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#### FUEL FOR FUN PARENT ASSESSMENTS OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLE AVAILABILITY AND MODELING EATING BEHAVIORS SUPPORTIVE OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES SHOW PREDICTIVE VALIDITY WITH TARGETED HEALTHY EATING INDEX COMPONENTS

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**Purpose** Examine ability of Fuel for Fun modeling and self-efficacy/outcome expectancy (SE/OE) assessments related to fruit and vegetable (FV) behaviors and availability in the home to predict Healthy Eating Index (HEI) scores. **Methods** Parents of children participating in Fuel for Fun, a school-based culinary and physical activity intervention, completed online, tested surveys about modeling FV eating behaviors (11 items, possible score 0–33), FV SE/OE (12 items, possible score 12–60) and FV availability in the home (20 items, possible score 0–20). Upon baseline survey completion (n=356) a subset (n=83) completed an internet-based diet assessment (DA) using the ASA24 platform to obtain HEI scores. Linear regression with a priori selected covariates (gender, race, education) examined predictive validity of FV availability, modeling, SE/OE surveys for targeted HEI components.

**Results/Findings** DA participants (mean age 38.0 ± 6.5 y) were mostly white (90%), female (87%), and highly educated. BMI was overweight/obese for 42%. Their demographic characteristics and baseline scores were not significantly different from parents only completing surveys. Genders did not differ for any HEI or parent survey score. At baseline, total HEI ranged from 22.0 – 77.4, mean 55.4 ± 1.4. HEI component mean scores were: total fruit 3.0 ± 0.2; whole fruit 3.4 ± 0.2; total vegetables 3.6 ± 0.1. Modeling mean was 15.0 ± 3.9; SE/OE mean was 52.6 ± 10.0 and FV availability mean was 12.3 ± 2.7. Parent modeling predicted total fruit HEI (P= 0.046) and total vegetable HEI component scores (P= 0.024) in the anticipated direction. SE/OE did not predict any HEI scores. FV availability was positively associated with HEI component scores of whole fruit (P=0.033) and total vegetables (P=0.009). Vegetable availability predicted total vegetable HEI component score (P=0.013) in the anticipated direction. FV availability positively predicted total fruit HEI component score (P=0.01) and fruit availability positively predicted whole fruit HEI component score (P=0.019), but not after adjusting for gender, race, and education. **Conclusions** Modeling of eating behaviors and FV availability predicted nearly all FV HEI component scores independent of race, gender, and education, suggesting that Fuel for Fun parent outcome measures capture behaviors associated with FV intake.