



Technical Report:

UNDERSTANDING THE STATE OF NUTRITION EDUCATION IN HEAD START

Spring 2018

¹Virginia C. Stage, PhD, RDN, LDN - Assistant Professor, The FEEd Lab Director

¹Amanda D. Peterson, MS, RDN, LDN – The FEEd Lab Research Associate

²Archana Hegde, PhD, BK – Associate Professor

¹Kristina Bandy – Graduate Student & Dietetic Intern

¹Kristi Wilkerson, RD, LDN – Graduate Student

¹Department of Nutrition Science, College of Allied Health Sciences

²Department of Child Development & Family Studies, College of Health and Human Performance



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Report Background
- II. Appendix A: Understanding the State of Nutrition Education in Head Start Survey
- III. Appendix B: Survey Results

Report Background

Fall 2016-Fall 2017, The FEEd (Food-based Early Education) Lab distributed a survey to all North Carolina-based Head Start programs to better understand current food and nutrition-related policies, practices, and environments. The FEEd Lab, housed in the Department of Nutrition Science in the College of Allied Health Sciences at East Carolina University, conducted the study in collaboration with the Department of Child Development & Family Studies.

This study report provides information that may be useful in efforts to improve the provision of education and in the long-term, promote child nutrition and prevent overweight/obesity among children in Head Start. This report may give you a general idea of your Head Start program's efforts in the area of child nutrition, and allow you to explore your successes and challenges compared to those of other Head Start Health/Nutrition coordinators throughout the state.

Results from this study were NOT used to assess individual Head Start program performance, therefore you will only see results in this report reflect participant responses as a group. The information that you provided has been and will continue to be kept separately from your name, contact information, and name of your Head Start program. Responses of individual programs are NOT included in this technical report to the Head Start community and will not be shared with anyone, including the Office of Head Start or any other government agency. Individual reports including only your program's specific responses to the survey are available from The FEEd Lab by request (see contact details below).

A total of 50 funded North Carolina Head Start programs (representing 354 childcare centers) were contacted to participate in the study. Efforts were made to obtain representation within each Head Start Cluster and program type (non-profit agencies, school districts, and community action groups). Migrant sites were excluded since they are only open during the summer months. Programs were contacted by phone in an effort to recruit the Health/Nutrition coordinator of each organization. The final response rate was 48% (24/50). The distribution of participating program types are as follows; 6 Community Action (25%), 9 Non-profit (37.5%), 8 School-District (33.3%), and one reported local government (4.2%). Study data was collected Fall 2016 through Fall 2017, therefore data are only representative of trends among programs at that time.

As a reminder, the survey was broken down into four sections: (A) Tell Us About Yourself; (B) Food & Nutrition Education Practices; (C) Teacher Training, Knowledge, & Behavior; and (D) Policies & Regulations. A copy of the original survey is included in Appendix A of this report. Report data can be found in Appendix B. Summarized data are reported using descriptive statistics, shown as either a percent or mean (average) score.

Thank you again for your participation in this research study. We hope that this report is beneficial to you and your program's efforts. If you have any questions and/or would like to request an individual report of your program's responses, please contact Dr. Virginia C. Stage, PhD, RDN, LDN at 252-744-1001 or by email at carrawaystagev@ecu.edu