

Curriculum Modification Guidance Background

Quality nutrition education is an integral part of CalFresh Healthy Living in California, the program known federally as 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**”. 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.”

In California, we have further described fidelity as the authenticity with which a program is implemented. This means implementing a program by maintaining the essential core components to meet program objectives and ensure program effectiveness. Core components (parts essential to a program’s effectiveness) are defined by the program developer and must be kept intact for the intervention to produce outcomes similar to those found in the original evaluation. If a particular curriculum does not explicitly identify what the core components are, the Curriculum Modification Guidance may help. It lists many examples of the kinds of changes that usually will not modify the core components, and ones that often will affect the core components. If you have questions about this, you may try contacting the program developer or contact your State Implementing Agencies (SIA) representative.

Other curriculum modification considerations addressed in the SNAP-Ed Guidance include ensuring that the 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 *California CalFresh Healthy Living Integrated Curricula List* and the *SNAP-Ed Strategies & Interventions: An Obesity Prevention Toolkit for States*, while excellent in many ways, may fall short on some of these criteria. Local Implementing Agencies (LIAs) have requested 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. LIAs 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

In response to these needs, CalFresh Healthy Living has developed a series of guidance tools aimed to help LIAs determine when curriculum modifications may be appropriate and how to make these modifications. Note that this is **not** an approval process. The purpose of these guidance tools are 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 LIAs and State Implementing Agencies
- allow results to be shared so LIAs can learn from the experiences of other LIAs

Curriculum Modification Guidance Tools

Tool Title Curriculum Modification	Description	Additional Information
Guidance Background	An explanation of why this guidance was developed and general overview of issues involved	n/a
Guidance Table	A table listing kinds of modifications that may be acceptable to make, clarifications on how to make these changes, examples, and evaluations requirements	Modifications are classified as green, yellow, and red to indicate how easy and permissible they may be.
Sharing Site	A site to document the curriculum modifications that LIAs make	USDA requires modifications to be documented. This site is primarily intended to document the kinds of changes that other LIAs may be interested in knowing about. You may also use it to document any change you make to a curriculum, but for very small changes, you may consider other documentation methods. NOTE: Access to this site is restricted to specific LIA staff.
Sharing Site Updates	An easy way to see what curriculum may have been modified and in what ways	This will be available to anyone and will be updated periodically. LIAs should check here before considering making any modifications to see if anyone else has already made a similar modification.
Process	Step-by-step instructions on how modify curriculum and record these changes on the Curriculum Modification Sharing Site.	Access to the Curriculum Modification Sharing Site is restricted to specific LIA staff.

Tool Title Curriculum Modification	Description	Additional Information
Frequently Asked Questions	Responses to questions the LIAs have asked about Curriculum Fidelity and Modification	n/a