

Curriculum Modification Guidance

Adapted with Permission from University of California SNAP-Ed Program

Background

Quality nutrition education is an integral part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education (SNAP-Ed). Education is intended to promote and support healthy behavior changes, including improved nutrition and more physical activity. Per SNAP-Ed Guidance, a curriculum needs to be implemented with fidelity to meet evidence-based requirements. The Guidance states that interventions must be “implemented as intended or **modified with justification**” (*SNAP-Ed Plan Guidance FFY 2023*, page 21). The Guidance further states: “Program fidelity means that the intervention was implemented as designed. In some cases, you may need to adapt the original evidence-based intervention to meet the needs of your target audience. Under such circumstances it is important to document what changes were made and how they were implemented.” (*Guidance*, page 58).

SNAP-Ed Guidance also states that education needs to be meaningful for the target audience (including being culturally and linguistically appropriate), behaviorally focused, updated with current scientific information and government recommendations, and personally engaging. Some of the curricula included on the *Washington State SNAP-Ed Approved Curricula List* and the *SNAP-Ed Strategies & Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States*, while excellent in many ways, may require adaptation to meet the target audience need or setting. Implementing Agencies (IAs) and sub-contractors need guidance on whether, when and how they may modify curricula.

Per SNAP-Ed Guidance, SNAP-Ed interventions need to demonstrate the intended impact on behavior (*Guidance*, page 21). IA’s and SNAP-Ed providers have shared that they feel they could improve the efficacy of SNAP-Ed nutrition education in some instances by modifying curricula **in specific circumstances** to make them:

- more relevant and appropriate for a particular target audience
- more engaging
- more up-to-date with new health and nutrition recommendations
- more skill based
- better aligned with objectives in USDA Evaluation Framework

Guidance

The following guidance aims to help SNAP-Ed providers determine when curriculum modifications may be appropriate and how to make these modifications. This guidance is intended to:

- allow for modification when appropriate
- adhere to fidelity of implementation (maintain intent, core elements and objectives)
- improve the chances for successful outcomes
- avoid undue burden for DSHS

The types of curriculum modifications allowed in Washington SNAP-Ed programs are divided into Green and Yellow Light Modifications, identifying the level of caution with which these modifications should be made. **Green Light Modifications** are those that DSHS and the Curriculum, Training, & Website (CTW) Team have determined as appropriate to implement. **Yellow Light Modifications**, although sometimes necessary to ensure high quality interventions, should only be implemented with care and require additional administrative guidance and evaluation of changes. These changes should be done in collaboration with the CTW Team and the Evaluation Team. **Red Light Modifications** are NOT allowed for direct education.

Please Note:

This document will be updated on a yearly basis.

If an IA or SNAP-Ed provider identifies a curriculum or a resource that could be a useful addition to the Washington State Snap-Ed Approved Curricula they should submit it to the CTW Team and DSHS for consideration.

Curriculum Modification Guidance Table

Green Light Modifications

Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
Enhancing visuals or adding props to make the learning more hands-on	Follow principles for effective visuals. Do not substitute for a core component of the curriculum. Keep costs moderate.	<p>Having actual samples of foods, food labels, or containers to pass around</p> <p>Using food models, sugar and fat visual aids, posters, puppets, etc.</p> <p>Using anatomy models (e.g., arteries, fat, digestive)</p> <p>Using visual strategies to help ELL students</p> <p>Use of “real life” pictures of people, foods, etc. to help enhance cultural understanding</p>
Adding activities within a class to make it more interactive	Added activities must follow SNAP-Ed Guidance and Dietary Guidelines for Americans, meet curriculum learning objectives, be appropriate for the audience, fit the objectives of the curriculum, and enhance the class’ engagement or relevance. They may not replace core component activities.	<p>Taste testing and recipe demonstrations</p> <p>Physical activity and games (e.g., brain breaks, energizers, Cardio Pyramid, group walks, CATCH games and strategies (brain-breaks.com, gonoodle.com, nchealthyschools.org/energizers)</p> <p>Participant sharing, facilitated dialogue, small group discussions, ice breakers, group introductions, review of the previous class</p> <p>Adding a grocery store tour to series lesson, smart goals and goal setting</p>
Updating content for new governmental and/or scientific recommendations	Update content for new recommendations following SNAP-Ed Guidance and Dietary Guidelines for Americans.	<p>Incorporating the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, Dietary Reference Intakes, and updated Nutrition Facts Label.</p> <p>E.g., Updating label reading lessons to reflect the updated nutrition facts label.</p>

Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
Making adaptations for cultural appropriateness	<p>Consult with experts, such as cultural representatives.</p> <p>Dietary modifications must meet Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Recipes must be from allowable sources and follow SNAP-Ed recipe guidelines*. See Yellow Light Modifications Table for more significant modifications.</p>	<p>Adjusting names, stories, recipes, food examples and images, and food demos included in a class. (E.g., Changing lesson recipe to reflect culturally familiar foods, changing lesson book for culturally appropriate replacement. When making these modifications make sure the change matches lesson topic and theme.)</p> <p>Using SNAP-Ed translated materials in other curricula. (e.g. using ESBA Spanish grain poster in PSSC lesson)</p>
Modifying for literacy level of target audience	<p>Changes to verbal communication during classes may be made to improve understanding, following principles for low ELL education.</p>	<p>Substituting familiar phrases for technical terms, shortening sentence length.</p> <p>E.g., Using pictures or visual images such as picture recipes, visual representation of phrases and key terms.</p>
Adjusting schedule of classes to fit needs of participants or site	<p>Class sessions may be divided over multiple sessions, or multiple classes combined into a single session as long as the overall curriculum sequence is maintained and content is not omitted.</p> <p>NOTE: If classes are divided, additional introductions, warm-ups, and conclusion may be needed.</p>	<p>Dividing 90-minute session into two 45-minute classes because school class time is only 50 minutes.</p> <p>Combining 10, 30-minute sessions of an adult curriculum into 5 one-hour-long sessions to improve participant retention.</p> <p>Extending class time to accommodate needs of audience (e.g., 90-minute lesson instead of 60-minute lesson for seniors, ELL, and participants with special needs)</p>
Substituting recipes, recipe ingredients and/or gardening activities to accommodate seasonality, availability of ingredients, or abilities of audience	<p>Substitutions must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • meet intent of lesson. • be from the same food group and have comparable nutrient content • be affordable and accessible to participants • follow SNAP-Ed recipe guidelines. 	<p>Substituting winter squash for carrots in class activity recipe when squash is available in a school garden and carrots are not.</p> <p>Substituting spinach for chard in food demo recipe when spinach is available at food bank.</p> <p>Substituting recipe ingredient that is more locally accessible and affordable e.g., Apples instead of mangos</p>

Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
		<p>Substituting a recipe that involves stirring, instead of one that requires chopping, for an audience with disabilities.</p> <p>Keeping an ingredient raw instead of cooking it.</p> <p>Altering a recipe so it can be prepared in a facility without a sink.</p> <p>Substituting a recipe that does not require cooking for a setting where cooking facilities are not available.</p>
Modifying to be flexible with time for each activity to allow for questions/conversation	Adapt time for each activity as needed; can substitute an activity of shorter duration that meets learning objectives; do not omit activities. Maintain fidelity to core components and learning objectives. Do not shorten overall class time. The recipe and activity may be modified, but NOT eliminated.	To make more time for discussion (e.g., for audiences with language limitations, seniors, or special education students) substituting a recipe with shorter preparation time or a shorter physical activity with similar objectives.
Making minor changes in the order of activities/content within a lesson	Sequence should be appropriate to meet learning objectives, activities/content that build on each other should remain in the order specified in the lesson plan, and core components of curriculum should remain intact.	<p>Moving the physical activity segment from the beginning of the session to the middle.</p> <p>Doing recipe demonstration/preparation at the beginning of the lesson to accommodate for long cooking times.</p>
Modifying for specific limitations (e.g., living situation) of the specific target audience.	Make minimal changes as appropriate for limitations of target audience. Core components of a curriculum may not be omitted.	<p>Replacing cooking activity with a food demo for group home residents or people experiencing homelessness who do not prepare their own meals.</p> <p>Utilizing low or no-cook meals for children, and people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Using “cooking for one” recipes when working with senior populations</p>
Modifying the selection of seeds used in gardening curriculum.	Select seeds and plants that best fit the Northwest growing season, climate and	Replacing growing corn with growing hardy greens, varieties of lettuce, radishes or sugar snap peas.

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Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
	conditions. Using seeds that can accommodate a short growing season.	
Modifying discussion about pests in a gardening curriculum.	Discuss pests that are common in the Northwest.	Discuss management of slugs and snails in the garden.

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Yellow Light Modifications

Specific guidelines for each Yellow Light modification are described in the table below. Programs considering Yellow Light modifications should contact the CTW Team to determine if a modification is appropriate.

Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
Making major modifications or adapting curriculum for different age, grade level, lifecycle stage, or setting from intended audience	<p>Contact the CTW Team to request permission from curriculum developer to modify for different age or grade level. After receiving response, the CTW Team will report outcome (whether curriculum developer gives approval or not). If no response from developer, the CTW Team will make a recommendation.</p>	<p>Adapting a curriculum designated for parents to be used with seniors caring for children.</p> <p>Teaching classes combined grades when curriculum is grade specific. For example, teaching a grade 2 curriculum to a combined 2-3 class.</p> <p>Teaching an after school or summer program with a mixed age group.</p>
Using a curriculum as is for different age, grade level, setting or lifecycle stage from intended audience	<p>Contact the CTW Team to seek approval from curriculum developer. After receiving response, the CTW Team will report outcome (whether curriculum developer gives approval or not). If no response from developer, the CTW Team will recommend a course of action.</p>	<p>Using a middle school curriculum in a high school.</p> <p>Using an adult curriculum with groups such as pregnant or parenting teens or youth transitioning out of the foster system.</p> <p>Using a youth curriculum with 19-year old high school students.</p>
Developing a language translation and/or making other significant adaptations for cultural appropriateness	<p>Contact the CTW Team to request permission from curriculum developer to request approval to translate and/or adapt. Work with cultural representatives from target audience and certified translator to develop an accurate and culturally appropriate translation or adaptation.</p>	<p>Translating an approved curriculum or handouts from Washington State Approved Curriculum List into a language that meets community needs.</p> <p>Using and interpreter or cultural guide when facilitating lessons.</p>

Curriculum Modification Guidance Table

Red Light Modifications

Red Light modifications are described in the table below. These specific types of curriculum modifications are **NOT** allowed for direct education.

Types of Modification	Guidance for Modification	Examples
Deleting content and/or activities that support a learning objective	NOT allowed.	Deleting a core component of a lesson Omit content to shorten a lesson Omit physical activity to shorten a lesson
Rearranging the order of activities so that the class no longer supports the learning objectives	NOT allowed.	Moving a summative activity from the end of a lesson to earlier in the lesson
Adding content and/or activities from unsubstantiated sources.	NOT allowed.	Adding additional information to a lesson from non-research-based sources. (e.g. Facebook, wellness coach blogs, day time talk shows)
Combining parts of several lessons into one.	NOT allowed.	Picking portion from 1st and 2nd lessons and presenting as one lesson.