

# Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template

## Part II, Program/Agency/System Accountability Summary

### Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

#### Program/Agency/System Purpose

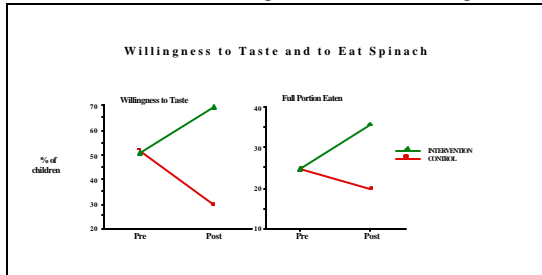
The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is partnering with School Readiness and Head Start programs in Connecticut to support young children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.

#### Program/Agency/System

Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program/  
Connecticut Department of Public Health

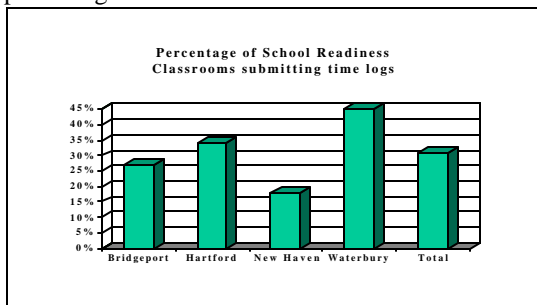
#### Performance Measure 1

Increase School Readiness children's willingness to taste and consume targeted fruits and vegetables.



#### Performance Measure 2

Increase the number of School Readiness programs in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury using the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum and reporting time spent on providing nutrition education.



#### Performance Measure 3

Increase the number of School Readiness and Head Start programs and the number of parent groups from School Readiness and Head Start programs receiving introductory training about building healthy mealtime environments.

Baseline 2006: 13 School Readiness Programs  
2 Parent Groups

Key Budget Information	
Total Current Program Year Funding	\$747,000
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Population Result	
Program Funding As Percent of Total Agency Budget	<1%
Funding Distribution	
Total Federal Funds	\$747,000
Total State Funds	\$0
Capital Projects Subtotal	\$0
Other Funding	\$0
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third Parties	45%

#### Story Behind the Baselines

Performance Measures 1 and 2 focus on using our proven curriculum to increase children's fruit and vegetable consumption. Performance Measure 3 focuses on a new program strategy, proven effective in other states, that provides training for and promotes an approach to classroom learning and mealtime environments that support young children's social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. We achieve this expanded outcome by equipping School Readiness teachers and parents to use classroom learning experiences and mealtimes to better support young children's capability for self-regulation, experience emotionally connected relationships, and build healthy eating capabilities and life skills.

**Turning The Curves: What do you propose to do over the next two years and why?**

#### Low-cost action steps

- Train teachers at sites that have not received training about using the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum and building healthy mealtime environments.
- Develop a document that links specific activities in the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum to specific standards in the State Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework.

#### Contingent upon additional funding

- Provide training about building healthy mealtime environments to School Readiness parents.
- Develop and test strategies to work with each of the four models for feeding young children at School Readiness and Head Start sites that support teachers' abilities to help children learn to eat a variety of healthy foods and to help teachers build healthy mealtime environments.
- Collect data related to healthy mealtime environments at School Readiness and Head Start sites and with families.

## Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template Part II, Program/Agency/System Accountability Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

### Program/Agency/System Purpose

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program is partnering with School Readiness and Head Start programs in Connecticut to support young children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program focuses on three areas:

- Developing and supporting School Readiness teachers' capability and motivation to provide nutrition and physical activity experiences in their classrooms that support young children's learning achievement in the areas of math, science, and language.
- Increasing young children's exposure to healthy foods, increasing the variety of healthy foods offered to them, and increasing young children's ability to eat and enjoy healthy foods and physical activity
- Building teachers and parents' capability to create and maintain healthy mealtime environments. This step was taken to equip and motivate teachers and parents to use mealtimes to build ten healthy eating capabilities and life skills in young children.

### Program/Agency/System

Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program/Connecticut Department of Public Health

### Contribution to Population Result

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program supports young children's enjoyment of and capability to learn.

The Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program uses a developmentally savvy approach to achieve a positive impact on young children's healthy eating and physical activity. The program achieves its results by focusing on teachers and parents who then use behaviors and strategies that have an impact on young children's eating and physical activity.

While nutrition efforts have typically focused on young children's physical development, the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program provides training for and promotes an approach to mealtimes that supports young children's social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. We achieve this expanded outcome by equipping School Readiness teachers and parents to use mealtimes to better support young children's capability for self-regulation, experience emotionally connected relationships, and build healthy eating capabilities and life skills.

<b>Key Budget Information (<i>Dollars reported in millions</i>)</b>	
Total Current Program Year Budget	<b>\$747,000 (.747 million)</b>
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Quality of Life Result	
Program Funding as Percent of Total Agency Budget	<b>&lt;1%</b>
Budget Distribution:	
Federal	<b>\$747,000 (.747 million)</b>
State	<b>\$0</b>
General Fund	
Capital Project Funds	
Other State Funding	
Other Funds (Not Federal or State)	<b>\$0</b>
Percent of Total Current Funding Spent on Direct Service	<b>72%</b>
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third parties	<b>45%</b>

### Basic Program Facts

The Department of Public Health (DPH) Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program began in 1998 by developing a strategy that appealed to School Readiness and Head Start teachers and students and securing funding. A key part of the strategy was the development of the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum that built the capability of teachers to integrate nutrition activities and lessons into their classroom activities and curriculum. Another part of the strategy was to design the activities in the curriculum to help meet the performance standards in the State Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework. One of the reasons that teachers use the curriculum is that it allows them to meet their need to provide educational activities that are fun and enjoyable.

Participating programs submit monthly reports to DPH indicating the specific amount of time spent in the classroom on nutrition-related activities and building healthy mealtime environments. The amount of time is tallied and a cost assigned to them based on the average cost of a School Readiness student. This cost is then matched by federal funds from the federal Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program.

### Performance Measures and Story Behind the Baselines

#### Summary of Story Behind the Baselines:

School Readiness and Head Start programs must deal with a number of forces that can hinder or support young children’s learning and healthy development. Developmentally, three and four-year-old children have gone through three stages of development - homeostasis, attachment, and separation and individuation. Developmentally, as three and four-year-olds, young children are focused on taking initiative by learning, growing, and accomplishing. Additionally, the care they have received in the first three years has hopefully provided a secure attachment pattern since this attachment pattern is the most supportive of learning. However, a significant number of children will have an insecure attachment pattern or even a disorganized attachment pattern. As a result, children will vary in their level of trust, autonomy, capability, and joy of learning.

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Children vary widely in their exposure to a variety of fruits, vegetables, and other foods. They also vary in frequency of having family mealtimes and how pleasant or unpleasant the mealtimes are. For example, a number of School Readiness programs report having three-year-old children who have never fed themselves.

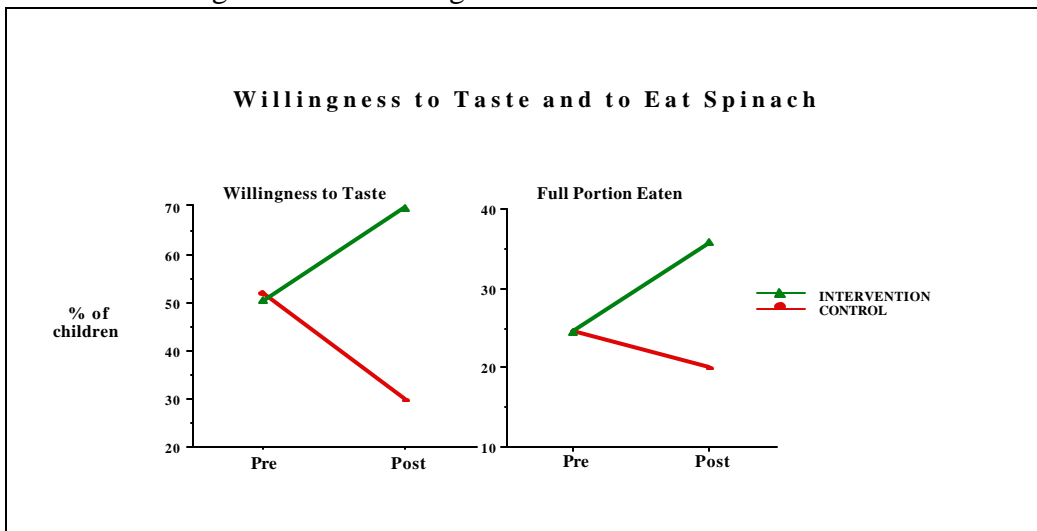
Additionally, the decision to use the activities in the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum and the decision to use behaviors and strategies that build healthy mealtime environments is completely voluntary. As a result, we must use strategies that attract teachers and parents to adopt the behaviors and strategies promoted by the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program. Teachers and parents want to enjoy their children, want them to thrive in life, and want to have positive emotionally connected relationships with their children. The DPH Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program has developed strategies that meet these three needs of teachers and parents that attract them to making changes in their behavior.

School Readiness and Head Start Programs employ four models for feeding young children:

1. Meals and snacks are prepared by cooks at the site.
2. Meals and snacks are purchased from a vendor.
3. Parents provide their child's lunch, and the site provides snacks.
4. Parents provide their child's lunch and snacks.

Each model varies in how well it either supports or hinders the program in setting its agenda of helping the children learn to eat a variety of healthy foods and learn new eating capabilities and life skills.

**Performance Measure 1:** Increase School Readiness children's willingness to taste and consume targeted fruits and vegetables.



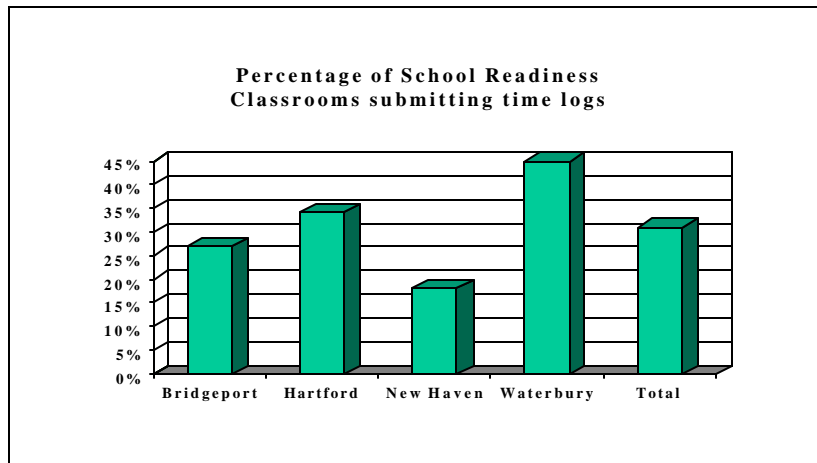
- The 15-week intervention resulted in an increase from one in two children to three in four children willing to taste spinach. The control group had a

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decrease from one in two children to one in three children willing to taste spinach.

- The 15-week intervention resulted in an increase from one in four children to one in three children eating a full portion of spinach. The control group had a decrease from one in four children to one in five children eating a full portion of spinach.

**Performance Measure 2:** Increase the number of School Readiness programs using the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum and reporting time spent on nutrition education in four-targeted cities – Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury.



- 30% (77 of 255 classrooms) are submitting monthly logs of time spent on nutrition activities in the classroom and at mealtimes.

**Performance Measure 3:** Increase the number of School Readiness and Head Start programs and the number of parent groups from School Readiness and Head Start programs receiving introductory training about building healthy mealtime environments.

- 13 School Readiness and Head Start programs have received the introductory training about building healthy mealtime environments. Nine of the thirteen training requests were unsolicited and resulted from word-of-mouth promotion of the training.
- 2 parent groups from School Readiness and Head Start programs have received the introductory training about building healthy mealtime environments.

Teachers routinely report that the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum activities and lessons are fun and enjoyable for the teachers and kids. Teachers also report

## DPH: Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program

using the activities throughout the school year and using them more than once. Nearly all teachers attending training report having frustrations and concerns about children's eating and communicate a desire to have strategies to help improve children's eating and to build more pleasant mealtime environments.

Based on the comments from evaluations, we are providing training on building healthy mealtime environments to support an approach to classroom learning and mealtime environments that supports young children's social, emotional, cognitive, and language development. Teachers appreciate the mealtime environment approach and the strategies for supporting young children's healthy development at mealtimes. Evaluation comments from parents have also been quite positive about the mealtime environment approach and the strategies for supporting young children's healthy development at mealtimes.

## Partners and Their Roles

University of Connecticut, School of Allied Health—develops and conducts research on the impact of the Food Stamp Nutrition Education Program on healthy eating behaviors in children and families.

State Department of Education— provides consultation on how the DPH program assists children in meeting performance standards and provides in-kind School Readiness matching funds.

School Readiness Programs – provide access to teachers, staff, and parents for training and support activities and encourages participation in the nutrition education reporting program.

Head Start Programs – provide access to teachers, staff, and parents for training and support activities.

**What do you propose to do to improve performance in the next 3-5 years and why?**

Low cost action steps to improve performance:

- Train teachers at sites that have not received training about using the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum and building healthy mealtime environments.
- Develop a document that links specific activities in the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum to specific performance standards in the State Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework.

Action steps to improve performance requiring additional funding:

- Provide training about building healthy mealtime environments to School Readiness and Head Start parents. Additionally, the training also needs to build

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- in opportunities at later dates for parental reflection about the behaviors and strategies they have tried.
- Collect data related to healthy mealtime environments at School Readiness and Head Start sites and with families.
  - Develop and test strategies to work with each of the four models for feeding young children at School Readiness and Head Start sites that support teachers' abilities to help children learn to eat a variety of healthy foods and to help teachers build healthy mealtime environments.

### Why

There continues to be a need to reach teachers at School Readiness and Head Start sites who have not received training to use the Captain 5 A Day curriculum and training about how to build healthy mealtime environments. Teachers also need a resource that indicates how the Captain 5 A Day preschool nutrition curriculum activities and lessons are connected to specific performance standards in the State Department of Education Preschool Curriculum Framework.

There is a large body of research that covers adult feeding behaviors and use of strategies to build healthy mealtime environments that hinder or support children learning to like new foods. Underpinning an approach based on this research is the strategy that kids will learn to eat and enjoy a variety of foods if adults use developmentally supportive feeding behaviors, offer developmentally appropriate challenges to help children's eating capability grow, and build developmentally supportive mealtime environments. Many teachers and parents are not aware of these feeding behaviors and mealtime environment strategies.

A system to collect, analyze, and report data regarding healthy mealtime environments at School Readiness and Head Start sites and with families needs to be established, tested, and revised. It also needs to complement the change strategies being used with teachers and parents.

Change strategies for each of the four models for feeding young children at School Readiness and Head Start sites need to be developed and tested since the challenges with each model are different.

## Appendix A, Data Development Agenda

Data is lacking about the impact of the building healthy mealtime environments training on teachers and on parents.

### Proposed Measures

- Measure the number of programs reporting that an adult sits with each table of children at meals and snacks and the number of programs that develop a plan to build healthier mealtime environments
- Measure the number of teachers reporting mealtimes as pleasant, reporting mealtimes as being supportive of kids' language skills, and reporting mealtimes as a time of positive emotional connection with the children.
- Measure the number of parents reporting family mealtimes as pleasant and reporting mealtimes as a time of positive emotional connection with their kids.

## Appendix B; Link to Budget

Increases in state funding are necessary to expand the reach of the program to all School Readiness and Head Start teachers and the families they serve.

*\*Any state funding provided for these initiatives within this targeted population would automatically equate to the USDA providing matching funds for program operations.*

- Provide training about building healthy mealtime environments to more parents. Additionally, the training also needs to build in opportunities at later dates for parental reflection about the behaviors and strategies they have tried; and develop and test strategies to work with each of the four models for feeding young children at School Readiness and Head Start sites that support teachers being able to help kids learn to eat a variety of healthy foods and to help teachers build healthy mealtime environments. ***\$250,000 per year***
- Collect data related to healthy mealtime environments at School Readiness and Head Start sites and with families. ***\$200,000 per year***

## Appendix C, Information and Research Agenda

Research is needed to quantify the prevalence rates of specific frustrations and concerns that teachers and parents have with their kids' eating. We need to collect prevalence rate data on the frequency of family meals along with prevalence rates of teachers and parents reporting mealtimes as pleasant. We also need to have prevalence rates of teachers and parents reporting mealtimes as a time of positive emotional connection with their kids. This data would let us know if we are making progress in helping teachers and parents create mealtime environments that support kids' healthy eating and kids' healthy social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development.



## Appendix E. What Works

The 2000 Institute of Medicine (IOM) publication, From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development, stated in its executive summary:

*Two profound changes over the past several decades have coincided to produce a dramatically altered landscape for early childhood policy, service delivery, and childrearing in the United States. First, an explosion of research in the neurobiological, behavioral, and social sciences has led to major advances in understanding the conditions that influence whether children get off to a promising or a worrisome start in life. These scientific gains have generated a much deeper appreciation of: (1) the importance of early life experiences, as well as the inseparable and highly interactive influences of genetics and environment, on the development of the brain and the unfolding of human behavior; (2) the central role of early relationships discussed as a source of either support and adaptation or risk and dysfunction; (3) the powerful capabilities, complex emotions, and essential social skills that develop during the earliest years of life, and (4) the capacity to increase the odds of favorable developmental outcomes through planned interventions. Second, the capacity to use this knowledge constructively has been constrained by a number of dramatic transformations in the social and economic circumstances under which families with young children are living in the United States.*

The 2001 Institute of Medicine publication, Health and Behavior: The Interplay of Biological, Behavioral, and Societal Influences, reported on the struggle to understand interactions between health and behavior and how to use that knowledge to improve the health status of individuals and populations. Individuals' behaviors have a profound impact on their health status, whether it is smoking, physical activity, eating, or other behaviors. Achieving change in behaviors is seen as playing a crucial role in the health of our nation, yet how behavior change is achieved is quite challenging.

The DPH Captain 5 A Day Program believes the strategies and recommendations in both IOM reports about supporting young children's healthy development and developing approaches that are most supportive of the adoption and continued use of behaviors by teachers and parents are crucial to the design of an effective program.

One cannot just focus on the physical development of young children. Equally as important, one must also focus on their social, emotional, cognitive, and language development if one wants to help preschoolers be most prepared to learn upon entering kindergarten.

We know that young children are most likely to thrive and succeed in life when teachers and parents use behaviors that support all aspects of young children's healthy development. As such, the DPH Captain 5 A Day Program seeks to influence the behaviors used and not used by teachers and parents of preschoolers. We believe when

teachers and parents use behaviors that promote healthy development in classrooms and mealtimes, young children are given the best support to thrive in life.

A number of articles have also looked at the connection between feeding behaviors and mealtime environment strategies with the development of children's eating capabilities and children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, and language development. This approach of focusing on adult feeding behaviors and mealtime environment strategies basically looks at feeding young kids as parenting. Parenting can be broken down into four parenting styles – authoritative, authoritarian, neglectful, and permissive. Recent national research has identified very different rates of overweight in first graders for kids with the different types of parenting style<sup>1</sup>. First graders with mothers using an authoritative parenting style had an overweight rate of 3%, whereas, first graders with mothers using an authoritarian parenting style had an overweight rate of 17%. Research by Susan Johnson has shown that three and four-year-old children at preschools can be taught to be aware of their hunger and fullness levels<sup>2</sup>. Johnson's intervention resulted in children who had been overeating no longer overeating.

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<sup>1</sup> Rhee KE, Lumeng JC, Appugliese DP, Kaciroti N, Bradley RH. Parenting styles and overweight status in first grade. *Pediatrics*. 2006 Jun;117(6):2047-54.

<sup>2</sup> Johnson SL. Improving Preschoolers' self-regulation of energy intake. *Pediatrics*. 2000 Dec;106(6):1429-35.