

THEMES IN TRAIN-THE-TRAINER NUTRITION EDUCATION INTERVENTIONS

Executive Summary

UR2US
SPORTS

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Up2Us Sports Acknowledgments

This review further identified the importance of the role that coaches play in the lives of youth and the unique position they hold in modeling and fostering healthy habits for youth. A thorough literature review process looked at approaches and delivery of nutritional education programs, and youth receptivity. Upon completion of this review, findings revealed many barriers that youth face in regard to nutrition and informed the structure and implementation of a coach-to-coach nutritional education module within the Up2Us Sports sport based youth development curriculum. This research would not have been possible without the help of several individuals and partner organizations.

First and foremost, recognition must be given to the lead author of this research, Christine St. Pierre (George Washington University), under the guidance of professor, Dr. Jennifer Sacheck (George Washington University), and in collaboration with Dr. Win Guan (Up2Us Sports) and Jamison Merrill (Up2Us Sports). Second, this study would not have been possible without the incredible and thankless work of Leah Barry (Tulane University), Grace Dease (George Washington University), Sydney Gottlieb (Tulane University), and Arielle Morris (Tulane University) in sifting through and analyzing over 4,000 research articles. We are thankful for their hard work, dedication, and expertise.

Second, we are grateful for the funding from the Youth Engagement in Sports Initiative through the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health. We appreciate their continued support and guidance for the Creating Opportunities for Adolescents through Coaching, Healthy Eating, and Sports (COACHES) Project and their passion for improving the lives of youth across the country. We thank the ReNEW Charter Schools and ARISE Charter Schools in New Orleans, LA for their partnership in the COACHES Project.

We would like to also extend a special gratitude to Up2Us Sports New Orleans Staff, including Jerita Mitchell and Katie Rawlings, and the Up2Us Sports Training Team, Nathan LeJeune, Thomas Padro, and Marysol Flores, for their work and guidance on developing the Up2Us Sports Nutrition Coach Training. Furthermore, we would like to thank the Up2Us Sports Miami Program Manager, Natasha Cruz, who was instrumental in developing and delivering coach trainings that came from the application of these review findings.

Finally, we would like to provide acknowledgement to our National Partners - adidas, Allstate Foundation, AmeriCorps, and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention for their on-going support and dedication in helping provide coaches the opportunity to transform youth, programs, and communities through sports-based youth development trainings and curriculums.



A Message From Paul Caccamo Founder & CEO of Up2Us Sports

At Up2Us Sports, we believe that all children should have a coach who inspires them to achieve their potential in life.

“Potential” is a big word and there are a lot of considerations that must be addressed when fostering it. That’s why we launched the field of Sports-Based Youth Development in 2010 to combine best practices from the mentoring field with youth sports coaching to foster social-emotional health. That’s why we created our state-of-the-art coach training program in 2011 to ensure that sports programs are designed to maximize children’s physical and social health. And that’s why we introduced trauma-informed coaching in 2012 to enable all children to experience the mental wellness that comes from being an athlete.

Today represents another landmark in our continued effort to achieve our mission: the publication of a comprehensive study on nutrition programs that focus on middle school-aged youth. In under-taking this study, we set out to answer one question: what is the most effective methodology for designing and delivering nutrition education?

Partnering with the George Washington University Milken Institute of Public Health, and through funding from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Youth Engagement in Sports Initiative, we evaluated train-the-trainer nutrition programs for their approach, content, and delivery methods. Our results inform future intervention design on the most common and likely effective ways for how nutrition can be taught to school-aged youth, whether by a coach, a teacher or other childcare provider. We think you will find our findings instrumental in informing your own programming, especially given the wide variety of nutrition education programs currently available to youth instructors.

At Up2Us Sports, our research agenda remains a robust one. We will continue to evaluate the impact of Sports-Based Youth Development programming, especially in areas of nutrition, fitness, social-emotional learning, and mental wellness. Our Evaluation team, led by Dr. Win Guan, continues to demonstrate that trained coaches can be effective promoters of healthy behaviors. Our national service program, Up2Us Coach, will also continue to partner with AmeriCorps to make these trained coaches available in communities nationwide where they are needed the most.

Thank you for your interest in this report and your ongoing support of our mission and services.

Paul Caccamo

Executive Summary

Up2Us Sports continues to emphasize the important role that Coaches play in the lives of young people. Evidence from previous research has shown the importance of training and reliance on individuals outside the nutrition profession--from classroom teachers to older student peers--in effectively reaching young people and supporting healthy behaviors. The importance of Coaches is further supported by the widely accepted Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model promoted by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, whereby healthy behaviors and habits are supported and reinforced by a holistic network of individuals, programs, and contextual settings surrounding young people. Given that regular physical activity and healthy eating patterns are two of the most important factors in achieving and maintaining physical, mental, and social-emotional health, Coaches are in a unique position to promote these behaviors in contexts ranging from physical education classes to one-on-one mentorship to structured athletic play.

Up2Us Sports commissioned Themes in Train-the-Trainer Nutrition Education Interventions Targeting Middle School Students: A Systematic Review in partnership with the George Washington University Milken Institute of Public Health and with funding support from the US Department of Health and Human Services Youth Engagement in Sports Initiative. The purpose of the review was to identify the prevalent themes in training approaches, content, delivery models, and youth receptivity in nutrition education programs that target youth in historically marginalized community settings. The findings in this review informed the design and implementation of a train-the-trainer nutrition education module embedded within the broader Up2Us Sports sports-based youth development curriculum.

The systematic review process was conducted by a project team consisting of the Project Director and four study screeners. The project team filtered through 2,041 peer-reviewed research articles to a final examination of 39 unique nutrition programs.

Research Questions

- What are the most effective train-the-trainer models for nutrition education programs?
- What nutrition messages and skills related to healthy eating were most common in programs specifically targeting middle school-age students?
- What were the most common formats and delivery methods for programs?
- How receptive were youth to the programs, what feedback was collected from participants and trainers, and what outcomes were measured?

Key Findings

1. Interactive and Ongoing Training Sessions

- The review found that train-the-trainer designs with engaging sessions that allow for role playing, discussion, and problem-solving through potential barriers were particularly well-received. These sessions enable those being trained, such as teachers, coaches, and near-age peers, to practice and apply their newly learned knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the research shows support for program designs that emphasize continued support including training sessions and ongoing assistance.

2. Adaptation to Local Context

- The ability to modify nutrition information and education based on contextual information to best suit the needs of a community is an important consideration when it comes to forming healthy habits. This includes using culturally and geographically relevant examples. Having a deeper understanding of location, culture, environment, food access, and other factors allows specific strategies to be designed to enhance content acceptability and effectiveness.

3. Build Healthy Food Skills

- In addition to teaching youth such content as fruit and vegetable consumption, healthy beverages, and healthy breakfasts, the review also found an important theme of building skills among youth toward making healthy choices. This includes goal setting, identifying healthy options (including reading nutrition labels), and strategizing for healthy choices through awareness of their immediate food environment.

4. Empower Youth to be Healthy Food Advocates

- It is important for youth to feel a sense of relatedness, competency, and autonomy as these are factors for motivation, which is needed to make changes. Several interventions included in this review indicated that youth can be important change agents in their communities. By motivating youth to advocate for health promoting habits, we provide them with a sense of agency and it also allows them to support other youth. When youth are given opportunities to learn from and support one another, and use their voice to be change agents, it cultivates skills such as leadership, advocacy, communication, and teamwork.

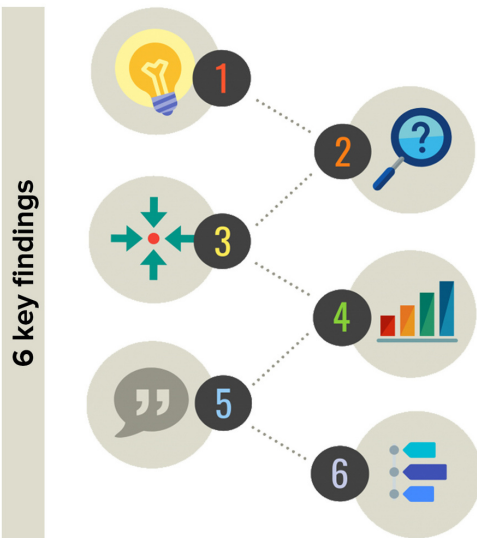
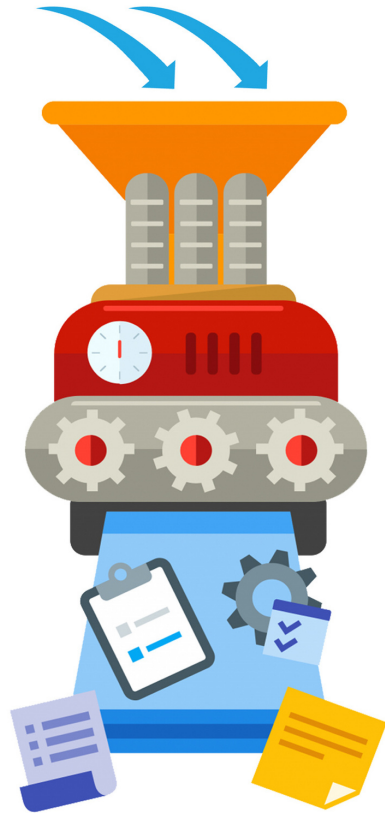
5. Positive and Simple Nutrition Messages

- A recurring theme in the review was the importance of creating simple and positive messages. For instance, promoting water consumption rather than discouraging sugar-sweetened beverage consumption. Encouraging and easy to absorb messages can increase one's confidence in their ability to not only create, but sustain healthy habits.

6. Engage Youth for Feedback

- As with most public health interventions, intervention success is often closely associated with participant acceptability, receptivity, relevance, and other important evaluative measures. In order to know what messages have a lasting impact on healthy habit formation in youth, it's important to hear from youth themselves. As a result, engaging youth for feedback can provide a good indication of whether an intervention will influence the youth habits.

Up2Us Sports filtered through 2,041 research articles for a final examination of 39 unique train-the-trainer nutrition education programs. Through this review, we found the following important themes:



- 1
Hold Interactive and Ongoing Training Sessions

- 2
Adapt Trainings to Local Context

- 3
Build Healthy Food Skills

- 4
Empower Youth to be Healthy Food Advocates

- 5
Use Positive and Simple Nutrition Messages

- 6
Engage Youth for Feedback

