

## Attachment G

OMB Control # 0584-0524  
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### USDA/FNS Formative Messaging & Supporting Content Mini Group Moderator's Guide (Parents of Middle School Students) 120 minutes

#### 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 private. By private 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 two hours. 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 middle school age child(ren), even if they have another child in a different age range. REMIND THEM OF THIS THROUGHOUT THE SESSION]

## III. WARM UP/HELPING CHILDREN STAY HEALTHY (5 minutes)

1. Let's begin our discussion this evening by discussing how we help **our middle school children** be healthy.
  - a. In general, what are some things that you do to help your middle school-aged child stay healthy? [WRITE ON EASEL. IF NOT MENTIONED, PROBE NUTRITION/PHYSICAL ACTIVITY]
  - b. Of the items we have on this list, which are the easiest to do as a parent for your middle school-aged child(ren)? Which are more challenging?
  - c. What about making sure your children eat right and get exercise? How easy or hard is that for you? What makes you say that?
  - d. Compared to when your child was in elementary school, would you say it is easier or harder to make sure they eat right and get exercise now that they are in middle school? What makes you say that?

## IV. ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL VS. COMMUNITY (10 minutes)

1. Now let's talk a little bit more about nutrition and physical activity.
  - a. To what extent do you think it is your responsibility, as a parent, to do what you can to make sure your children eat healthfully and get physical activity?
  - b. How much responsibility falls on your shoulders as opposed to your middle school-aged child's? What makes you say that?
2. Are there any other institutions or people who should play a role in helping middle school-aged children eat healthfully and get exercise? What makes you say that?
3. [IF NOT MENTIONED:] What role should the middle school itself play?
  - a. Does the middle school play an important role? What makes you say that?
  - b. What about teachers? Principals? What type of role do they play? What role *should* they play?
  - c. What about the food service/cafeteria/school nutrition manager? Do you know who they are at your child's middle school?

- d. When you hear the phrase “healthy school environment” what does that mean to you? Do you consider nutrition and physical activity to be a part of a healthy school environment? What makes you say that?

## **V. WHAT HAPPENS AT SCHOOL (10 minutes)**

1. To what degree do you feel you know what your child eats when at school? How do you feel about that?
2. As a parent, to what degree do you feel you can help make your child healthier – eating better, getting more exercise – while they are at school?
  - a. What are some things you think you can do, if anything, to help your child eat healthier while at school?
    - i. What are the biggest challenges?
  - b. What are some things you think you can do, if anything, to help your child get more exercise while at school?
    - i. What are the biggest challenges?
3. Do you know if your child's middle school has a wellness council? How would you feel about participating in a council like this?
4. Have you ever received information about child nutrition from your child's middle school?
  - a. If yes, did you find the information helpful? Did you do anything different as a result of the information?
  - b. If not, would you like to receive this type of information? Why or why not?
  - c. Have you ever received information from the school about what your child is learning in regards to nutrition? What did you think about it?
5. How often, if at all, do you look at the school lunch menu?
  - a. If yes, how do you get the menu? Online? Mail? A handout sent home with your child?
  - b. What do you look for when you review the menu?
  - c. Do you think about how nutritious the offerings are?
6. How do you feel about the school serving healthier foods at parties and celebrations?

## **VI. MESSAGES and MESSAGE CONCEPTS (40 minutes)**

1. We just discussed how it can be a challenge to get your middle school child to eat healthfully and get adequate exercise while at school. Now, we are going to read some statements and messages written to help convince parents to take an active role in helping to make their child's school a healthier environment.

So first, we are going to look at a set of statements. Each **statement** is written on a card, followed

by a list of corresponding messages. I would like you to sort these cards. Place the card with the statement that you **find to be most convincing in terms of getting you to participate with other members of your community to try to make your child's school a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity** on top. Put the one that does the second-best job underneath that one, and so on and so forth, until you get to the card that did the worst job (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 A**, please write the letters of the cards in the order in which you have stacked them. Then, we'll talk about it.

[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 messages.]

Number	Parent Messages
130	Your child's healthy future is now. Get involved in school nutrition and physical activity policies and programs.
131	Give your child the tools for school success. Children that eat nutritious foods and are physically active learn better in class. Make sure your school is providing a healthy school environment that supports academic achievement.
132	Wellness at home. Wellness at school. Help your children get the healthy food choices and opportunities to move more in the two places where they spend most of their time.
133	Healthy habits now. Healthy habits later. In a few years your children will be all grown up and leaving home. Now is the time to help them learn how to eat healthier and be physically active every day.
134	Healthier school. Easier parenting. Your job is easier when school and home share the same healthy eating and physical activity values and practices.
135	Fewer sick days for kids, mean fewer missed work days for you, too. Well-nourished, active children have fewer sick days. Making sure your school is making healthy foods and physical activity available to your child pays-off in many ways.
136	A concerned parent can help change a school. Sometimes it takes a champion to teach educators about the need for healthy food choices and physical activity in school. Speak up, form a team, make a change.
137	Now more than ever. Your child isn't so little anymore and they want to make their own choices. Help them learn to make healthy choices by ensuring that nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity are available at school and at home. It's a lesson that can last a lifetime.

[GO AROUND TABLE:] Which one did the best job? The second best job? Take a moment and explain why you selected those as your top two? [PROBE: likes, main idea/takeaway]

- a. Sometimes words can create pictures in your mind. Take a moment and take another look at the statement you placed on the top. What images or pictures come to mind as you read it?
- b. How does reading this statement make you feel? [PROBE: hopeful, empowered, guilty, nagged]
- c. [GO AROUND TABLE:] Now, let's look at the other side of the coin. Which **ONE** did not speak to you at all? [IF NECESSARY:] Which statement was at the bottom of your stack? Please explain why you thought this statement did a bad job.

- d. Were any of the statements confusing to you? Which one(s)? What about them were confusing?

*[The following section is designed to get at the message concepts/motivators.]*

2. In a moment, we are going to discuss the messages specifically. But, before we get there, I want to talk to you about what you just read in a different way. Many of these statements talked about the different roles parents play.
  - a. Which roles do you think are most important to you?
  - b. Are they realistic? What makes you say that?
3. Some of these messages talk about doing whatever you can for your child. How convincing is that as a reason to get involved in this effort? What makes you say that?
4. What's missing from what you just read? In other words, what are some other convincing reasons to get you to help make your child's middle school a healthier environment?

#### MESSAGE SPECIFIC PROBES:

*[This section will contain a few probing questions for each message included in testing. They will explore the use of specific words and phrases as appropriate.]*

Message 130: Your child's healthy future is now. Get involved in school nutrition and physical activity policies and programs.

- i. What do you think about the tone of the message? Is hopeful? Preachy? What makes you say that?
- ii. What do you think about the phrase, "your child's healthy future is now"?
  1. What does it mean to you? Do you agree or disagree? What makes you say that?
  2. How important is that as a reason to get involved in creating a healthier school environment?

Message 131: Give your child the tools for school success. Children that eat nutritious foods and are physically active learn better in class. Make sure your school is providing a healthy school environment that supports academic achievement.

- i. What do you think about the phrase, "school success"?
  1. What does it mean to you?
  2. How important is that as a reason to get involved in creating a healthier school environment?
- ii. In your opinion, how much do you consider nutrition and physical activity to be tools that support academic achievement?

Message 132: Wellness at home. Wellness at school. Help your children get the healthy food choices and opportunities to move more in the two places where they spend most of their time.

- i. What do you think about the term, “wellness”?
  - 1. What does it mean to you?
- ii. Does it mean the same thing when you talk about wellness at home versus wellness at school? What makes you say that?

Message 133: Healthy habits now. Healthy habits later. In a few years your children will be all grown up and leaving home. Now is the time to help them learn how to eat healthier and be physically active every day.

- i. What do you think about the tone of the message? Is hopeful? Preachy? What makes you say that?
- ii. How important is that as a reason to get involved in creating a healthier school environment?

Message 134: Healthier school. Easier parenting. Your job is easier when school and home share the same healthy eating and physical activity values and practices.

- i. What do you think about the tone of the message? Is hopeful? Preachy? What makes you say that?
- ii. What do you think about the phrase that refers to the need for school and home to share the same “values and practices”?
  - 1. What does it mean to you? Do you agree or disagree?
  - 2. How important is that as a reason to get involved in creating a healthier school environment?

Message 135: Fewer sick days for kids, mean fewer missed work days for you, too. Well-nourished, active children have fewer sick days. Making sure your school is making healthy foods and physical activity available to your child pays-off in many ways.

- i. What do you think about this message?
  - 1. Do you agree/disagree? What makes you say that?
  - 2. How important is this message as a reason to help create a healthy school environment?
- ii. How much are you concerned about unexpected absences from work?

Message 136: A concerned parent can help change a school. Sometimes it takes a champion to teach educators about the need for healthy food choices and physical activity in school. Speak up, form a team, make a change.

- i. What do you think about this message?
  - 1. Do you agree/disagree? What makes you say that?
  - 2. How important is this message as a reason to help create a healthy school environment?

- ii. What do you think about becoming a “champion”? Do you personally feel like you are concerned enough about a healthy school environment that you would want to be one of these champions? What makes you say that?

Message 137: Now more than ever. Your child isn't so little anymore and they want to make their own choices. Help them learn to make healthy choices by ensuring that nutritious foods and opportunities for physical activity are available at school and at home. It's a lesson that can last a lifetime.

- i. What do you think about the tone of the message? Is hopeful? Preachy? What makes you say that?
- ii. How do you compare this message to Message 133? Is it more or less compelling? What makes you say that?

## VII. SUPPORTING CONTENT (20 minutes)

We also want to get your opinion on additional information that could be provided to parents like you to try and get parents involved in making their child's middle school healthier through better nutrition and physical activity.

Take a quick look through this material [DISTRIBUTE PACKET OF SUPPORTING CONTENT]. Look through all of the materials and put a mark on the pages that would most convince you to take action.

1. What is your first reaction to the material you just looked through?
2. Which pages did you mark that you found most motivating? Why did you pick those pages?
3. Now I want you to think about all of the pages that were in the packet you received. On the sheet of paper in front of you, write down the letter of the page you liked the best. [ASK ABOUT EACH LETTER AND TAKE A HAND COUNT] Why did you select that page?
4. Which page did you like the least? What makes you say that?
5. Let's say that we are developing a brochure, and we only had room for one piece of information in the materials I provided to you. What would be the one thing that you would include? What makes you say that?

## VIII. COMMUNICATION TOOLS (15 minutes)

1. Still thinking about the information we just reviewed, where would you expect to see information like this? Where would you look for this type of information if you wanted it?
  - a. Where, specifically, *have you seen* information like this?
2. Is this information that you would be likely to notice or pay attention to? What makes you say that?
3. What are other ways that people have tried to provide you with nutrition or other health information?
  - a. Is there an example that stands out to you as being something that you remember as being a really good way to share information like this with you? What about this example makes it stand out to you?
  - b. Are there any other ways you would want to get information about nutrition and health? What ways?
4. How would you most likely share information like this with friends?
5. Where do you usually get health and nutrition information? [PROBE: Online, doctor's office, kids' school, community, WIC office, etc.]
6. Do you have a computer and Internet access at home?
  - a. [If yes] Do you go online to search for health and nutrition information? Where do you go online for this information? What types of sites or information have you found to be most helpful?
  - b. [If no access] Do you go anywhere to access the Internet?



7. What information would be MOST helpful to you when it comes to helping your kids eat more healthfully?
  - a. How would you most like to receive this information?

**IX. FALSE CLOSE (5 minutes)**

1. **[BRIEF]** Throughout this evening, we have talked and read about ways to convince parents to get involved in their schools to help make it a healthier environment in terms of nutrition and physical activity.
2. While I step out of the room for a moment to see if I need to cover any additional information, take a moment and answer the question on Handout B. It reads, "What would be the one thing you would say to a friend to get him/her to take part in an effort to make your middle school a healthier environment for nutrition and physical activity."

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

**Attachment G1**

**OMB Control # 0584-0524**  
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First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2010  
Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Session #: \_\_\_\_\_

**Handout A**

Take a look at your stacked cards. Each card has a letter in the lower right-hand corner. Please write the letter of each statement in the blanks below in the order in which you sorted the cards.

Does best job motivating you to help make your child's school a healthier place by improving nutrition and increasing physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Does worst job of motivating you to help make your child's School a healthier place by improving nutrition and increasing physical activity \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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Please note that the materials to follow will be printed on 5 x

8 index cards.

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### Supporting Content Packet

**Get your school’s policies into shape.** Join your district or school wellness committee. They’re dedicated to improving the school’s food and physical activity programs and policies.

**Lead the way to a healthier school.** Form a parent’s committee on school nutrition and physical activity policies. Discover how your school is or is not offering kids healthful food choices and physical activity. Report your findings to the school wellness council, school administrators, and school nutrition manager.

**Organize a walking school bus program** where parents take turns walking with a group of children to school. Children get physical activity and a chance to be outdoors.

**Build bridges of information and support.** If you don’t know what your child had for lunch at school or how much physical activity they’re getting, find out. Work with your school to help other parents get this information. Get dialogues going between parents and school staff.

**Raise funds without raising obesity rates.** Encourage your parent teacher organization, school clubs and others to find fundraisers that do not involve the sale of candy, baked goods, fast food and other high-fat, high-sugar foods with little nutritional value. Make sure fundraisers also do not use activities involving less healthy foods as a prize (for example, a trip to a fast food restaurant).

**A healthy school begins at home.** Ask your kids what they are eating at school and how often they have physical education class or other chances to be physically active. Talk with their teachers about what lessons they are teaching about food and nutrition and then reinforce the message at home. Prepare foods covered in class, be physically active together, or start a family garden.

**Work with school foodservice. They need your help.** Recognize that your school nutrition manager and staff are a valuable resource. Communicate with them and make them part of your school’s wellness goals. When your kids complain about meals, don’t join in. Instead work with the school nutrition manager to make the meals better.

**Walk the talk.** Be an example for your kids and their schoolmates. Make healthy food choices and be physically active. Let kids see you getting involved at school in making things healthier for them.

**Make healthy foods and physical activity part of the celebration.** Show kids that holidays, birthdays and other parties can be fun and support a healthy lifestyle.



**Attachment G3**

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**Handout B**

1. What is the one thing you would tell a friend if you were going to try and motivate them to help their middle school children eat healthier and get more physically active while at school?

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