

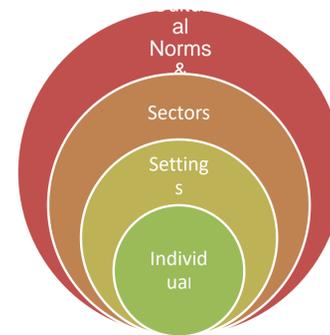
Exposure to Healthy Food Increases Food Preferences among Children and Youth in Low-Income School Settings

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BACKGROUND

- ❖ **Objectives:** To increase healthy food preference through taste tests among children and youth.
- ❖ **Program Description:** In 2019-20, CalFresh Healthy Living, UC (CFHL, UC) nutrition education program was implemented with tasting activities among K-8th graders. Youth taste tests occurred as part of the direct and indirect nutrition education, and policy, systems, and environment (PSE) initiatives in collaboration with community partners across Tulare and Kings Counties.



METHODS

- ❖ **Participants & Settings:** K-8 across Schools/ After school programs in Tulare-Kings counties of California.
- ❖ **Curricula, Theoretical & Evaluation Framework:** Age-appropriate evidence-based curricula, Social-Ecological Model, and SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework were used.
- ❖ **Evaluation Methods & Analysis:** Youth Taste Test Tool were administered to assess participants' goals and intentions.

RESULTS

- ❖ **Reach & Youth Outcomes:**
 - ✓ In Tulare county, of the 7,614 students tasting variety of food, 14% of students tasted the target food before, 97% tried it today, 81% were willing to eat it again, and 79% were willing to ask for it at home.
 - ✓ In Kings county, of the 1,920 students tasting variety of food, 31% of students tasted the target food before, 98% tried it today, 84% were willing to eat it again, and 82% were willing to ask for it at home.
 - ✓ Foods tasted were from all food groups- fruits, vegetables, grains, proteins, and dairy and served raw, paired with a familiar food, cooked or included in a mixed dish.



Children and youth engaged in hands on nutrition education that resulted in taste tests.



CONCLUSION

- ❖ CFHL, UC brings together expertise and capacity to implement USDA funded nutrition education program in local communities.
- ❖ CFHL, UC plays a critical role in obesity prevention by empowering low-income children, youth, and families with knowledge and skills to make healthy eating an easy choice.
- ❖ Taste tests provide opportunity to try a variety of foods from five food groups that compose MyPlate which is a promising strategy for promoting healthy food preferences among children and youth. Healthy food preferences, in turn, are associated with healthy food consumption patterns.