

Memorandum

Date: February 7, 2013

To: Julie Wise, OMB Desk Officer, Food and Nutrition Service

Through: Rachelle Ragland Green, Food and Nutrition Service, Information Clearance Officer; Ruth Brown OCIO Desk Officer

From: Alicia White, Senior Nutritionist, Child Nutrition Division
USDA – Food and Nutrition Service

Re: Under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0523 Request for Approval to Perform Formative Research for MyPlate Kindergarten Curriculum Materials

The Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) of the USDA Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services is requesting approval for formative research under Approved Generic OMB Clearance No. 0584-0523.

This request is to acquire clearance to conduct formative research in order to inform the development of MyPlate kindergarten curriculum materials and activities.

The following information is provided for your review:

1. **Title of the Project:** MyPlate Kindergarten Curriculum Materials
2. **Control Number:** 0584-0523
3. **Public Affected by this Project:** Individuals/Households, and State, Local/Tribal Employees
 - Kindergarten students in classrooms of schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
 - One-third of which will reside in households whose income falls at or below 185% of the Federal poverty line as approximated by eligibility for reduced or free lunch under the NSLP.
 - Parent/caregivers (both English - and Spanish-speakers) of kindergarten students in schools that participate in the NSLP.
 - Participating parent/caregivers will be the guardians/caregivers of the children participating in the kindergarten classrooms specified above.
 - One-third of which will reside in households whose income falls at or below 185% of the Federal poverty line as approximated by eligibility for reduced or free lunch NSLP.
 - Kindergarten teachers who are employed by the schools that participate in the NSLP.

- Principals of schools will assist with focus group recruitment, but will not participate in any focus groups themselves.

See section 7, *Project Purpose, Methodology & Formative Research Design* for a description of the number of participants for each audience (students, teachers, and parent/caregivers) by research methodology (focus groups, small group interviews, one-on-one interviews).

4. Number of Respondents:

The total estimated number of participants is 625: 25 principals, 60 kindergarten teachers, 270 parents/caregivers of the students, and 270 kindergarten students. Responder estimates are based on response rates of 60% for principals, 60% for teachers, 25% for parents/caregivers, and 70% for students. These response rates are based on previous research in similar populations (ICR reference number 201008-0584-001).

Number of respondents

Target audience	Total number of participants	Proportion of Responders	Proportion of Non-Responders
Principals	25	60% (15*)	40% (10)
Kindergarten Teachers	60	60% (36**)	40% (24)
Parents/Caregivers	270	25% (68)	75% (202)
Students (Kindergarten)	270	70% (189)	30% (81)
Total	625	308	317

*3 Principals at primary school sites plus 12 from surrounding elementary schools.

**Includes nine teachers from primary school sites that will be involved in food preparation activities plus additional kindergarten teachers from the primary school sites and surrounding schools that will participate in focus groups.

Principals of three primary schools selected as sites for the research (e.g., location of focus groups, food preparation activities, etc.) will recruit and obtain consent (see Attachments A and B) from three kindergarten teachers at their schools school (total of nine teachers). Both student and parent/caregiver respondents will be recruited from the classrooms of these teachers. The principal will provide teachers with instructions for distributing a letter and forms to be sent home with each of their students (see Attachment C). Each of these classroom teachers will be responsible for:

- Distributing a letter of invitation and a parental consent form to each of his/her students to take home (see Attachment C).
 - Invitation letters and parental consent forms will solicit parent/caregiver's permission for their children to participate in the formative research.
 - Invitation letters, screeners and consent forms to parent/caregivers will solicit parent/caregiver's participation in focus groups.

- Collecting all forms.
 - Teachers will collect and return screeners and parental consent forms to the evaluation contractor.

The nine kindergarten teachers at the primary school sites will also conduct in-class food preparation activities as part of their normal classroom instruction (see Attachment N), participate in interviews about the food preparation activities (see Attachment D), and participate in teacher focus group interviews (see Attachment F). Additional kindergarten teachers will be recruited to participate in teacher focus groups by distributing information to principals at four elementary schools in the area surrounding the primary schools sites. The principals at these surrounding schools will recruit and obtain consent from all interested teachers. Each school is estimated to have four kindergarten classrooms, so that approximately 60 teachers (across both the primary and surrounding schools) will receive a consent package. Of those packets distributed, it is anticipated that 60% (total=36) of teachers will complete and return forms. All kindergarten teachers who provide consent will be considered for participation. Teachers will be screened in advance using a teacher survey (see Attachments A and B) in order to allow for greater participant diversity (e.g. teaching experience, race/ethnicity, and gender).

Recruitment of parents/caregivers for focus groups will be conducted among parents/caregivers of children in the nine primary classrooms. Each classroom is estimated to have 30 students (270 total) so that approximately 270 parents/caregivers will receive a packet with an invitation letter, screener, parental consent form, and consent for child participation form (see Attachment C). Of those packets distributed, it is anticipated that 25% (total=68) of parents/caregivers will complete and return forms to the classroom teachers, indicating interest and availability to participate in parent/caregiver focus groups. Once completed forms are returned, the evaluation contractor will review them to determine which parents/caregivers meet minimum qualifying criteria. The questions on the parental screener will be used to guarantee the groups represent racial/ethnic and socio-economic diversity and identify Spanish-speaking parents for the focus group to be conducted in Spanish.

It is anticipated that 70% of parent/caregivers will complete and return forms to classrooms teachers giving permission for their child's participation (total=189).

Individual Interviews with Kindergarten Teachers Completing Food Preparation Activities

Three teachers with experience preparing food in kindergarten classrooms will be selected from each of the three primary school sites (nine total) to conduct an in-class food preparation activity (see Attachment N). These teachers will participate in a one-on-one telephone interview (see Attachment D).

Individual Teacher Interviews

Target Participants	# of Teachers per Location	# of Locations	Total # of participants
Teachers with experience preparing food in kindergarten classrooms	3	3	9

Observation of Kindergarten Teachers Completing Food Preparation Activities

At least one teacher from each location will be observed while conducting food preparation activities during normal class time by research staff (see Attachment E). Each of the four food preparation activities will be observed at least once. This will not require any additional time from any participants.

Focus Groups with Kindergarten Teachers

Kindergarten teachers will be recruited at the three primary school sites and surrounding schools in each locale to participate in focus group discussions (see Attachment F). In order to seat at least eight teachers, ten teachers will be recruited in each locale. If all ten teachers attend the focus group, all ten will be seated. One group will be conducted at each primary school site for a total of three focus groups and up to thirty teachers:

Teacher Focus Group Participants

Target Participants	# of Groups	# of Participants per group	Total # of participants
Teachers from Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Locale	1	10	10
Teachers from Mid-West or Southeast Region Locale	1	10	10
Teachers from Southwest, Mountain-Plain, or Western Region Locale	1	10	10
Total	3	-	30

Parents/Caregivers Focus Groups

Parents/caregivers with children in participating kindergarten classrooms will be recruited to participate in focus group interviews (see Attachment G, English and Spanish). Two groups will be conducted at each site with six parent/caregivers in each group, for a total of six groups and thirty-six parent/caregivers. At the Northeast/Mid-Atlantic Region site, Spanish-speaking parents will be identified through the screening process and with teacher input in order to recruit participants for the group to be conducted in Spanish (see Attachment C – Spanish Version).

Parent Focus Group Participants

Target Participants	# of Groups	# of Participants per group	Total # of participants
Parents from Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Site - <i>(In Spanish)</i>	2	6	12
Parents from Mid-West or Southeast Region Site	2	6	12
Parents from Southwest, Mountain-Plain, or Western Region Site	2	6	12
Total	6	-	36

Student Focus Groups

Students in participating classrooms will be recruited to participate in focus groups interviews (see Attachment H). Five- and six-year-olds are often interviewed in small groups because young children are often better able to communicate with the support of their peers. Three groups will be conducted in each location with four students in each group, for a total of nine focus groups and thirty-six children.

Student Focus Group Participants

Target Participants	# of Groups	# of Participants per group	Total # of participants
Students from Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Site	3	4	12
Students from Mid-West or Southeast Region Site	3	4	12
Students from Southwest, Mountain-Plain, or Western Region Site	3	4	12
Total	9	-	36

5. Time Needed Per Response:

In the tables below, the time noted is an average response time for each member of the target audience, by activity. Principals at the primary site will identify and invite eligible teachers/classrooms, give direction to teachers to assist in distributing and collecting parent/caregivers forms, and ship completed forms to the evaluation contractor. Principals at the surrounding site will identify and invite eligible teachers to participate in focus groups and ship completed forms to the evaluation contractor. Teachers at the primary sites will complete teacher consent forms, distribute invitation letters, screeners, and consent forms to students in his/her class, collect completed forms, and return completed forms to the principal. Teachers at schools surrounding the primary site will only complete consent forms. Parent involvement includes completing invitation letters, screeners, and consents forms. Student involvement includes receiving parent invitation letter and forms from the teacher, taking those documents home to a parent/caregivers, and returning forms (if completed) to the teacher.

Time Needed per Initial Teacher Recruitment and Consent

Target Audience	Time (minutes)	Time (hours)
Principals (responders, n=15)	30	0.5
Principals (non-responders, n=10)	2	0.03
Teachers (responders, n=33)	10	0.17
Teachers (non-responders, n=27)	2	0.03

Time Needed per Initial Parent/Caregiver Screener & Consent Form

Target Audience	Time (minutes)	Time (hours)
Principals (N=3)	10	0.17
Teachers (N=9)	30	0.50
Students (n=189 responders)	10	0.17
Students (n=81 non-responders)	2	0.03
Parent/Caregiver of Kindergarten students (n=189 responders)	10	0.17
Parent/Caregiver of Kindergarten students (n=81 non-responders)	2	0.03

Time Needed per Research Component

Target Participants	Research Activity	Time (minutes)	Time (hours)
Teachers (N=9)	Food Preparation Activity	30	.50
	Individual Interview	30	.50
Teachers (N=30)	Focus Group Interview	90	1.5
Students (N=36)	Focus Group Interview	30	.5
Students (N=270)	Food Preparation Activity*	30	.5
Parent/Caregiver (N=36)	Scheduling Groups	5	.08
	Focus Group Interview	90	1.5

*Note: children will not need consent for food preparation activity as it takes place as part of the normal classroom schedule

6. Total Burden Hours on Public:

(a)		(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Affected Public	Respondent Type	Screeners, Surveys	No. Respondents	Frequency of Response	Est. Total Annual Responses per Respondent (c x d)	Hours per Response	Total Burden Hours (e x f)
State, Local/Tribal Employees	Elementary School Principals (responders n=15)	Recruitment and Distribution of Teacher Letter and Consent Forms	15	1	15	0.5	7.5
		Distribution of Parent Letter, Forms to Classroom Teachers, Return Completed Forms to Evaluator	15	1	15	0.17	2.55
	Elementary School Principals (non-responders n=10)	Recruitment and Distribution of Teacher Letter and Consent Forms	10	1	10	0.03	0.3
	Elementary School Classroom Teachers (responders n=36)	Response & Consent Forms	36	1	36	0.17	6.12
		Distribution of Parent Letter, Forms to Students, Collect Complete Forms, Return to Principal	9	1	9	0.5	4.5
		Food Preparation Activity	9	1	9	0.5	4.5
		Interview	9	1	9	0.5	4.5
		Focus Group Interview	30	1	30	1.5	45
	Elementary School Classroom Teachers (non-responders n=24)	Response & Consent Forms	24	1	24	0.03	0.72
	Subtotal			85		157	
Individuals & Households	Parent/Care-givers (responders n=189)	Response & Consent Forms	189	1	189	0.17	32.13
		Focus Group Interview & Brief Survey	36	1	36	1.5	54
		Confirmation Letter and Call	36	1	36	0.5	18
	Parents/Caregivers (non-responders n=81)	Response & Consent Forms	81	1	81	0.03	2.43
	Elementary School Students (all students=270)	Food Preparation Activity	270	1	270	0.5	135
	Elementary School Students (responders)	Response & Consent Forms	189	1	189	0.17	32.13
		Focus Group Interview	36	1	36	0.5	18
Elementary School Students (non-responders)	Response & Consent Forms	81	1	81	0.03	2.43	
Subtotal			540		918		294.12
Total			625	-	1075	-	369.81

Total burden hours on public: 369.81

7. Project Purpose, Methodology, and Formative Research Design:

Background

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) administers the nutrition assistance programs for the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The mission of FNS is to provide children and low resource families better access to food and a more healthful diet through its nutrition assistance programs. Among these programs are the Child Nutrition Programs, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The Child Nutrition Programs provide nutritionally balanced, low-cost, or free meals and snacks.

As authorized under Section 6(a)(3) of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act, 42 USC 1755(a)(3), FNS provides training and technical assistance for school foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and encourages school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity. These activities are implemented under the Agency's Team Nutrition initiative that is designed to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits by using the principles of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Under this initiative, FNS is currently developing nutrition education lessons and materials that promote healthy meal selection and consumption, while meeting education standards for academic course content in kindergarten. This nutrition education will build skills and motivation for children to make healthier food and physical activity choices as part of a healthy lifestyle.

The above-mentioned lessons and related resources will support Team Nutrition's behavior-oriented strategy of "providing multifaceted, integrated nutrition education for children and their parent/caregivers."

Purpose

The purpose of the proposed research is to (1) gather feedback on potential food preparation activities for inclusion in the curriculum, and (2) inform the development of other curriculum materials (i.e. posters, characters, a song, an emergent reader, and information for parents/caregivers) for kindergarten students and their parents/caregivers.

The formative research with kindergarten students and their parents/caregivers will verify that materials and messages are clear, credible, relevant, and useful to the intended audience, and ultimately compel audiences to take action. The focus groups with teachers are designed to identify nutrition education activities and materials that are engaging and easily implemented in today's classrooms.

Methodology/Research Design

Individual Interviews with Teachers. Three kindergarten teachers at each of the three primary school sites will conduct a food preparation activity with their students. After activities are complete, each teacher will participate in an individual interview by telephone or in person. Interview duration is anticipated to be 30 minutes, and the focus will be:

- To identify past experience with food preparation activities
- To assess the ease-of-use, relevance, and perceived quality of the featured food preparation activities
- To determine teacher perceptions of levels of student interest in and learning from the activities.

Observation of Food Preparation Activities. At least one teacher at each of the three primary schools will be observed conducting food preparation activities with their students during regular class time. The focus of the structured observation will be:

- To assess children’s interest and ability to participate independently in in-class food preparation activities
- To assess the ease-of-use, relevance, and quality of the featured food preparation activities

Focus Groups with Teachers. Focus group interviews will be conducted with kindergarten teachers from the primary sites as well as teachers from schools in the immediate area of each site. One group will be conducted in each school, for a total of three focus groups. Groups will be segmented by location as follows:

Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Locale	Mid-West or Southeast Region Locale	Southwest, Mountain-Plains, or Western Region Locale
1 group of Kindergarten Teachers	1 group of Kindergarten Teachers	1 group of Kindergarten Teachers

Each group will consist of up to ten teachers (total=30) and will last approximately 90 minutes. The main focus of the teacher focus groups will be:

- To identify and understand contextual and other factors that may engender and/or inhibit the integration of nutrition curriculum into coursework
- To identify engaging nutrition education activities, including food preparation activities, that are easily integrated into classroom lesson plans
- To assess the appeal, comprehension, and relevance of curricular prototypes (song, posters, emergent reader) designed to promote healthy eating, knowledge of the food groups, and physical activity.

Focus Groups with Parents/Caregivers. Focus group interviews will be conducted with parents/caregivers of participating kindergarten students in the three selected school

locales. Two parent focus groups will be conducted in each school, for a total of six focus groups. Groups will be segmented by location and language as follows:

Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Locale	Mid-West or Southeast Region Locale	Southwest, Mountain-Plains or Western Region Locale
2 groups of Spanish-Speaking Parent/Caregivers	2 groups of English-Speaking Parent/Caregivers	2 groups of English-Speaking Parent/Caregivers

Each group will consist of up to six parent/caregivers (total=36) and will last approximately 90 minutes. The main focus of the parent/caregivers focus groups will be:

- To identify and understand contextual factors that may engender and/or inhibit parent/caregivers acceptance of and motivation to act on curricular messages
- To assess the appeal, comprehension, and relevance of curricular prototypes take-home materials and messages designed to increase awareness of the MyPlate food groups and promote healthy eating and an active lifestyle.

Focus Groups with Kindergarten Students. Students in participating classrooms will be recruited to participate in focus groups interviews. Three groups will be conducted in each location for a total of nine groups. Groups will be segmented by age as follows:

Northeast or Mid-Atlantic Region Locale	Mid-West or Southeast Region Locale	Southwest, Mountain-Plains or Western Region Locale
2 groups of 5 - to 5.75-year-olds	2 groups of 5 - to 5.75-year-olds	2 groups of 5 - to 5.75-year-olds
1 groups of 6 - to 7-year-olds	1 groups of 6 - to 7-year-olds	1 groups of 6 - to 7-year-olds

Each group will consist of four students (total=36) and will last approximately 30 minutes. Five- and 6-year-olds are often interviewed in small groups because young children are often better able to communicate with the support of their peers. The main focus of the student groups will be:

- To identify and understand contextual factors that may engender and/or inhibit students' acceptance of and motivation to act on curricular messages
- To assess the appeal, comprehension, and relevance of curricular prototypes (characters, an emergent reader, song) designed to increase awareness of the MyPlate food groups and promote healthy eating and an active lifestyle
- To gather student feedback on their perceptions of the final food product.

Design/Sampling Procedures

The sample will include three different audiences, as described above: kindergarten students; their parents/caregivers; and their teachers utilizing purposive and

convenience sampling procedures. All three selected schools will participate in the National School Lunch Program. Participating schools will be racially and ethnically diverse and represent families of a broad range of household income levels, including segments of the target audience that are low income based on eligibility for free or reduced lunch under the NLSP.

Qualifying parent/caregivers will be those who have participating students in classrooms in selected schools. Only one parent/caregiver per child will be allowed to participate.

Site Selection

Three elementary schools with principals willing to recruit kindergarten teachers, kindergarten students and their parents/caregivers, will be selected. Each school will represent a different FNS region of the country and have more than 33% of the school population eligible to receive free or reduced priced lunches under the NLSP. One of the schools will have a high percentage of the school population that identifies their ethnicity as Hispanic, in order to facilitate recruitment of Spanish-speaking parents/caregivers for the focus groups.

Three to four additional schools will be recruited in the area surrounding each primary school site, from which additional teachers will be recruited for focus groups. These schools will also meet the specifications discussed above.

Recruitment

With approval from the primary school site principal, kindergarten teachers agreeing to participate will distribute consent packets to each of their students to take home to their parents/caregivers. This recruiting strategy will be used as schools cannot/do not release students' contact information because of privacy concerns addressed in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The consent packets will include consent forms and detailed information about the formative research as well as the pilot food preparation activity. Parents/caregivers who are interested in participating and/or willing to allow their children to participate in student focus groups will complete, sign, and return the parents/caregivers consent form to the teachers. Additional teachers will be recruited from schools in the area surrounding the primary school sites with approval from the schools' principal.

Confirmation of Participation

A follow-up letter of confirmation (see Attachment Q) will be mailed to parent/caregivers who have agreed to participate in focus groups. The letter will thank the participant for agreeing to be part of the focus group, remind them of the date, time and location of the groups, and provide other information about scheduling, directions, etc., as needed. Follow-up "reminder" phone calls (see Attachment Q) will be made to parents/caregivers a day or two prior to the scheduled dates. Teachers will receive notification from their principals about date and time of teacher interviews.

Compensation

Parent/caregiver focus group participants will be given \$50 as a token of our appreciation. Teachers conducting food preparation activities and participating in individual interviews will receive a cash stipend of \$75 for added time to prepare for implementing the activities, participating in the interviews, caregiver and child recruitment support and materials (including food supplies for activity). Teachers participating in focus groups will receive \$50 as a token of appreciation for participating in interviews after school hours. The selection of these amounts comes from past experience of the evaluators in the recruitment of families and school staff for participation in after-school focus groups and interviews. Each school site will receive an honorarium in the form of a gift to the school not exceeding \$300 for their efforts in supporting the research activities.

Interview and Focus Group Sessions

Time. Teacher interviews will each last 30 minutes. Parent/caregiver and teacher focus groups will each last 90 minutes. Student focus groups will each last 30 minutes.

Interview Content. A trained moderator will facilitate interviews/discussions as described in the *Moderator's Guide for Parent Focus Groups*, *Moderators' Guide for Teacher Focus Groups*, *Moderator's Guide for Student Focus Groups*, and *Teacher Interview Guidelines* as appropriate to the audience.

Consent. Teacher consent forms will be collected at the outset of the study, prior to the parent/student recruitment process. Consent forms (for parent/caregivers and their children) will be obtained during the recruitment process. These forms are modeled after those previously approved by OMB under "Formative Research About FNS Curriculum Messages for 5th and 6th Grades (control number: 0584-0523, ICR 201207-0584-007), with the only modifications reflecting the content of the focus groups. Parent/caregiver consent materials will be made available in Spanish for Spanish-speaking parents.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Data. Teacher interviews will be audio-recorded (with respondent permission), and the information collected will be used to inform the optimization of the food preparation activities. Food preparation observations recorded by the researcher (written in digital form) will be analyzed along with interview information. Teacher, parent/caregiver, and student focus groups will be audio- or video-recorded, and information gathered will inform the development of materials and lesson content. Focus group respondents will be informed that the sessions are recorded. Notes taken while observing the focus group sessions and recordings will be the primary methods of data collection for qualitative data. Recordings and notes will be reviewed for recurring themes stated across multiple groups and respondents. Differences will be assessed across groups, locations, and audiences will be noted as appropriate. Findings will be

considered descriptive and directional, but not definitive. No attempt will be made to generalize findings as nationally representative or statistically valid.

Outcomes/Findings

Information and formative input gathered from specific target audiences through the research will help identify messages and content that is most effective at motivating the target audience to take action. FNS may decide to publish summary research findings either electronically or in print, but such documents will not include information that personally identifies any of the research participants.

8. Confidentiality:

Using the *Agreement on Security of Comments Form* participants will be informed of confidentiality and privacy act provisions before responding to the screener. System of Record FNS-8, FNS Studies and Reports, published in the Federal Register on 4/25/1991 at 56 FR 19078, covers personal information collected under this study and identifies safeguards for the information collected.

9. Federal Costs: \$121,688.46

10. Research Tools/Instruments:

- **Attachment A:** Teacher Letter, Survey for Participation in Food Preparation Activities and Informed Consent Form (Teacher Consent Package for Primary Teachers)
- **Attachment B:** Teacher Letter, Survey for Participation in Focus Groups and Informed Consent Form (Teacher Consent Package for Focus Groups Only)
- **Attachment C:** Parent/Caregiver Letter, Survey for Participation in Focus Groups, Informed Consent Form for Parent/Caregiver and Informed Consent Form for Student (Parent Consent Package English and Spanish Versions)
- **Attachment D:** Individual Interview Guide for Teachers
- **Attachment E:** Researcher's Food Preparation Observation Log
- **Attachment F:** Moderators Guide for Teacher Focus Groups
- **Attachment G:** Moderators Guide for Parent/Caregiver Focus Groups (English and Spanish Versions)
- **Attachment H:** Moderators Guide for Student Focus Groups
- **Attachment I:** Food Friend Characters
- **Attachment J:** Popular Children's Character
- **Attachment K:** Emergent Reader Stimulus (English and Spanish Versions)
- **Attachment L:** Emergent Reader Examples
- **Attachment M:** Poster Stimulus
- **Attachment N:** Food Preparation Activity
- **Attachment O:** Song Lyrics and Song
- **Attachment P:** MyPlate Image
- **Attachment Q:** Parent/Caregiver Follow-Up Letter and Phone Call Sample Script

