



# SHARE OUR STRENGTH'S COOKING MATTERS



The **goal of Cooking Matters' is:**

To improve

- nutrition knowledge,
- eating habits,
- **cooking** skills,
- **food** safety practices,
- **food** resource management, and
- financial planning skills

of people at risk for hunger so that they can better provide for themselves and their families.

## **Hands-on Cooking Courses**

- Multi-session courses for parents, adults, childcare professionals and families. Each lesson is taught by a team of facilitators with expertise in cooking and nutrition and covers meal preparation, grocery shopping, food budgeting and nutrition. During each week of class, participants take home a bag of groceries to practice the skills they learned in class.

## **Interactive Grocery Store Tours**

- One-time educational tours provide participants with the skills to shop strategically and choose healthier foods in order to prepare balanced meals.

## **\$10 Family Meal Challenge**

- One time challenge encourages participants to shop to prepare a meal for a family of 4 using \$10. The meal must include all 5 food groups. The participants are given \$10 to purchase the ingredients to make the meal at home for their family.

# Evidenced Based

The first-ever long-term evaluation of Cooking Matters conducted by Altarum Institute, from April 2014 to March 2015.

The 1,600+ study participants included families taking a Cooking Matters course and a comparison group of families who did not take the course. They were surveyed before the course began, and three and six months after it finished.

After Cooking Matters, families are...

- More confident in their cooking abilities (10% increase).
- See fewer barriers to making healthy, affordable meals (11% decrease).
- Cooking meals more often, and making meals healthier and more budget-friendly.
- In the short-term (3 months), families are eating more fruit. Over the long-term (6 months), they are eating more vegetables, including non-fried options and green salad.
- Before the course, families “sometimes” worried that food might run out each month; six months later, they “rarely” worried about this.
- Families were 17% more confident in stretching their food dollars (including federal benefits like SNAP and WIC) due to the strategies they learned in Cooking Matters, like planning meals, shopping with a list and comparing unit prices.

Pooler, J. A., Morgan, R. E., Wong, K., Wilkin, M. K., & Blitstein, J. L. (2017). Cooking matters for adults improves food resource management skills and self-confidence among low-income participants. *Journal of nutrition education and behavior*, 49(7), 545-553.

## Collaborators



# Implementation

**Target Population:** Individuals with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities.

## **Typical Settings of Cooking Matters Classes:**

Community based developmental disability service provider facility, typically day programs and sheltered workshops.

## **Reach:**

- Over 500 people with IDD trained on Cooking Matters Adapted Addenda.
- 210 Cooking Matters Instructors were trained.

- **Attend New Partner Training** and order Cooking Matters books and graduation gifts for class from the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.
- **Check out Cooking Kit** from Arkansas Disability & Health Program and request financial assistance for groceries.
- **Before Class 1** – complete participant information form and pretest for all participants.
- **For Each Class** – have the sign in sheet, recipes/handouts, and take home groceries for homework.
- **Class 4** – Grocery Store Tour and/or \$10 Meal Challenge
- **Class 6** – Graduation, complete posttest, and everyone gets a bag of kitchen gadgets from Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. Send the Cooking Kits including the sign in sheet and pre/post tests back to the Arkansas Disability & Health Program.
- Copy of the Sign in Sheet and the **pre/post tests** are shared with Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and data is **entered into Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters Evaluation database.**

# Outcomes

## Recent Study on Behavior Impact

- Participants in 2019
- 127 participants N = 43 after data cleaning.
- 17 men, 25 Women between the ages of 18+, 88% had GED or less education.
- While not enough to be significant, the data does suggest that following the Cooking Matters course participants are making better food choices.
- Participant age does not affect the participant making healthier food choices following the Cooking Matters course.



SHARE OUR STRENGTHS  
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### Implementation and Assessment of the Cooking Matters Program for People with Disabilities in Arkansas

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#### Background

According to the 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey, Arkansas has higher rates of disability than the national average. People with disabilities also report higher obesity rates and lower rates of physical activity than their non-disabled peers. In turn, people with disabilities report two to three times the rates of obesity related chronic diseases.

**A Snapshot of Disability in Arkansas**



24.6% of adults in the US have a disability  
33.1% of adults in Arkansas have a disability

**Chronic Conditions**

Disability	Prevalence	Rate
Diabetes	16.7%	4.7%
High cholesterol	17.6%	10.2%
High blood pressure	17.6%	10.2%
Heart failure	14.4%	4.2%
Stroke	14.4%	5.2%
Low back pain	14.4%	4.4%

#### Methods

Cooking Matters Basic Disability Addenda is a 6 session class for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Classes are limited to 10 participants with at least one Cooking Matters Trainer in a room with handwashing and microwave facilities. Class consists of a brief discussion on nutrition, food safety, cooking utensil basics, food labels, etc. before the group prepares a recipe in class. The food is then consumed together. Students take home the ingredients and recipe to try it again on their own.

AHRA uses a Train the Trainer model to train Leaders to carry out Cooking Matters around the state.

ADHP has available Training Kits that contains all cookware needed to conduct the class and is also able to assist classes in purchasing ingredients.

Cooking Matters Adult curricula participant survey is an pre/post test evaluation tool designed to track changes in participant knowledge, attitudes, skills, confidence, and behavior as a result of the Cooking Matters course. Data is being analyzed to see what, if any, impact the adapted curriculum may have on this specific population, with the hopes of expanding the program and legitimizing the Cooking Matters Basic Disability Addenda.




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#### Early Data

Since 2016 we have trained 172 individuals to carry out Cooking Matters Basic Disability Addenda from disability organizations around the state. We have trained 200 individuals with IDD on the adapted Basic Addenda.

Data has only been collected since December 2018 and in that time we have data from two separate classes of the Basic Cooking Matters Disability Addenda. Only 18 participants are included in this early data analysis, but the data looks promising so far. Participants have shown a **33% increase in confidence in cooking from scratch**, a **51% increase in how often they plan their meals**, and a **20% increase in their confidence in their abilities to cook healthy foods**.

#### Conclusion

A concerted effort to educate people with IDD on nutrition and basic cooking skills is desperately needed. Obesity impacts this specific population at higher rates than people without disabilities. Increased confidence in the kitchen and preparing healthy foods is a great step towards a healthy life. More research is needed regarding nutrition education and obesity among this population.



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# Lessons Learned

- More focused curricula with one nutrition topic, one cooking skill, and one recipe per class.
- Classes are 1 hour.
- Adaptations include how the food is prepared before purchase.
- For many visual recipes and color coded measuring cups and spoons was important for participation.
- From observation, repetition of classes helps participants with IDD become more engaged and involved. Doing more with each class.
- The evaluation is too long and cumbersome for people with IDD even with pictures to enhance understanding.
- This is a class that can be conducted repeatedly bringing in new games, activities, and myplate.gov resources.

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