

Food Promotion and Educating for Children's Health: Food Literacy, Knowledge Translation and Evaluation

March 21, 2016, 9:30-2:30
Hotel Alma, Parkdale Boardroom (5th Floor)
University of Calgary

Background:

According to Statistics Canada, 31.2% of Canadian children are overweight or obese, and 75% of those children will become overweight adults. Alberta is certainly no exception, with a 22% combined rate of childhood and youth overweight. While addressing child obesity is important, no less significant is the goal of *promoting* children's health. One key strategy to promote children's health (and prevent obesity) is to provide children with the skills and knowledge to make healthy choices in a complex food environment.

Various initiatives are designed to improve children's eating practices, but they come with their own set of challenges—including how to best translate nutrition-related information to children, and how to effectively evaluate these initiatives. Food literacy has become a popular way to frame and explain the educational aims of such initiatives, although current definitions of the concept are inconsistent, and often too broadly framed to be useful. This raises significant questions about how we understand food literacy when it comes to children: what does it mean for a child to be "food literate"? Do we need a separate definition of food literacy for children compared to adults? How can—and should—children's food literacy skills be measured?

Objectives:

1. To introduce evidence-based Media Literacy & Food Marketing Lesson Plans developed for elementary school children as examples of a knowledge translation initiative aimed to improve the health of young people. The lesson plans provide a case for questions of evaluation;
2. To develop an evidence-informed consensus statement on the definition of "food literacy"—both for children and for adults—as well as to probe the possibilities for evaluating food literacy;
3. To explore best practices and possibilities for evaluating food literacy programs for children.

Agenda:

Time	Agenda Item	
0930	Welcome and meeting objectives	
0940	Evidence-based Media Literacy & Food Marketing lesson plans	C. Elliott
1000	Roundtable introduction – role, projects	All
1030	Food Literacy - what does the literature say about definitions, themes, barriers and facilitators?	E. Truman
1100	Food Literacy – Prioritization exercise	All
1120	Break	
1130	Knowledge translation in schools – food literacy and Jamie Oliver Ambassadors	J. Henderson
1140	Knowledge translation – what is it and how can it be used to advance impact in food literacy?	K. Mrklas
1200	Working Lunch Breakout session: Food literacy consensus statement – definition, components, evaluation	All
115	Report group findings & consensus statement	All
145	Program evaluation: Best practices	
215	Discussion: best practices for evaluation	All
230	Summary, Next Steps	