

SNAP-Ed Toolkit

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Common Threads: Small Bites Program

Common Threads

Overview

The Common Threads: Small Bites Program is a direct education intervention designed to increase nutrition knowledge, vegetable consumption, and variety of vegetables consumed. The curriculum teaches students about nutrition and healthy cooking through a series of eight 1-hour lessons combining nutrition and knife-free cooking. In every lesson, students prepare a healthy snack, using recipes that meet USDA Guidelines, and provide opportunities to learn about and reinforce nutrition concepts and cooking skills. The lessons are grade-level banded, suitable for the in-school or after-school setting and are designed to support core content learning in math, English Language Arts, and science. **Target Behavior:** Healthy Eating **Intervention Type:** Direct Education

Intervention Reach and Adoption

Small Bites targets preschool, elementary, and middle school aged children in a variety of settings. Small Bites has been adopted in community and education based settings (both in-school and after-school) that work with at least 50% free and reduced lunch populations or at sites located in census tracts where at least 50 percent of persons have gross incomes that are <185 percent of the poverty threshold. The number of students reached by the intervention from 2012-2019 totals 319,600 students. In 2015-2018 Common Threads started collecting site-based data and has worked with 2,600 sites. **Setting:** Farmers markets, Child care (Learn), Community (Live), Faith-based community, Food pantries, Health care, School (Learn), USDA program sites (not National School Lunch Program) **Target Audience:** Preschool (<5 years), Elementary School, Middle School **Race/Ethnicity:** All

Intervention Components

Small Bites includes eight 1-hour nutrition education lessons that incorporate a healthy snack making

component, cultural education, core content alignment to national and state standards and extension lessons. These intervention components provide improved child nutrition knowledge, child attitudes about eating fruit and vegetables, intention to eat healthy food, food preparation skills, self-efficacy for preparing healthy snacks at home, and positive attitudes and perceived norms about preparing meals at home. Inputs necessary to implement the intervention include teaching staff, funding, student and parent recruitment, school/administrator commitment, facilities, and volunteers. Classroom intervention components provide increased teacher support for Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards in classroom instruction and student engagement. To achieve targeted behaviors it is recommended that the program be completed in at least 8 weeks.

Intervention Materials

Materials include online self-paced training for educators, student videos, digital or print curriculum access, and recipes which meet USDA guidelines. Resources are available for a fee via www.commonbytes.org or <https://commonthreads.skilljar.com/>.

Intervention Costs

\$75 for 1 Year Digital training + curriculum access for a single user (grant funding available for eligible partners) \$275-\$300 for Printed Curriculum kits that include printed curricula, manipulatives for the lessons, a classroom cooking kit, and 1 year digital training and curriculum access

Evidence Summary

Common Threads places high value on research and evaluation and we have conducted continuous, annual, and internal evaluation of programs since 2016. We use a quasi-experimental pre-post survey design with Wilcoxon paired tests to determine if there was a significant change in participant responses. During the 2017-2018 academic year, we achieved the following national outcome after participating in Small Bites:

- Net 22.4% of students answered more nutrition knowledge questions correctly than they did before participating (p<.001)
- Net 10% of students had been exposed to more vegetables (p<.001)
- Net 13% increased their liking for vegetables (p<.001)
- Net 16% increased their consumption of vegetables (p<.001)
- Net 8% increased the variety of vegetables they consumed (p=.002)
- Net 7% were more confident in their ability to make a healthy snack (p=.03)

Evidence-based Approach: Practice-tested

Evaluation Indicators

Based on the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework, the following outcome indicators can be used to evaluate

intervention progress and success.

	Readiness and Capacity – Short Term (ST)	Changes – Medium Term (MT)	Effectiveness and Maintenance – Long Term (LT)	Population Results (R)
Individual	ST1	MT1		
Environmental Settings				
Sectors of Influence				

- ST1: In school year 2017-2018, net 21% of students increased their nutrition knowledge (p<.001)
- MT1: In school year 2017-18, net 7% of students increased the amount of vegetables consumed the previous day (p=.02)
- MT1d: In school year 2017-18, net 8% of students increased the variety of vegetables they consumed the previous day (p=.002)
- MT1m: In school year 2017-2018, median Veggie Meter measurement (measurement of carotenoids in the skin) increased from 257 before programming to 263 after programming (p=.04)

Evaluation Materials

Evaluation materials include pre- and post-surveys for students and teachers and evaluation instructions for Small Bites teachers. Resources can be accessed for a fee via www.commonbytes.org or <https://commonthreads.skilljar.com/>.

Additional Information

Website: The Small Bites [website](#) includes training, recipes, videos, and curriculum offered by Common Threads. **Contact Person:** Kristin Mize 512-879-3381 teachers@commonthreads.org