidential. By confidential, I mean your names, addresses, and phone numbers will not be given to anyone, and no one will contact you after this group is over. When I write my report, I will not refer to anyone by name.
4. Please turn off your **beepers & cell phones**. The group will last only 90 minutes. Should you need to go to the restroom during the discussion, please feel free to leave, but we'd appreciate it if you would go one at a time.
5. Feel free to say what is on your mind. If you have something negative to say, it is all right. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. We just want to hear your opinions.

#### **II. INTRODUCTION (5 minutes)**

1. Now, first let's spend a little time getting to know one another. Let's go around the table and introduce each of ourselves. Please tell me:
  - First name, and
  - What local area you live in,
  - Who you live with (ages of children), pets, plants, etc., and
  - A little bit about yourself—such as what you do for a living or a favorite hobby.

[MODERATOR: Instruct respondents that when questions in the guide refer to children, they should think of their 2-5 year-old child/ren, even if they have another child in a different age range. REMIND

THEM OF THIS THROUGHOUT THE SESSION]

### III. MEALTIMES (5 minutes)

1. As I just mentioned, everyone around the table is a mom of a 2-5 year old. I want to begin our conversation tonight talking a little bit about what mealtimes are like with your 2-5 year-olds.
  - a. Take a moment and think about what word or phrase you would use to describe a typical family mealtime with your 2-5 year-old?
  - b. Please explain why you decided on that particular word or phrase?  
[MODERATOR: Have everyone give a word or phrase and explain their response.]
  - c. What are some of the best things about mealtimes?
  - d. On the flip side, what are some of the challenging things about mealtimes?

### IV. CHILD FEEDING PRACTICES (15 minutes)<sup>1</sup>

1. Thank you for that. Now, I want to shift gears a bit, and we are going to talk about the job you and your preschoolers have when it comes to your kids eating healthfully. We'll focus on dinner or the evening meal for our conversation.
  - a. Before we get into specifics, how often would you say you eat dinner together as a family, if at all?
  - b. For typical dinners, does your 2-5 year old eat meals separately (i.e., earlier) or with others in the family?
  - c. Again thinking about dinner, how does dinner get served at your house?
    - i. How do you usually serve family meals? (i.e., for example from bowls/containers on the table or do you prepare a plate for everyone, etc.?)
      1. How about your 2-5 year old - how does food get on his/her plate?
    - ii. [IF THEY SERVE THEIR 2-5 YEAR OLD:] How do you decide how much to serve your child? Do you just serve them or do you ever ask how much he/she wants?
      1. How old should a child be when he/she starts to serve himself/herself at least some of what is offered at meals?
      2. Does your child ever ask to serve him or herself?
    - iii. Are you concerned about how much your child eats, or if he or she is eating enough? What makes you say that?
      1. [IF APPROPRIATE] Do you have any rules about when your 2-5 year old has eaten enough? What are the rules? [PROBE: finish certain amount,

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<sup>1</sup> We will update this line of questioning based upon findings from the formative round of research. We cover some of the same information that is included in the formative guide in order to serve as a baseline (e.g., so we have some information about respondents as we interpret their reactions to messages/supporting content), but we will tailor this specific line of questioning to address issues/questions that arise out of the formative discussions. Also, note that we will keep this section relatively brief so that the focus of this round of testing can be on gaining reaction to refined messages and associated supporting content.

finish certain foods, finish or “clean” plate, try all of the food that you prepare, etc]

- d. I am going to read you a statement and I want to get your reaction to it: “Parents should choose *what*, *where* and *when* to eat – and that children should choose *how much* and *whether to eat*.” What’s your initial reaction to this idea? [MODERATOR WRITE THE CONCEPT ON EASEL; REFER TO EASEL SO THAT RESPONDENTS CAN VIEW AS THEY CONSIDER.]
- i. What are the benefits of allowing your children to decide *how much to eat*? What concerns do you have?
  - ii. What are the benefits of allowing you children to decide *whether to eat (that means that they decide if it is the right time for them to eat or not)*? What concerns do you have?

## V. CHILD FEEDING PRACTICES STRATEGIC MESSAGES (20 minutes)

Now we are going to shift gears for a moment and take a look at some short statements. Each is written on a card. I would like you to sort these cards.

Read all of the cards and place the card with the message that you **find to be most convincing** on top. Put the one that you find second-most convincing underneath that one, and so on and so forth, until you get to the card with the message that you find to be least convincing (which should be on the bottom).

After you have done that, you will notice that each card has a letter in the lower right-hand corner. On Handout 1, please write the letters of the cards in the order in which you have stacked them. Then, we’ll talk about it. [DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT 1]<sup>2</sup>

[NOTE TO MODERATOR: To the extent possible, try to get respondents to ignore issues with grammar and/or word choice. The key is to have them focus on the concepts.]

[Insert Messages]<sup>3</sup>

- a. What do you think these statements are trying to tell you?
- b. [GO AROUND TABLE:] Which one did you find to be the most convincing? Take a moment and explain why you selected that one as your top choice?
- c. [GO AROUND TABLE:] Now, let’s look at the other side of the coin. Which **ONE** did you find to be the least convincing? Why did you select that one?
- d. Were any of the statements confusing to you? Which one(s)? What about them were confusing?

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<sup>2</sup> Handouts will be developed based on findings from the formative round of research. Finalized handouts will be re-submitted to OMB prior to testing in February 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Messages will be developed based upon findings from the formative round of research. When messages are finalized, they will be re-submitted to OMB, prior to testing in February 2011.

[NOTE: ADDITIONAL MESSAGE-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS WILL BE ADDED ONCE THE MESSAGES ARE FINALIZED FOR TESTING.]

## VI. SUPPORTING CONTENT FOR EXISTING MESSAGES (30 minutes)

1. Now we are going to look at some information that has been written to go with different messages than the ones you just read.

[SHARE MESSAGES ON CARDS, THEN DISTRIBUTE SUPPORTING CONTENT, NARRATIVE PARAGRAPHS/HANDOUT 2]<sup>4</sup>

First, read these paragraphs written by moms of 2-5 year-olds. **Circle** any statement, word, or phrase that you particularly like, and **draw a line through** any statement, word, or phrase that you did not like or did not understand.

- a. Before we talk about specifics. What did you think of these paragraphs? [PROBE: Interesting? Informative? Boring?]
- b. Did it sound realistic? What makes you say that?
- c. What do you think about the ideas they talk about? Are they believable? Doable?
  - i. Would you try these ideas? Which ones? What makes you say that?

[DISTRIBUTE SUPPORTING CONTENT, REMAINING INFORMATION] Now I am going to show you more information. Again, this information has been written to go with the messages you read on the cards. Don't worry about how they look on the page, for now, just focus on what is written.

Please take the next few moments to read this information and **circle** any statement, word, or phrase that you particularly like, and **draw a line through** any statement, word, or phrase that you did not like or did not understand. Then, we'll talk about them.

[SHARE SUPPORTING CONTENT, REMAINING INFORMATION/HANDOUT 3]<sup>5</sup>

Before we talk about specifics. What did you think of what was written on the pages? [PROBE: Interesting? Informative? Boring?]

- a. [GO AROUND TABLE] What stood out to you? Which TWO or THREE statements, phrases or words did you like best? Take a moment and explain why you chose those. [MODERATOR IDENTIFY WHAT PEOPLE CIRCLED] [PROBE: Helpful, realistic, doable]

Now, let's look at the other side of the coin. Which statements, phrases or words did you cross out because you did not like or did not understand them? Take a moment to explain why you chose those. [MODERATOR IDENTIFY WHAT PEOPLE CROSSED-OUT]

- b. Let's say that you were creating a brochure and you had to select which of the information you just read to put into it. Since brochures are small, you can't use all of the information you read. What 1 or 2 pieces of information do you think **MUST** be included? Why did you select those?

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4 Messages and supporting content will be developed based on findings from the formative round of research. Finalized materials will be re-submitted to OMB prior to testing in February 2011.

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## VII. FALSE CLOSE (10 minutes)

1. Tonight we discussed a number of issues. While I step out of the room for a moment to see if I need to cover any additional information, please answer the question on Handout 4. [DISTRIBUTE HANDOUT 4]<sup>6</sup> The question on this handout reads, “Of all of the ideas we talked about this evening, which one would you be most likely to try in your own household?”

[IF TIME: DISCUSS RESPONSES TO THIS ITEM.]

Thank you very much for your participation! Have a great evening!

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<sup>6</sup> Handouts will be developed based on findings from the formative round of research. Finalized handouts will be re-submitted to OMB prior to testing in February 2011.