



# *EatPlayGrow*<sup>™</sup> SYNTHESIS REPORT

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Prepared for: The Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM)

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# Introduction: CMOM EPG

- In 2009, the Children's Museum of Manhattan (CMOM) launched its Health Initiative, with the goal of bringing about documented behavioral changes that form the building blocks of healthier lives, and ultimately reduce children's risk of obesity. As part of this Initiative, CMOM developed *EatPlayGrow* (EPG)—an early childhood anti-obesity curriculum—in partnership with the National Institutes of Health (NIH).
- To further the impact of this program and create a cost-effective, scalable model, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation provided a two-year grant to CMOM in 2012. The purpose of the grant was to test the efficacy of CMOM's place-based train-the-trainer model: a six-hour professional development training and complimentary web resource.
  - In this model, Head Start educators in low-income communities in New York City—including the South Bronx and Harlem—receive a six-hour training, access to the *EPG* website, and weekly push emails that link them back to the *EPG* curriculum and other resources on the website.
  - Subsequent to this, these teachers create a one-hour workshop for parents in their communities to educate them on core topics in early childhood anti-obesity health.
- In order to meet the evaluative needs for their *EPG* train-the-trainer program, CMOM contracted *BLiP Research*—a New York-based research firm specializing in children, education, media, and technology—to conduct a multi-phase research protocol.
- This document is an executive summary synthesis of the findings from this project.

# Evaluation Protocol

Phase #	Methodology	Description
1 <i>Exploratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review</li> <li>- Pre-Participation IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze training model and extant research prior to implementation for context, familiarization, and hypothesizing</li> <li>• Examine preconceptions, expectations, and concerns, to be addressed in the subsequent phases of the research</li> </ul>
2 <i>Qualitative Insight</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training Observation</li> <li>- Mini FGIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and analyzing implementation of six-hour the training model</li> <li>• Small focus group interviews immediately subsequent to training model implementation</li> </ul>
3 <i>Quantitative Testing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Post-Participation Surveys</li> <li>- Online Surveys</li> <li>- Online Tracking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requisite written surveys delivered to all training participants</li> <li>• Requisite online surveys for all users of the web platform</li> <li>• Statistical online data tracking for site use, time on task, browsing, etc.</li> </ul>
4 <i>Qualitative Reflection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop Observation</li> <li>- Mini FGIs</li> <li>- Follow-Up IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and analyzing the one-hour workshop events</li> <li>• Small focus group interviews immediately subsequent to workshops</li> <li>• Long-term post-participation interviews examining subsequent behavior</li> </ul>
5 <i>Quantitative Reflection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online Tracking</li> <li>- Post-Participation Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statistical analysis of post-participation web portal/platform use</li> <li>• Requisite written surveys delivered to workshop participants</li> </ul>

# Summary of the Research

Phase	Methodology	Scope	Sample
1 <i>Exploratory</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review</li> <li>- Pre-Participation IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examination of all materials</li> <li>▪ 6 20-minute IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>2 BLiP</b> researchers</li> <li>▪ <b>6</b> Teachers and Administrators from participating Head Start sites</li> </ul>
2 <i>Qualitative Insight</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Training Observation</li> <li>- Mini FGIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observation of 2 trainings</li> <li>▪ 4 15-minute Group Interviews</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>2</b> 6-hour Trainings observed by 2 <b>BLiP</b> researchers</li> <li>▪ <b>16</b> Teachers who attend the trainings</li> </ul>
3 <i>Quantitative Testing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Post-Participation Surveys</li> <li>- Online Surveys</li> <li>- Online Tracking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All training participants</li> <li>▪ EPG site users</li> <li>▪ All EPG site visitors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>124</b> completed surveys</li> <li>▪ <b>44</b> completed surveys</li> <li>▪ <b>300+</b> users</li> </ul>
4 <i>Qualitative Reflection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Workshop Observation</li> <li>- Mini FGIs</li> <li>- Follow-Up IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Observation of 2 workshops</li> <li>▪ 4 15-minute group interviews</li> <li>▪ 7 20-minute IDIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>2</b> 1.5-hour parent/caregiver workshops</li> <li>▪ <b>13</b> Parents/Caregivers</li> <li>▪ <b>7</b> Teachers 4-6 months post-participation</li> </ul>
5 <i>Quantitative Reflection</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Online Tracking</li> <li>- Post-Participation Surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All EPG site visitors</li> <li>▪ All workshop attendees</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>500+</b> users</li> <li>▪ <b>46</b> completed surveys</li> </ul>

# Previous Reports/Instruments

- This is a synthesis summary of all findings from the totality of the research.
- A full report was assembled and presented following each phase of the research. Each of these reports can be downloaded via the links below:
  - **PHASE I** - <https://www.hightail.com/download/UIRTYnV5OC9kMnVHR3NUQw>
  - **PHASE II** - <https://www.hightail.com/download/UIRTYnV5OC9nYU1VV01UQw>
  - **PHASE III** - <https://www.hightail.com/download/UIRTYnV5OC93NUILSk5Vag>
  - **PHASE IV** - <https://www.hightail.com/download/UIRTYnV5OC9laFNwSHNUQw>
  - **PHASE V** - <https://www.hightail.com/download/UIRTYnV5OC9CTW40WjhUQw>
- All instruments used in all areas of the research—surveys, interview guidelines, observation worksheets, etc.—are contained in these reports.
- All statistical analysis, charts, and quantitative data, as well as qualitative findings and verbatim quotes, are also included.

# Findings

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## Overall Headline:

### *EatPlayGrow* Trainings/Site Empower Teachers, Communities

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- The *EatPlayGrow* program of trainings and workshops has been shown to be successful in educating participants and empowering them to creatively and compellingly disseminate the information learned in the communities they serve via community workshops—informing and positively affecting behaviors.
- There is also indication that connection to the *EatPlayGrow* curriculum flows out further from there, with people trained in/exposed to the content sharing information, activities, and the website with others in their spheres of influence.
- The core resource for this further dissemination is the *EatPlayGrow* website, which contains a wealth of information, activities, extensions, etc. The website is witnessing a steady and growing rollout, with many original participants in the trainings and workshops visiting or returning or referring others to do so.

# Participants Had Positive Anticipation of Trainings

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- Prior to their participation, teachers who were scheduled to attend the original six-hour trainings looked forward to the opportunity.
  - They recognized the importance of the subject of early childhood obesity—for the students they teach, for the parents/caregivers of these students, for themselves, for their communities—and wanted to learn what they could do to help.
- Teachers expected the training to cover conventional areas like healthy eating habits, proper portions, and physical activity, but did not anticipate the relevance of proper sleep or bone growth.
  - Counterintuitive, surprising, and illustrative information was noted as being of key importance in creating a compelling training.
  - The EPG training was well aligned here.
- Dynamic, participatory, interactive in-person trainings are favored by teachers.
  - The EPG training was also very well aligned here.



# Teachers' Concerns were Relevant, Mediated

- Prior to their participation, teachers were concerned about a number of notable areas connected to the six-hour *EatPlayGrow* training. The *EatPlayGrow* training successfully resolved many of these areas.
  - **Length:** Full-day trainings are often overly detailed and connected to bureaucratic topics like proper methods of official documentation.
    - Teachers felt like the training was fun and engaging and passed by quickly and pleasantly.
  - **Format:** Full-day trainings like these are often didactic and bland.
    - A great majority of the training—and the most enjoyable elements—were interactive, participatory, hands-on, and intriguing, and contained many fresh discoveries or “ah-ha” moments.
  - **Tech:** The “digital divide” remains. Access to and comfort with the internet is frequently irregular in the schools and communities targeted for the *EatPlayGrow* training. This extends to participating teachers.
    - Introduction to and registration for the EPG website via iPads and internet service provided at the trainings by CMOM diminished this issue. However, some ongoing concern/discomfort remained.
  - **Translating Engagement to Behavior:** Even if the topic is compelling, teachers had concerns that the information presented would be difficult to adapt to their lives and the lives of the communities they serve.
    - The *EatPlayGrow* workshop provided many simple incentives, encouragements, activities, and “tricks” that were easily and readily applicable to teachers’ lives and those of their constituencies.

# Survey Proves Training Was Extremely Successful

Statistical analysis of post-participation surveys demonstrated the training's success:

- **96%** of participants felt that the training successfully informed them of many key issues surrounding early childhood obesity prevention.
- **97%** of participants felt prepared to share what they learned with members of their community—students, parents, caregivers, and others.
- **91%** of participants felt prepared to use the *EatPlayGrow* website.
  - **88%** of participants felt that it was likely that they would visit, or still be visiting, the site six months after the training.
- **91%** of participants (on average) found highly useful the various elements that made up the training.
  - The most compelling and memorable portions of the training were those that were interactive, participatory, and/or surprising.
  - The least compelling were those that were didactic and unidirectional.
- **88%** of participants felt that there was a strong likelihood that, six months subsequent to the training, they would be implementing some element of the training in their classrooms.

# *EatPlayGrow* Website Hosts Many, Increasing Visits

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- According to the most recent Google Analytics data, the *EatPlayGrow* website has been host to well over 1000 (human) sessions since its introduction in the first quarter of 2014.
- About half of these sessions come from new users, half from returning users, indicating that the site continues to grow and attract new users while retaining prior visitors.
- Users stay on the site for an average of nearly five minutes (4:48) during each visit, and visit an average of nearly four different pages (3.74) during their time on the site, indicating a depth and breadth of use.
- iPads were used for access during the initial trainings and workshops. Yet access to the *EatPlayGrow* website via desktop computers and mobile devices accounts for over 80% of total visits, indicating that the vast majority of new and returning users are coming to the site subsequent to their participation in the trainings.
- Lesson plans remain the most popular destination on the site, indicating an ongoing interest in accessing and delivering valid and engaging educational content regarding early childhood obesity prevention.

# *EatPlayGrow* Website Users Satisfied, Sharing

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- Our directional survey data indicates that Visitors to the *EatPlayGrow* site were generally satisfied with their engagement
- Based on survey data, a large majority (**68%**) of respondents reported very positive overall interaction with the *EatPlayGrow* website.
  - The most popular motivators for visiting the site included the sourcing of interactive games, activities, lessons, songs, and videos.
- A similarly large majority (**70%**) found themselves able to navigate the site, and find readily what they were looking for, during each visit.
- The aforementioned digital divide may have impacted on visitors' ability to access, navigate, and interact with the site readily and successfully.
- **80%** of visitors noted that they had shared the site with friends, family members, and other people in their community.

# *EatPlayGrow* Trainings Enjoyable, Educational, Motivating

- Follow-up conversations with teachers—six months after their participation in the six hour *EatPlayGrow* training—indicated that these trainings were highly:
  - **Memorable:** Teachers had strong recall of many aspects of the trainings, especially segments that were interactive and allowed opportunities for themselves and their students to connect directly with information and materials.
  - **Compelling:** Teachers remembered fondly many of the activities presented. More important, they often found the information personally relevant and made changes in their own behavior based on their learning.
  - **Elucidating:** Teachers felt that they garnered a good deal of new and germane information about healthy foods and beverages, the importance of activity, the relevance of sleep, and the effect of food and beverage consumption on kids' bones.
  - **Utilizable:** Teachers implemented a great deal of the information and activities in their classrooms, particularly those interactive elements based in songs, movement, games, sorting, arts and crafts, demonstrations, and books.
  - **Extendible:** Teachers found myriad ways to personalize and extend these activities to suit the specific needs of their students and classrooms.
  - **Shareable:** Where possible, teachers shared the information they learned in the trainings with the parents/caregivers of their students and/or noted students sharing this information with their parents/caregivers. They also shared with their friends and family.

# *EatPlayGrow* Training Meets Goals in Workshops

- Teachers who participated in the six-hour *EatPlayGrow* training did so in part in order to prepare to share and further disseminate—via parent/caregiver workshops in their schools—the information gleaned here.
  - A series of six of these workshops were held in the fall and winter of 2014.
- Survey data proved that these workshops were highly successful, indicating the success of the program.
  - **96%** of workshop participants felt that the workshops informed them successfully of some of the key issues surrounding early childhood obesity prevention.
  - **98%** of workshop participants felt successfully prepared to share the information they learned at the workshops.
  - **78%** of participants (on average) found the various elements of the workshop to be highly useful.
  - **85%** of workshop participants found their introduction to the *EatPlayGrow* website highly satisfactory, and sufficient to allow subsequent navigation.
  - **75%** of participants felt it was highly likely that they would use the *EatPlayGrow* website subsequent to the training.
  - **82%** of participants felt that they would be very likely to still be sharing—six months after the training—the information they learned at the workshops.

# *EatPlayGrow* Parent Workshops Entice, Activate Participants

- Observations of and follow-up conversations with parents during and subsequent to their participation in the one-hour, teacher-led *EatPlayGrow* workshops indicate that these community events were highly:
  - Enjoyable:** Attendees exhibited keen focus and interest. Engagement was physically and verbally demonstrated.
  - Accessible:** Attendees were able to take in and comprehend the information presented. This was particularly true of moments and areas in which they were induced to make new discoveries (e.g. the number of teaspoons of sugar in various beverages, how serving size can conflict with package size, experimenting with new healthier foods, etc.)
  - Compelling:** Interactive segments, as well as the trainers'/teachers' energy and interest was motivating—particularly their stories of personal connection to the topic (in terms of challenges and changes they had made in their own lives).
  - Motivating:** After participating, workshop attendees felt certain that they would want, and be prepared, to share information they learned, as well as to gather and disseminate other information on the subject—including on the *EatPlayGrow* website.
  - Extendible:** Attendees were very intrigued by connecting with community groups, organizations, and institutions that could help them to access information on healthier food options, as well as directly to healthier foods.
    - Healthier food options—like fresh, local produce—and straightforward information on the true (and even basic) nutritional value of foods seemed like rich areas for further exploration. (Some of this is intended to be integrated into a Community Mapping section on the *EatPlayGrow* website.)

## Implications/Recommendations: Digital Divide

- Yet this research indicates that a Digital Divide persists in the schools and communities targeted by this program.
- Teachers in these communities often do not have consistent online access, skills, or updated hardware in their schools, and parents/caregivers often do not have consistent online access, skills, or updated hardware at home or via their mobile devices.
- In order to further the reach of the curriculum, it would seem relevant to analyze this situation and seek out tech or other partnerships to ensure broader access. CMOM is doing just that:
  - CMOM also has future plans to allow further access to *EatPlayGrow.com* by providing public access through their popular CMOM.org website.



## Implications/Recommendations: Further Roll Out

- As evidenced throughout the five phases of this research study, this pilot program was extremely successful in delivering a “train the trainer” model, providing teacher trainings that could serve as a foundation for teachers to deliver community workshops,
- Given that it was a pilot program, the participating centers relied on CMOM’s participation in coordinating and assisting with attendance and logistical support—but not content—at the initial trainings as well as the subsequent workshops.
- As the program rolls out further, the creation of templates for a more self-supporting enterprise will be useful.
  - If these materials are to be available solely on the *EatPlayGrow* website, the aforementioned Digital Divide will also need to be addressed in this area.
- Fortunately, partnerships and means to assist in this broader dissemination are already being explored by CMOM.
  - CMOM has been working with local and national agencies to extend access to this training model. These include: Administration Children’s Services, New York City Department of Education, New York City Department of Health, Department of Homeless Services, National Association for the Education of Young Children, Family Place Libraries, First Book, Association of Children’s Museum, Let’s Move!, Faith and Communities.

# Thank You!

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