Mid-Del Texting Pilot Campaign

Introduction:

- To improve frequency of homemade meals and family mealtime, parents need support via simplified, healthy recipes and meal preparation resources that are conscious of time and cost constraints
- To increase vegetable consumption, especially dark green and red-orange vegetables, use easy dinner-time recipes that include these ingredients and resources for why/how to add to meals
- Why SMS?
    - Vast majority of target population own cell phones and use text messaging
    - Most traffic on ONIE website and FB is from cell phones
    - SMS is quick, short and sent directly to participants, easy to save for later
    - Engage with parents, receive replies, poll responses

Hypothesis: This 10-week pilot SMS intervention will increase the number of homemade meals prepared in households, the number of healthy "ONIE" recipes prepared, and the number of times vegetables are consumed in a homemade meal of those who receive recipes and diet-related text messages as opposed to the control group.

Specific Aims:

Improve the home food environment related to:

- To increase the number of times families prepare meals at home.
- To increase the number of vegetables consumed in family meals prepared at home.
- To increase the number of ONIE recipes cooked at home.

Methods:

Study Design

Pre- and Post-intervention surveys of intervention and control group participants, as well as a qualitative assessment of the intervention.

Recruitment and Participants

The five participating schools were:

Intervention *TastyText* Sites:

- Midwest City (MWC - 86.5% FRL) 871 student enrollment
- Del City (Del City - 90.9% FRL) 647 student enrollment

Control *Ready2Read* Sites:

- Epperly Heights (Del City - 100% FRL) 646 student enrollment
- Steed (MWC - 79.7% FRL) 418 student enrollment
- Country Estates (MWC - 86.3% FRL) 445 student enrollment

Donations & incentives

Incentives were provided by Feed the Children, our community partner & main donor for the pilot program. They donated books (Ready2Read sites) & the ingredients to make the featured recipe: Fiesta Casserole (rice, beans, enchilada sauce & canned corn) for +500 bags of groceries (TastyText sites).





Recipe & Food Catering

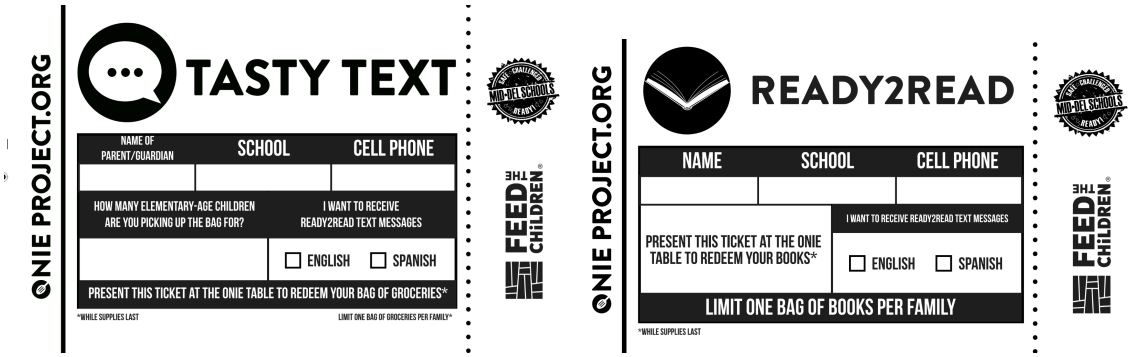
Fiesta Casserole was the feature recipe for the TastyText kick-off event. Each ONIE bag was stuffed with a print copy of the recipe to make at home and the shelf-stable ingredients.



Tickets

ONIE created 4 versions of tickets (TastyText & Ready2Read in both English & Spanish). They were given to teachers from participating (control & intervention sites). Teachers were instructed to give them to parents in the one-on-one meetings during the Parent-Teacher Conference. With the ticket, parents could claim a bag of groceries (TastyText- intervention sites) to make the Fiesta Casserole recipe, or a bag of books (Ready2Read- control sites). We collected demographic information, including their phone numbers, needed to enroll them into the program. After ONIE entered the information from the tickets into the texting platform called SimpleTexting®, participants would get a “Welcome Text” with the OPT-out option.

ENGLISH VERSIONS



SPANISH VERSIONS





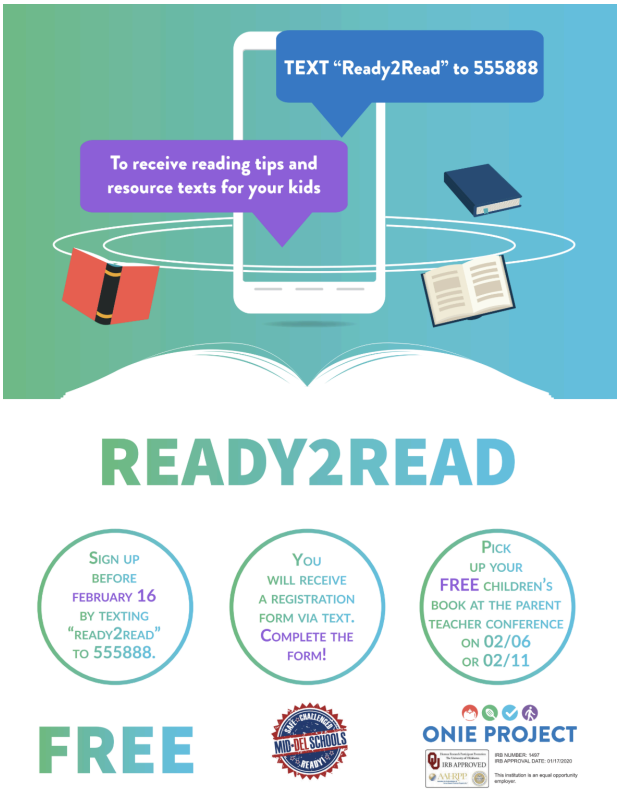
Enrollment

Parents/guardians had two options for enrollment in the texting program. In the first option, they could text a keyword to a specified number (TastyText to 555888 or Ready2Read to 555888). After texting the keyword, parents would automatically receive a text message with a link to the pre-survey to complete enrollment. In the second option, parents who participated in parent-teacher conferences were able to enroll by filling out a paper “ticket” where they could provide their name, phone number, the number of children in their household, and preferred language.

Parents who attended conference events received a tote bag with a flyer describing how to sign up for the program. Parents from intervention schools also received all recipes that were featured in the text message intervention in the form of recipe cards placed in the tote bags. Recruitment at the events was incentivized by receiving either free groceries provided or free books at conference events depending on whether the parent/caregiver was at a control or intervention school.

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Intervention Description
The intervention consisted of a series of 20 text messages delivered over 10 weeks (2 per week) which enrolled participants received on their mobile phones. Messages included various healthy living tips and calls-to-action with links to healthy ONIE recipes and long-form content (blogs) on the ONIE website. Four of these intervention messages were evaluative in nature via polls to assess whether or not participants were cooking featured recipes at home.
The control group received text messages containing educational tips and calls-to-action with resources for reading their children at the same dose including four evaluative messages.

Results

Overall, 202 participated in the TastyText program, and 400 participated in the Ready2Read Program. All participants were given an opportunity to complete a pre- and post-intervention survey, however the response rate was 19.4% for TastyText and 17.2% for Ready2Read. Even with the small sample size, we did observe a significant increase in the number of times that vegetables were served at the evening meal among those participating in the TastyText program, and no such change was observed among the Ready2Read. The number of times that dinner was prepared at home increased among both groups, and the number of times that takeout was served declined. This change may have been due to change in evening meal habits because of the pandemic. Regardless, 90% of respondents among both groups reported wanting to continue receiving SMS messages.