THE FOOD FUN PROGRAM:
A QUALITATIVE EVALUATION

A Thesis Submitted to
the College of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Science
in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition

University of Saskatchewan
Saskatoon

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Spring 2002

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of the Food Fun Program on participants. Specifically, this qualitative evaluation explored what program experiences children aged 8–12 integrated into their lives at home, as well as what inhibited and facilitated integration. The Food Fun Program aimed to teach children basic food preparation and cooking skills, food and kitchen safety, and basic nutrition in a fun, safe, and interactive manner. Food preparation and cooking, games, crafts, outside activities, food experiments, and field trips were the basis of daily activities in this one-week summer day camp. Participant observation of the camps, focus groups with children, document review, and interviews with the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre director and camp counselors were used to gain an understanding of the program, to establish rapport with the interview participants, and to obtain information for subsequent interviews with parents and children. Qualitative interviews were the main source of data collection for exploring the research questions. Children and/or their parents were interviewed six weeks after children participated in the camp. Interviews were conducted with children and parents, individually, in their homes. Observations were recorded using field notes and were analyzed for key program activities. Interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Parent and child interviews were separately analyzed for common themes and categories. The results indicate that children integrated camp recipes into their lives at home and that children were more confident, involved in different food-
related activities, more aware of nutrition, and more willing to try new foods after the camp. The results indicate that lack of time, involvement in other activities, and parents' restriction of food-related activities may have inhibited integration of camp experiences. The results also indicate that encouragement and help from parents and the hands-on nature of the Food Fun Program may have facilitated integration of camp experiences into life at home. The findings suggest that hands-on cooking experiences and parent involvement are important components of nutrition programs for children. These findings will guide the NRVC in setting direction for the program.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express sincere thanks to:

- Dr. Shawna Berenbaum, my research supervisor, for her ongoing insight, guidance, and support. Without it, my experience would not have been as professionally or personally rewarding;

- my advisory committee members, Dr. Gwenna Moss and Dr. Linda Suveges, for their readily available feedback and encouragement;

- as well as the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition and the College of Graduate Studies and Research for help in financing my studies through a Graduate Teaching Fellowship, the Douglas and Merle Bocking Award, and the Hope Hunt Scholarship.
DEDICATION

To my husband, Jamie, for his never-ending love and support.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

PERMISSION TO USE i
ABSTRACT ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iv
DEDICATION v
TABLE OF CONTENTS vi
LIST OF TABLES xi
LIST OF FIGURES xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS xiii

1. INTRODUCTION 1
   1.1 Introduction 1
   1.2 The Food Fun Program 1
   1.3 Problem 2
   1.4 Purpose 2
   1.5 Research Questions 3
   1.6 Significance 3

2. LITERATURE REVIEW 4
   2.1 Introduction 4
   2.2 Food and Nutritional Intake 4
   2.3 Food Preparation and Selection 6
   2.4 Influences on Behaviour 7
2.5 Nutrition Programs Evaluated 7
2.6 Successful Components of Nutrition Programs 9
2.7 Evaluation Research 10
2.8 Qualitative Paradigm 12
2.9 Summary 14

3. METHODS 15

3.1 Introduction 15
3.2 Researcher’s Story 15
3.3 Sampling Procedure 18
3.4 Recruiting Procedures 20
3.5 Participants 21
3.6 Data Collection Procedures 25
  3.6.1 Document Review 25
  3.6.2 Observation 26
  3.6.3 Focus Groups 29
  3.6.4 Interviews 30
    3.6.4.1 NRVC Director and Camp Counselors 32
    3.6.4.2 Parents 33
    3.6.4.3 Children 34
  3.6.5 Access and Rapport 38
3.7 Data Analysis Procedures 41
3.8 Trustworthiness 45
3.9 Ethics 48
3.10 Summary

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Food Fun Camp

4.2.1 Overview

4.2.2 Enrollment

4.2.3 Program Setting

4.2.4 Typical Daily Activities

4.2.5 Food-Related Concepts and Skills

4.3 Parents

4.3.1 Overview of Categories

4.3.2 Context of Food-Related Activities at Home

4.3.3 Major Themes

4.3.3.1 Perception of Food Fun Camp

4.3.3.2 Integrated Food Fun Camp Experiences

4.3.3.3 Factors that Influenced Food-Related Activities

4.4 Children

4.4.1 Overview of Categories

4.4.2 Context of Food-Related Activities at Home

4.4.3 Major Themes

4.4.3.1 Perception of Food Fun Camp

4.4.3.2 Integrated Food Fun Camp Experiences

4.4.3.3 Factors that Influenced Food-Related Activities
4.5  Summary
    4.5.1 Food Fun Camp 107
    4.5.2 Parents 107
    4.5.3 Children 110
5.   CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 112
    5.1 Introduction 112
    5.2 Research Question 1 112
        5.2.1 Research Question 1.1 113
        5.2.2 Research Question 1.2 114
    5.3 Recommendations to the NRVC 116
        5.3.1 Engage Parents 116
        5.3.2 Reorganize Camp Cookbook 118
        5.3.3 Affirm Skills Learned at Camp 118
        5.3.4 Maintain Camp Format 119
        5.3.5 Revisit Goals and Objectives 119
    5.4 Limitations 120
    5.5 Future Research 121
    5.6 Implications for Professionals 121
REFERENCES 123
APPENDICES 128
   Appendix A  Food Fun Program Goals and Objectives 129
   Appendix B  Invitation Letter 130
   Appendix C  Interest Form 132
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appendix</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Demographic Profile</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Focus Group Interview Guide</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Focus Group Facilitator Guide</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Counselor Interview Guide</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Parent Interview Guide</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Child Interview Guide</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Audit Report</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Confidentiality Agreement</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Counselor Consent</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Parent Consent</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Child Assent</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>Parent Transcript Release</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Child Transcript Release</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Counselor Data Release</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Ethical Approval</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1  Demographic Profile of Families who Participated in Parent Interviews  24
Table 4.1  Parent Categories and Subcategories  66
Table 4.2  Children Categories and Subcategories  95
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3.1 Recruitment and Degree of Involvement of Study Participants 22
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NRVC    Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Evaluation research is seen as an essential component in the development, production, and implementation of all nutrition education programs (Achterberg, 1988). In fact, evaluation should be incorporated into the entire nutrition education strategy and should be conducted for all types of interventions (Oshaug, 1996).

The Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre (NRVC) within the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition at the University of Saskatchewan offers several nutrition education programs. Program evaluation is seen as an integral part of every program offered. The Food Fun Program is one education program offered by the NRVC and was the focus of this research.

1.2 The Food Fun Program

The Food Fun Program is a five-day summer camp for children 8–12 years old. The focus of the camp is fun with food, cooking, and nutrition. Children are taught basic food preparation and cooking skills, food and kitchen safety, and basic nutrition in an interactive, hands-on environment. Food preparation and cooking, games, crafts, outside activities, food experiments, and field trips are incorporated into the daily activities. Camps run from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. Camps are facilitated by upper-year nutrition students. The cost of the program is $150.00 per child per week. The Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Center (NRVC) developed the program and has offered several camps every summer since 1998.
1.2 Problem

The Food Fun Program aims to teach children basic cooking skills and nutrition in a fun, safe, and interactive manner. Although several goals and objectives guide the program (Appendix A), previous evaluations and observations indicated that the Food Fun Program may have had broader influences on its participants than intended. Most programs are evaluated based on their specific goals and objectives, ignoring the unintended effects the program may have on its participants. However, possible unintended effects can be significant and should be considered with respect to ongoing program planning and implementation. For these reasons, it was important to explore the possible unintended effects of the Food Fun Program. It was not known to what extent the Food Fun Program, intentionally or unintentionally, impacted the lives of the participants—and specifically what, if anything, participants “took home” from the program. In addition, it was not known what aspects of the program or what aspects of participants’ lives influenced integration of program experiences into participants’ daily lives.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the Food Fun Program experiences children integrated into their daily lives after participating in the program. Experiences were described from the perspectives of the program participants (i.e., the children) and their parents. “Integrate” was defined as “to incorporate into a larger unit” (Webster’s, 1981), the larger unit being food-related activities at home.
1.4 Research Questions

1. What Food Fun Program experiences did participants integrate into their lives?

1.1 What inhibited integration of program experiences into participants' lives?

1.2 What facilitated integration of program experiences into participants' lives?

1.5 Significance

The Food Fun Program has been operating since 1998. Formative evaluation, both formal and informal, was carried out in previous years. As a result, the program activities were well established. However, no formal information regarding the impact of the Food Fun Program was available. Information obtained through careful data collection and analysis—specifically exploring what the participants “took home” from the program—will help the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre set direction and enhance decision making about the program. In the future, the results of this study may also be used to design a more focused outcome evaluation of the Food Fun Program.

There are several broader applications of this research. The information may be helpful for others who are 1) developing or implementing nutrition-related programs for children, 2) planning qualitative evaluations, or 3) conducting research with children.

In addition, this study was significant to the researcher. I gained knowledge about qualitative evaluation and research, knowledge about important components of nutrition programs for children, and awareness of the complexity of families’ lives.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

My search and review of the literature revealed several issues regarding children, nutrition, and education programs, as well as information regarding qualitative evaluation. Specifically, issues related to children’s food and nutritional intake, food preparation and selection, and influences on children’s food behaviors were reviewed. Literature regarding evaluated nutrition programs for children and components of children’s programs that make them successful were useful in guiding the evaluation of the Food Fun Program. Insight into evaluation and qualitative research was also important.

2.2 Food and Nutritional Intake

There is increasing awareness of the importance of diet for health promotion and disease prevention (Melnik, Rhoades, Wales, Cowell, & Wolfe, 1998). Diets high in fat and low in fiber and complex carbohydrates are linked to increased risk for coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some forms of cancer (Melnik et al., 1998). Higher intakes of fruits and vegetables seem to be associated with a lower risk of cancer (McPherson, Montgomery, & Nichaman, 1995). Antioxidant vitamins found in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of coronary heart disease (McPherson et al., 1995). To reduce the risk of developing osteoporosis, children need adequate calcium intake for linear growth and to achieve peak bone mass (McPherson et al., 1995). Nutrition during childhood is linked with the occurrence of cancer, obesity, and cardiovascular
disease in adulthood (Brady, Lindquist, Herd, & Goran, 2000). Awareness of the importance of diet has led to concern about the food consumption patterns of school children (Melnik et al., 1998).

Several studies indicate that children's food and nutritional intakes are not at recommended levels for good health. A study of children living in Saskatoon indicated that 8–15 year olds consumed fewer fruits and vegetables than the 5–10 servings recommended in Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating (Whiting, Colleaux, & Bacchetto, 1995). In this same study, 10–12 year olds were low in consumption of milk products. Children in grades two and five from public and private schools in New York City consumed fewer breads, fruits, and vegetables than recommended in the American Food Guide Pyramid and more fat and energy than recommended for health and weight maintenance (Melnik et al., 1998). In a review of government- and industry-sponsored national surveys and scientific literature, American children consumed only about half of the recommended number of servings of fruit and vegetables per day (McPherson et at, 1995). This same review suggested that American children over six years of age need to increase their calcium intake. A study that compared the dietary intakes of Caucasian and African-American children aged 7–14 to the American Food Guide Pyramid found that very few of these children met the food group recommendations (Brady et al., 2000). Only 5% met the recommended 2–4 servings of fruit, 20% met the recommended 3–5 servings of vegetables, and only 9% met the recommended 2–3 servings of dairy products. On the other hand, Shatenstein and Ghadirian (1996) found that Montreal French-Canadian children and adolescents consumed nutritionally adequate diets compared to daily Recommended Nutrient Intakes. However, among
children with inadequate intakes (29% of the sample), energy, niacin, and calcium were observed to be low.

2.3 Food Preparation and Selection

Children seem to be somewhat responsible for making their own food choices and preparing food. Crockett and Sims (1995) report that American children are being given more and more responsibility for making their own food decisions. Most of the children in Baranowski and colleagues' (1993) focus groups reported that they participated in some type of food preparation. Almost all of these 4th and 5th grade children reported making their own breakfast. In a study of children in New York, a high proportion of the children in the study, particularly those in grade five, were consuming meals prepared by themselves or other children (Melnik et al., 1998). This practice was significantly related to a decreased consumption of fruits and vegetables (Melnik et al., 1998). According to Frank (1994), a report published by the American Dietetic Association in 1991 indicated that about 65% of U.S. children in grades four to eight chose their own breakfast, 46% selected their own lunch, and 74% selected their snacks. Many of these children (87%) were responsible for cooking or preparing some meals, with 80% preparing their own breakfast. Robinson (2000) interviewed 9 year old children in the United Kingdom and found that these children perceived that adults had a high degree of control over both what and how much they ate. However, nine out of every 10 children in this study believed they had some control over breakfast and two-thirds believed they had some control over their snacks.

According to McPherson and colleagues' (1995) review, children seem to understand the link between nutrition and health. However, translation of this
knowledge into behavior is incomplete. They recommend that emphasis needs to be placed on understanding the barriers to behavior change in order to facilitate children’s transfer of knowledge into practice.

2.4 Influences on Behaviour

Several forces influence children’s eating patterns. A study of dietary behaviours among 4th grade children found that gender, race, fruit and vegetable availability at home and school, self-efficacy belief for selecting low-fat foods, and involvement in meal preparation contributed to variance in dietary exposures to food groups in the American Food Guide Pyramid (Corwin, Sargent, Rheume, & Saunders, 1999). Melnik et al. (1998) found that children’s food consumption was affected by participating in school lunch, skipping meals, children being responsible for meal preparation, and by socioeconomic characteristics (i.e., household structure and race/ethnicity). Fifth grade children who consumed meals prepared by themselves or another child ate fewer servings of fruits and vegetables daily. Crockett and Sims (1995) reported that eating with family and food availability at school contribute to children’s development of healthful eating habits. A child’s prior eating history, parents’ food buying habits, family income, ethnic background, and other factors all interact with the knowledge gained through a nutrition education program to codetermine behavior, making it difficult to clearly attribute changes in behavior to a specific program (St. Pierre, 1982).

2.5 Nutrition Programs Evaluated

Many nutrition programs for children have been evaluated as evidenced by Contento and colleagues’ (1995) review of 43 studies that were published, over a 15
An outcome evaluation found that cooking experiences had a positive effect on 1) knowledge in both younger and older children, 2) on behavioral intention in younger children, and 3) on cooking self-efficacy in older children (Liquori, Koch, Contento, & Castle, 1998). This evaluation compared cooking experiences as an educational strategy to other forms of active participation in kindergarten to grade six classrooms.

Although nutrition education should be an important component of education in schools (Corwin et al., 1999), community programs, such as after-school programs or camps, may be important for reaching children outside of school (Lytle & Achterberg, 1995). An evaluation of a summer food preparation and nutrition education program for children 8–12 years old found that the program was effective in producing knowledge gains with respect to food safety, food preparation, and nutrition (Winter, Stanton, & Boushey, 1999).

Connor et al. (1986) asked parents of children who had participated in an after-school cardiovascular health education and fitness program if they noticed any changes in their child’s knowledge or behavior that could be attributed to the program. The results of this questionnaire indicated that changes in knowledge, such as more awareness about heart conditions, knowing what foods are heart healthy, basic knowledge about the body, and the importance of exercise carried over into changes in the children’s behavior at home. Parents reported that at home children exercised...
more, acted more self-confident, had better eating habits, more energy to help clean the house, were more outgoing, and shopped for healthy foods at the grocery store.

2.6 Successful Components of Nutrition Programs

There are several components that seem to make nutrition education programs for children successful. Active hands-on involvement in food-based activities is one such component (Contento et al., 1995; Lytle & Achterberg 1995). Exposure to foods in a positive social context is another important feature of nutrition education programs, especially for elementary school-aged children (Contento et al., 1995). With respect to young children, involving the family is also important (Contento et al., 1995). Lastly, learning increases when subject matter is presented in a variety of formats (Lytle & Achterberg, 1995).

Children need guidance to help them establish healthful eating patterns. Healthy eating habits formed early in life have the potential to persist into adulthood and can help to prevent or delay chronic disease conditions (Crockett & Sims, 1995). Skills training and self-efficacy are extremely important as children take on more responsibility for meal preparation and food selection at home, in school, and at stores and restaurants (Melnik et al., 1998). Improving children’s confidence in their ability to select lower fat foods, to prepare healthy meals and snacks, and to positively influence their parents’ food purchases should be targeted through skill-building activities and strategies (Corwin et al., 1999). Skills training to improve food consumption patterns and promote health should begin with children in the early elementary school grades (Melnik et al., 1998).
2.7 Evaluation Research

"A working definition for evaluation is the process of inquiry into the performance of a program" (Dignan & Carr, 1992, p.143). Evaluation can also be defined as "any effort to increase human effectiveness through systematic data-based inquiry" (Patton, 1990, p.11). When one examines and judges the achievements and effectiveness of a program, one is engaged in evaluation (Patton, 1990). When this examination of effectiveness is conducted systematically through careful data collection and analysis, one is engaged in evaluation research (Patton, 1990).

Evaluation is applied research. This distinguishes evaluation research from basic academic or experimental research (Patton, 1990). Evaluation research is a general process of describing and judging in order to determine the value of a program (Achterberg, 1988) while experimental research systematically examines and analyzes specific evidence in order to contribute to scientific knowledge (Talmage, Hughes, & Each, 1978).

Evaluation research typically assesses what has occurred as a result of the implementation of a program (Dignan & Carr, 1992). The purpose of this assessment is to inform action, enhance decision-making, and apply knowledge to solve problems (Patton, 1990; Talmage et al., 1978). Evaluation research is judged by its usefulness in making programs more effective and by its practical utility to decision-makers (Patton, 1990).

Evaluation is a necessary part of health education programs (Dignan & Carr, 1992). Evaluation is needed for monitoring the efficacy of programs, to aid in the planning of future programs, and to provide evidence of the value of programs (Dignan
Health education programs influence target populations through planned activities (process) that may have immediate as well as more long-term effects or outcomes (Dignan & Carr, 1992).

Health education evaluation should focus on the effects on clients and deal with process and/or outcomes (Dignan & Carr, 1992). Outcome evaluation focuses on the effect of program activities on the participants (Dignan & Carr, 1992; Posavac & Carey, 1997). However, examining the process dimensions of a program is also essential in explaining why a program does or does not work (Edwards, Mullis, & Clarke, 1986). It is important to collect data on program activities, program delivery, program participants, and agency characteristics that may affect program implementation. This information will help to explain the effects of the program on the participants.

Quantitative evaluation has been the conventional approach to inquiry about the performance of a program (Dignan & Carr, 1992). Randomized field experiments employing quantified observations were deemed the ideal design in evaluation research (Broughton, 1991). However, experimental designs require control of program variables and thus are unable to account for the dynamic nature of human service programs (Edwards et al., 1986). In addition, these types of evaluations often do not provide program planners with detailed insight as to how or why changes were achieved (Achterberg, 1988). Difficulties in executing a conventional experimental design under field conditions and the awareness that traditional evaluation methodologies were often failing to detect positive program outcomes has led many evaluators to look to qualitative methods for appropriate new evaluation techniques (Broughton, 1991).
Program evaluation has tended to focus on measuring the achievement of specific program goals and objectives. The unintended or unanticipated effects, however, are frequently as important as the intended effects (Talmage et al., 1978). Qualitative techniques have grown more attractive as evaluators have confronted the need to do more than confirm the presence of anticipated outcomes (Broughton, 1991). Qualitative approaches are capable of detecting processes and outcomes, both positive and negative, that were not anticipated by program planners (Achterberg, 1988; Broughton, 1991).

Qualitative evaluation is based on the need to discover rather than to test (Dignan & Carr, 1992). It seeks to produce statements describing the processes and experiences that result from participation in a program (Dignan & Carr, 1992). These descriptions are usually obtained from program participants and staff. Participants’ descriptions of what actually took place during a program can be highly useful for determining which program components contribute to the program’s successful outcomes (Broughton, 1991).

The potential of a qualitative approach to evaluation is largely untapped in nutrition education (Achterberg, 1988) and yet many evaluation projects would benefit from the selective use of qualitative techniques at some point and to some extent (Broughton, 1991).

2.8 Qualitative Paradigm

The qualitative approach is based on a "naturalistic" philosophy (Achterberg, 1988). From a naturalist’s point of view, reality is constructed and shaped by the human mind, and because people vary, there are multiple realities in the world. Therefore, all
inquiries are value- and context-bound. This philosophical view provided the basis for the use of theory, the formulation of objectives, and the selection of methods in this study.

According to Patton (1990), qualitative inquiry has several elements. It is naturalistic, inductive, and holistic, involves personal contact and insight, assumes dynamic systems, has context sensitivity and design flexibility, and generates qualitative data.

Qualitative researchers observe events as they occur “naturally” and do not attempt to artificially manipulate programs (Achterberg, 1988; Patton, 1990). They study programs as they occur in the “real world”. This preserves the natural variation exhibited in human behavior (Achterberg, 1988).

Qualitative methods are oriented toward exploration, discovery, and inductive logic (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990). In fact, this is a major strength of qualitative research (Maxwell, 1996). The inductive nature of qualitative inquiry allows the researcher to make sense of a situation without imposing pre-existing expectations on the program under study (Broughton, 1991; Patton, 1990). Qualitative researchers also strive to understand a program as a whole rather than to reduce it to a few discrete variables (Patton, 1990).

Qualitative approaches emphasize the importance of direct and personal contact with the people in the programs under study (Patton, 1990). This contact helps the researcher to understand the program and see the participants’ perspectives. The researcher him- or herself is usually the main data collection instrument (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Posavac & Carey, 1997).
Qualitative research is an emergent process. While the design of a qualitative evaluation will specify an initial focus and plans for data collection, the naturalistic and inductive nature of the inquiry makes it impossible and inappropriate to finalize the processes beforehand (Patton, 1990). Therefore, the design may change as the evaluation unfolds.

Qualitative inquiry should be used when little is known about a phenomenon or when research questions pertain to understanding or describing a particular phenomenon or event about which little is known (Morse & Field, 1995). Qualitative inquiry usually answers questions pertaining to what an experience is like and researchers usually approach a topic by asking “what is going on here?” (Morse & Field, 1995). Qualitative inquiry is especially useful when attempting to describe a program from the participant’s point of view (Morse & Field, 1995).

2.9 Summary

Many children are eating fewer fruits, vegetables, and dairy products than recommended while at the same time becoming more responsible for food selection and preparation. A variety of demographic, socioeconomic, and environmental factors affect children’s eating patterns and behaviors, which may inhibit and/or facilitate changes in behavior. Previous evaluations of nutrition education programs for children have shown positive changes in children and there are several components of programs that may attribute to these positive outcomes. Evaluation is an important component of all nutrition programs. Many programs would benefit from the use of qualitative evaluation techniques at some point in the evaluation process.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The Food Fun Program was evaluated using a qualitative approach. The flexibility to explore both the positive and negative unintended impact of the program from the participants’ perspectives fit well with the purpose of this evaluation. Outcome evaluation was used to determine in what way participants felt the program impacted their lives.

The evaluation of the Food Fun Program followed Patton’s (1987) description of qualitative evaluation:

Qualitative evaluation data begin as raw, descriptive information about programs and people in programs. The evaluator visits the program to make firsthand observations of program activities, sometimes even engaging personally in those activities as a “participant observer”. The evaluator talks with participants and staff about their experiences and perceptions. Records and documents are usually also examined. The data from these interviews, observations, and documents are then organized into major themes, categories and case examples through content analysis. (p. 7)

3.2 Researcher’s Story

To conduct qualitative research, it is imperative that the researcher be aware of his or her own perspective, bias, and/or agenda (Morse & Field, 1995). This is especially important since the qualitative researcher is the primary instrument for data collection (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse & Field, 1995; Posavac & Carey, 1997).

Before starting graduate studies, I was working as a public health nutritionist. My focus was on planning, implementing, and evaluating nutrition programs that
protected, promoted, and supported the nutritional well-being of the people in my service area. It was my goal to choose a research project that would help me gain skills valuable to my role as a public health nutritionist.

In my role as a public health nutritionist, I implemented and co-ordinated a summer cooking and nutrition program similar to the Food Fun Camp. Parents of children who participated in my program told me stories about their children’s behaviour at home during the program. One parent told me that her child instructed her father, who was attempting to cut a cake, that he could not use the knife he had just dropped on the floor. Another parent told me her child explained that the potato chips they were having as part of their evening meal were not part of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating. This surprised and intrigued me, and inspired me to investigate the possibility of evaluating the Food Fun Camp offered at the University of Saskatchewan.

I also chose to evaluate the Food Fun Program for several personal reasons: (1) to increase my knowledge of program evaluation, (2) to improve my skills in qualitative research, (3) to conduct practical research, and (4) to increase my knowledge of nutrition education programs for children. These reasons were and still are relevant to my role as a public health nutritionist and describe my personal agenda for conducting this research.

The Food Fun Program evaluation seemed to be a feasible research project. It fit within my time and resource constraints and I was able to gain access to the program because my research supervisor, who as NRVC Director managed the Food Fun Program, was supportive of my idea.
I believe that primary prevention and health promotion strategies are the best ways to protect the health of the people in our communities. I believe that in order for primary prevention and health promotion strategies to be most successful they need to start early in life. I believe that young children are capable of making choices that affect their health. I believe that children today are given more responsibility to make those types of decisions and that they need guidance to help make appropriate choices. Because of these beliefs, I see value in initiatives like the Food Fun Program. Knowing this, I was sure to listen very carefully to what my research participants had to say about the program so I could feel confident that the results were based on their perceptions and not only mine. I also took steps, such as engaging in peer debriefing, consulting with my research committee, and hiring an auditor, to ensure I remained open to unexpected data and that the results of the study were grounded in the data.

My experience as a qualitative researcher was also important to this study. The quality of information obtained depended on my knowledge and skill (Kvale, 1996; Patton, 1990). I obtained extensive theory and background regarding qualitative research through my course work but prior to this study I had limited experience in practice. The opportunities I did have to practice my skills as a qualitative interviewer, in both my course work and another research project in which I was involved, were with adults only. My direct experience interviewing children, for the purposes of research, was very limited. Because the main research method in this study was interviewing (adults and children), I practiced interviewing both adults and children prior to the actual data gathering period. This practice was obtained through pilot interviews with
past child participants of the program and their parents. As expected, my interviewing skills continued to improve with subsequent study interviews.

3.3 Sampling Procedure

Sampling problems in qualitative research usually revolve around the selection of locations and times of observation and in the choice of interview participants (Broughton, 1991). The purpose of sampling in qualitative research is to discover and describe categories of a phenomenon (Achterberg, 1988) and to facilitate learning a great deal about issues of central importance to the research (Patton, 1990). Qualitative research typically focuses on relatively small samples, selected purposefully (Patton, 1990).

Purposeful sampling is a strategy in which particular settings, persons, or events are selected deliberately in order to provide important information in relation to the research questions at hand (Maxwell, 1996). The logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth (Patton, 1990). There are several different strategies for purposefully selecting information-rich cases (Patton, 1990). One way to purposefully sample is by deliberately selecting cases, individuals, or situations that are known to be typical (Maxwell, 1996). In this study, typical case sampling was used to select camps.

In describing a program to people not familiar with the program, it can be helpful to provide a qualitative profile of one or more "typical" cases (Patton, 1990), or in this study, typical camps. These cases are selected with the cooperation of key informants, such as program staff, who can help identify what is typical (Patton, 1990). The purpose of a qualitative profile is to describe and illustrate what is typical about the
program, not to make generalized statements about the experiences of all participants (Patton, 1990).

There are no standard rules for sample size in qualitative research. Sample size depends on the research questions, the purpose of the study, how the findings will be used, and what is feasible given available time and resources (Patton, 1990). For this evaluation, three typical camps were chosen from the seven camps planned for the Food Fun Program in summer 2000. Three camps were considered sufficient for describing a typical camp as the program activities were previously well established and were repeated at each camp. In addition, the same two counselors facilitated each camp, thereby increasing the likelihood that the camp activities remained consistent. Possible atypical situations that arose were also accounted for by including three camps.

The NRVC director indicated, based on previous program years, that a typical camp had approximately 8–10 children. Although the Food Fun Program had camps ranging from 3–15 children in the past, the dynamics of the camp changed drastically at these extremes. Camps usually had both boys and girls ranging in age from 8–12 years, but typically more girls than boys. The first camp was not selected for the evaluation, as it was considered to be less typical. During the first camp of the summer, program staff were getting acquainted with their roles and fine tuning activities. The fourth, sixth, and seventh camps were chosen for the evaluation. All camps except the first were full this summer. Therefore, the camps selected for the evaluation had the maximum number of participants, twelve. The fourth camp ran from July 17–21, 2000 and had children ranging in age from 7–12 years, including 11 females and one male. The sixth camp had children ranging in age from 8–12 years, including nine females and three males, and
ran from August 7–11, 2000. The seventh camp ran from August 14–18, 2000 and had one male and 11 female children ranging in age from 8–11 years.

3.4 Recruiting Procedures

Participants are usually those who are willing to talk and have established a relationship of trust with the researcher (Morse & Field, 1995). The NRVC Director was involved from study inception. The Food Fun Program staff (camp counselors), the children who participated in the selected camps, and the parents of these children were also invited to participate in the Food Fun Camp evaluation. The camp counselors were verbally invited to be interviewed and both agreed to participate in the study. The children and their parents were invited to participate via letter.

All children who were registered for the three selected camps and their parents were invited to participate in the evaluation. An invitation letter (Appendix B), including a form to indicate interest in participating in the study (Appendix C), was mailed to parents of children registered for the selected camps. The invitation letter and interest form were mailed one to two weeks prior to the start of each selected camp. The letter and form were mailed as part of a regular package of information about the camp that was sent to parents by the camp counselors. Parents were asked in the invitation letter to return the interest form on the first day of camp, indicating which if any portions of the study (i.e., children’s focus group, children’s interview, and/or parent’s interview) they were interested in participating. If the interest form was not returned by the second day of camp, I called parents and verbally asked them to participate in the study. Thirty-four invitation letters were mailed. Twenty-one families agreed to
participate in the study to some degree and 13 declined to participate (Figure 3.1). Reasons for declining were not pursued.

3.5 Participants

Individuals are selected to participate in qualitative studies based on their firsthand experience with the phenomenon of interest (Morse & Field, 1995). In this case, the evaluation participants included the NRVC Director, the Food Fun Program staff (hereafter referred to as “camp counselors”), the children who participated in the selected camps (“children” or “campers”), and the parents or guardians of these children (“parents”).

The NRVC Director, who was also the research supervisor, participated in the study from its inception. The NRVC Director managed the Food Fun Program as well as other programs offered through the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre (NRVC) within the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition.

Both of the camp counselors participated in the study (Figure 3.1). The counselors were upper-year university students majoring in nutrition.

The parents and children were the key participants in this evaluation because it was assumed that they had particular knowledge about the aspects of interest in this research and had direct knowledge of the program under study. According to Morse & Field (1995) it is important to select participants that meet these criteria.

Nineteen parents participated in the study interviews (Figure 3.1). Two parents of one child volunteered to participate in the study and were interviewed together; therefore 18 interviews were conducted. Of the 18 interviews conducted, 17 interviews
Figure 3.1 Recruitment and Degree of Involvement of Study Participants
were with the mothers of the children, and one interview was with the mother and father of a child. Two of the families each had two children who attended Food Fun Camp. The other 16 families had one child who participated in camp.

Twenty-one children participated in the study (Figure 3.1). Eighteen children participated in the focus groups and 18 children participated in the interviews. Of these, 15 participated in both the focus groups and the interviews, three participated in the focus groups only, and three participated in the interviews only. The children who participated in the study ranged in age from 7–12 years. There were two males and 19 females.

A demographic profile (Appendix D) was completed during the parent interviews regardless of whether or not the child participated in the study. Demographic profiles were completed at all parent interviews for each child that attended Food Fun Camp. Therefore, 20 demographic profiles were completed by 18 families (two families had two children that attended food fun camp, all other families had one child that attended Food Fun Camp). The demographic profile is summarized in Table 3.1.

According to the demographic profile, 15 children had attended Food Fun Camp once and five children had attended Food Fun Camp twice, including camp in the year 2000. Six of the children had completed at least grade 3, thirteen had completed grade 4 or 5, and one had completed grade 6 or 7. Six of the children had no siblings and 14 of the children had one or more siblings. Two of the families that participated in the parent interviews were single parent (mother) households and 16 of the families were dual parent (mother and father) households. Nine of the mothers had professional occupations, six had technical/skilled occupations, and three had unskilled occupations.
Table 3.1 **Demographic Profile of Families who Participated in Parent Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of times children attended Food Fun Camp*</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One time</td>
<td>15 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two times</td>
<td>5 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highest grade completed by children who attended Food Fun Camp**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>6 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4/5</td>
<td>13 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6/7</td>
<td>1 child</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of siblings children who attended Food Fun Camp had**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>6 children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One or more</td>
<td>14 children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Number of parents in household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>2 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>16 families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Occupation of parents in household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9 mothers</td>
<td>9 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Skilled</td>
<td>6 mothers</td>
<td>5 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>3 mothers</td>
<td>2 fathers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Highest level of education of parents in household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Completed High School</td>
<td>3 mothers</td>
<td>2 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some post-secondary education</td>
<td>5 mothers</td>
<td>4 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed post-secondary education</td>
<td>10 mothers</td>
<td>10 fathers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment status of parents in household**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Mothers</th>
<th>Fathers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time (&gt;20 hours/week)</td>
<td>13 mothers</td>
<td>14 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time (&lt;20 hours/week)</td>
<td>3 mothers</td>
<td>0 fathers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casual/Unemployed/Choose not to work</td>
<td>2 mothers</td>
<td>2 fathers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Approximate gross family income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Families</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>5 families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to &gt;$65,000</td>
<td>13 families</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* includes Food Fun Camp 2000
Nine of the fathers had professional occupations, five had technical/skilled occupations, and two had unskilled occupations. All parents had completed at least a high school education. Five of the mothers and four of the fathers had completed some post-secondary education. Ten of the mothers and 10 of the fathers had completed post-secondary education. Thirteen of the mothers interviewed were employed full-time, three part-time, and two were casual, unemployed, or chose not to work. Fourteen fathers were employed full-time and two were casual, unemployed, or chose not to work. The approximate gross family income was $20,000 to $49,999 in five of the families and $50,000 or more in 13 of the families.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In qualitative research it is important to collect data from several sources in order to obtain a comprehensive perspective of the program. Documents, observation, discussions with the NRVC Director, interviews with the camp counselors and focus groups with the children were used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the Food Fun Program and helped focus questions for the interviews. By having a complete account of the camp prior to the interviews, a better understanding of the information provided during the interviews was obtained. Interviews with children and parents approximately six weeks after the program were used to determine what camp experiences children integrated into their lives.

3.6.1 Document Review

Program documents are a rich source of information about what is happening in a program (Patton, 1987). Documents help to provide context for observations and interviews and may provide stimulus for generating questions for interviews (Glesne,
My understanding of the program grew as I made use of the documents that were part of the program. The Food Fun Program documents that were reviewed included the program pamphlet, registration forms, the camp cookbook and schedule, the parent/guardian camp consent form, the letter sent to parents confirming registration, and the letter sent to parents providing more detailed information about camp. These documents were a basic source of information about program activities and participants but also helped to generate ideas about questions to pursue during focus groups and interviews.

3.6.2 Observation

Program documents provide context for observations while direct observation of the program produces a deeper and richer understanding of the context (Achterberg, 1988). This type of contextual information cannot be obtained by interviews or focus groups alone (Morse & Field, 1995; Patton, 1990). By directly observing program operations and activities, the evaluator is better able to understand and interpret the program being evaluated (Patton, 1990). Observation also informs the evaluator about appropriate areas of investigation and aids in the development of sound relationships with participants (Glesne, 1999). In this evaluation, observation served three main purposes: (1) to develop a descriptive overview of the program, (2) to develop rapport with the counselors and especially with the children for subsequent interviews, and (3) to provide context and focus for subsequent interviews.
The type of observation that an evaluator engages in depends on the evaluator's degree of involvement in the setting (Morse & Field, 1995). Glesne (1999) describes observation as being on a continuum, ranging from unobtrusive observer to full participant.

For the purposes of this evaluation, I was a "participant as observer" (Glesne, 1999, p. 44). I interacted with the children and the counselors and I took part in camp activities while at the same time observing. I was neither a counselor nor a camper but somewhere in between. I would describe my role as a "camper-helper". I participated in camp activities with the children but also helped the counselors set up and prepare activities when they requested. For example, on varying occasions I was partnered with a child to cook, played games with the children, helped lead a game or activity, or helped get ingredients ready for cooking. As recommended by Holmes (1998), I did not have any official supervisory role or authority over the children. If necessary, however, I did intervene if it seemed to me that a child may be harmed. For example, if I was partnered with a child to cook and that child was about to accidentally touch a cookie sheet that was just taken out of the oven, I warned that child that the cookie sheet was very hot.

A difficulty with participant observation is the change in behavior in the setting when an observer is present (Morse & Field, 1995). This issue was only of concern with the counselors as the children at camp seemed to see my presence as a "normal" part of the camp—I was part of the camp for the entire time the children were in the camp.

When observations are being undertaken, it is useful to spend time in the program setting prior to the commencement of formal data gathering in order to
minimize possible difficulties with changes in behaviour (Morse & Field, 1995). Prior to the data gathering period, I spent an entire week at one of the camps (2nd camp, July 3–7, 2000) engaging in all camp activities. This period of time allowed the counselors to acclimatize to my presence. Any changes that I caused as a result of my presence should have reduced over time as the counselors became used to my role, felt less threatened, and grew more trusting.

Spending time in one of the camps prior to data gathering was also important to the quality of data later obtained. The quality of observational data depends on the skill, training, and competence of the observer (Patton, 1987). This period of time allowed me to become familiar with routine camp activities and practice interacting with the children and counselors.

For the data gathering period, I observed approximately 28 out of 40 hours of each selected camp. The focus of the observations during each week was on program delivery and activities. Observations must have a focus such as this in order to provide information relevant to the research questions (Patton, 1987).

Observational data must be sufficiently descriptive so that the reader can understand what occurred and how it occurred (Patton, 1990). Descriptions of observations should not contain interpretive judgements such as whether what occurred was good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate. These descriptions are usually in the form of field notes. However, active participation often makes taking field notes problematic (Graue & Walsh, 1998). This was true during my participation in the Food Fun Camps. Therefore, during the camps I simply made short notes about activities and expanded on them later.
3.6.3 Focus Groups

Focus groups are based on the assumption that individuals who share an experience may be more willing to talk about it amid the security of others who have shared the experience (Achterberg, 1988). Interviewing children in small groups is advantageous because they keep each other on track and truthful, they are more relaxed with other children than alone with an adult, they help each other answer the questions, and their discussions help to identify better questions (Graue & Walsh, 1998). This combined group effort tends to produce a wide range of information, insight, and ideas (Achterberg, 1988). Focus group interviews are advantageous because the group dynamics contribute to focusing on the most important topics and issues about the program (Patton, 1987). Focus group interviews are also useful at the end of a program for gathering perceptions about outcomes or impact of a program (Patton, 1987).

In this study, focus groups were used to obtain the children’s perspectives of what occurred at the camp. The focus groups were also used to gather preliminary ideas about what children “took home” from the program. The information obtained from the focus groups helped to provide context and focus for subsequent interviews. It also helped in the development of wording of questions for subsequent interviews, as I became more aware of children’s language.

The focus group interview guide (Appendix E) was developed based on the research questions, the purpose of the focus groups, and my observations of the camp. The interview guide was reviewed by the research supervisor and another research committee member and revised.
Each focus group was conducted by a facilitator trained specifically for the purposes of this study. This allowed me to take notes during the focus groups, paying attention to how the children responded to questions and to what kind of questions they responded to best.

Facilitators met with me approximately one week before the focus groups to discuss their role as facilitator, to review the interview guide, and to discuss the camp in general. At that time they were provided with the written focus group guidelines (Appendix F) and focus group interview guide. Facilitators were encouraged to contact me prior to the focus groups if they had any questions. Facilitators then met with me briefly just prior to each focus group to confirm the logistics of the focus group (i.e., time, location, number of children) and discuss any other issues or questions they may have had.

Focus groups were conducted on the last day of each of the three selected camps. Children who had parental consent and agreed to participate partook in the focus groups (Figure 3.1). The first focus group had five female children ranging in age from 7–11 years. The second focus group had seven children, five females and two males, ranging in age from 8–12 years. Six female children ranging in age from 8–11 years participated in the third focus group. Each focus group was approximately 25 minutes in length and was tape-recorded.

3.6.4 Interviews

The purpose of qualitative interviews is to find out what is in and on someone else's mind (Patton, 1990). Qualitative interviews have certain characteristics: a relatively low degree of structure imposed by the interviewer (King, 1994; Lincoln &
Guba, 1985), primarily open-ended questions (King, 1994; Patton, 1990), and focus on accessing the perspective of the participants (King, 1994; Patton, 1990). Qualitative interview questions extend to include exploration of "how" and "why" the program activities impact the participants (Dignan & Carr, 1992).

A common approach to qualitative interviewing is to outline a set of issues or possible questions, before the actual interview, to be explored with each participant (Britten, 1995; King, 1994; Patton, 1990). This is referred to as the interview guide approach (Patton, 1990). Interviews using an interview guide approach can provide a great deal of information and are an efficient use of time (Achterberg, 1988). Questions are phrased in the evaluator's own words and asked in an order that is appropriate to the flow of the conversation in each interview (Patton, 1990). Common information can be obtained from each participant, yet at the same time issues not anticipated prior to the interview can be explored.

The interview guide approach was used for the primary interviews in this study. The observations and focus groups provided context and initial topics of discussion for the interviews. However, it was expected that unanticipated issues would arise during the interviews, especially as related to factors that may have inhibited or encouraged integration of program experiences.

"Interview data for program evaluation purposes allow the evaluator to capture the perspectives of program participants, staff, and others associated with the program" (Patton, 1990, p. 278). For the Food Fun Program evaluation, interviews were conducted with camp counselors, children who participated in the selected camps, and parents of these children. Discussions were also held with the NRVC Director.
Separate interview guides were developed for interviews with the camp counselors, the children, and the parents, each with a slightly different focus. Interview guides for the parents and children were pilot tested. Maxwell (1996) suggests pilot testing interview guides with people as much like the planned interview participants as possible to determine if the interview guide works as intended. Although the interview guides were pilot tested, the guides were also revised and refined as necessary based on emerging interview data.

3.6.4.1 NRVC Director and Camp Counselors

Several discussions and meetings were held with the NRVC Director regarding the history of the Food Fun Program, planning, and other camp-related issues. These discussions occurred as deemed necessary by me and were useful in building understanding about the program.

The counselors were interviewed together to obtain their general perspectives about camp activities, to enhance the description of a typical camp, and to gather ideas for subsequent interviews with children and parents. The interview guide (Appendix G) was developed based on these purposes. The interview guide was reviewed by the research supervisor, as well as another research committee member, and revised.

I interviewed the camp counselors twice throughout the summer. The first interview, conducted after the fourth camp (July 24, 2000), was 40 minutes in length. The second interview, conducted after the last camp (August 21, 2000), was 65 minutes in length. Each interview was tape recorded.
3.6.4.2 Parents

Parents who volunteered to participate and provided consent were interviewed. Parents were interviewed once, in their homes, for approximately 40 minutes. I conducted 18 interviews with parents of children who participated in the Food Fun Program in the year 2000. Seventeen of the interviews were conducted with mothers of children who participated in the program and one interview was conducted jointly with a mother and a father of one child. Parents were interviewed about six weeks after their child had attended Food Fun Camp. In most cases, the parent was interviewed immediately prior to the interview with the child.

Interview questions were based on an interview guide. The parent interview guide (Appendix H) was developed specifically for the purposes of this study. It was developed based on the research questions, discussion with the NRVC director, camp observations, and information from the focus groups and counselor interviews. The main purpose of these interviews was to obtain parents' descriptions of what program experiences their children integrated into their lives, and what facilitated and/or prevented integration of program experiences.

Once developed, the interview guide was reviewed by the research supervisor and another research committee member and revised. The interview guide was then pilot tested with three parents; one parent of a child who attended Food Fun Camp in 1999, and two parents of children who participated in the second camp (July 3–7, 2000). I had participated in the second camp prior to the data collection period. Based on information from the pilot interviews, the interview guide was revised. The interview guide continued to evolve during the data collection period based on emerging data.
At the conclusion of each interview, the parent was asked to complete a demographic profile (Appendix D) of their family. The demographic profile was explained and the parent was asked to complete it in another room. This provided me with time to interview the child without the parent being present.

3.6.4.3 Children

Graue and Walsh (1998) describe interviews with children quite succinctly—“Children know more than they know they know. They surely know more about what they know than the researcher does. The purpose of interviews is to get them to talk about what they know” (p. 112).

The interview as a research tool is a remarkably powerful way of getting to know how children describe and explain the world around them (Sanders, 1996). Children are quite capable of describing events and experiences. However, adults were typically the informants in research focused on children because of the belief that children lacked verbal skills, conceptual abilities, recall, and overall narrative competence to convey their own experiences (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). To learn more about children’s experiences, we need to elicit their own perspectives.

Gathering accounts of experiences from children is both difficult and time-consuming (Sanders, 1996). This is not because interview data from children is less well-developed, but because it is different from data obtained from adults (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Children interpret the world differently from adults because they view it on their own terms (Sanders, 1996). For example, a teacher may plan an activity designed to assist children in learning a particular skill or concept, but children may experience something completely different.
Most of children’s talk is focused on the present, but in the second year of life, children develop enough sophistication in the cognitive structures of memory to store, retrieve, and communicate past experiences to another person (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Children six years of age and older have the cognitive and language capabilities that enable them to be interviewed (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). There is a fairly rapid increase in the capability of children to respond to eating behavior inquiries beginning at seven or eight years of age (Frank, 1994). By 10–12 years of age, children can provide information on their own dietary intake (Frank, 1994).

At approximately two years of age, children begin to form autobiographical memories of an experience (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Autobiographical memories are personal memories of specific events coded with respect to time and place. When an event has occurred repeatedly, children store and retrieve the event as a script. A script is a model of repeated familiar experiences.

Children as young as three years old develop scripts for familiar situations and experiences (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Children use scripts as the primary means of anticipating, comprehending and re-creating real-life experience. These scripts allow children’s memories to be more readily accessible and comprehensible.

Interviews with children must be tailored to the individual child, their setting, and the research problem (Sanders, 1996). However, there are some generally accepted strategies that were considered when interviewing children for the Food Fun Program evaluation:
1) The purpose of the interview was shared with the campers. Children often have difficulty determining what researchers want to know from them because researchers take for granted that children will see the obvious (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). Children also may tire before they can begin to relay information on the topic of interest. For these reasons, researchers should take the time to clarify for the child the purpose of the interview and the role the child is expected to play during the interview. The excerpt below is an example of how I often began an interview.

Interviewer: “What’s going to happen C13a is that I’m going to ask you some questions off of my sheet here and I want you to answer the questions the best that you can.”
Child: “Mmm.”
Interviewer: “There’s no right or wrong answers. This isn’t a test or anything. I just want you to tell me what you think. It’s going to be sort of a casual discussion. Okay?”
Child: “Okay.”
Interviewer: “We’re going to talk about the food fun camp and the food type things that you do at home if you do any…” (transcript C13a)

2) It is important to use terms and vocabulary that the child will understand (Sanders, 1996). Appropriate terms and vocabulary for the Food Fun Program evaluation were ascertained from the observations of the camps and the focus group interviews.

3) To explore an answer to a question in more detail, questions like “I don’t really understand what you mean. Could you tell me more?” compel children to describe what they are thinking (Sanders, 1996). These types of questions were used during the interviews.

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1 Denotes participant code. C = child, 13 = interview sequence of family, a = oldest child interviewed in family
4) I also attempted to be nonjudgmental. Children must be able to feel that they can trust the adult and say anything without the risk of being disciplined (Sanders, 1996).

Each child who had parental consent and agreed to participate was interviewed once. I interviewed the children one-on-one in their homes approximately six weeks after they participated in the Food Fun Program. Interviewing them in their homes helped provide context for the interviews as related to the research questions. Interviewing them six weeks after the camp gave them time to integrate their experiences from camp into their daily lives. In most cases, children were interviewed immediately after their parents were interviewed.

I conducted interviews with 18 children—five children from the fourth camp, seven children from the sixth camp, and six children from the seventh camp. Two males and 16 females were interviewed. The children interviewed ranged in age from 7–11 years. Interviews were approximately 25 minutes in length.

Information obtained from free recall, as in an interview guide approach, is more likely to capture the unique perspective of the child (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). It is recommended that interviewers begin with an open-ended question to elicit a spontaneous narrative, use direct questions to fill in the blanks in that narrative, and then follow with another open-ended question (Docherty & Sandelowski, 1999). These suggestions were taken into consideration during the development of the child interview guide (Appendix I) and during the interviews.

The interview guide was developed specifically for the purposes of this study. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain descriptions of children’s Food Fun Camp
experiences, what camp experiences they integrated into their lives, and what facilitated and/or prevented integration of camp experiences into their lives. The questions in the interview guide directly related to these purposes. The purposes and the questions were developed based on discussions with the NRVC director and information obtained from the focus groups, counselor interviews, and my observations.

Once developed, the guide for the child interviews was reviewed by the research supervisor and another research committee member and revised. It was then pilot tested with three children; one child who participated in the Food Fun Camp in 1999, and two children who participated in the second camp (July 3–7, 2000). I had participated in the second camp prior to the data collection period. Based on information from these pilot interviews, the wording and focus of some questions were revised. The interview guide continued to evolve throughout the data collection process. For example, the order of some questions was changed.

3.6.5 Access and Rapport

Access to the Food Fun Program was gained through the NRVC Director. The NRVC director, who was also the research supervisor, had an integral role in planning the evaluation for the Food Fun Program. Although access was obtained through the Centre and was a stepping stone to developing rapport with the participants, it was still necessary to take additional steps to develop rapport with the children and parents, as well as the counselors, before interviewing them.

The way in which a researcher presents him- or herself to a group may be crucial to subsequent acceptance and quality of the data (Morse & Field, 1995). It is essential that the researcher fits into the setting with minimal disruption. Selection of
dress and other group norms are important to follow. By being a camper-helper I was able to fit into the setting with minimal disruption.

I attempted to establish rapport with the counselors prior to the data gathering period by informing them about the research. Through face-to-face meetings, the NRVC director and I explained the purpose of the evaluation and made it clear that I would be observing and participating simply to gain an understanding of program activities and delivery. Acting as a helper during the participation and observation periods also helped to establish rapport with the counselors.

Rapport with parents and access to children was gained by explaining the study to the parents in a letter (Appendix B) and interest form (Appendix C) that was sent to them prior to the camp. This information was mailed to all parents with children in the selected camps, along with a regular mailing that the counselors sent to parents, approximately one to two weeks before their child started camp. The letter explained that I would be participating in camp activities as part of my research and invited them to participate in this research.

I also attempted to establish rapport with parents through face-to-face contact. By introducing myself to parents the first day of each camp and greeting them when they dropped off and/or picked up their child from camp, I started to establish rapport. Talking with parents at the camp wind-up party on the last day of camp was an attempt to further establish rapport and trust. I think these approaches were successful as evidenced by the fact that two parents and their children agreed to participate in the study on the last day of camp.
Rapport was re-established with the parents prior to the interviews during phone calls to book and confirm interview appointments and during “small talk” immediately prior to the interviews. Interviewing the parents before the children also gave the parents a chance to get to know me and my research better. Consequently I think they felt more comfortable leaving me alone with their children.

Establishing a personal relationship with children before interviewing them was also very important. Sanders (1996) suggests observing children in their setting and making small talk about their experiences. I followed this advice while participating in each selected camp.

When observing children, adults should avoid acting too much like an adult (Graue & Walsh, 1998). For example, adults usually initiate conversations with children and avoid certain areas usually reserved for children, such as play areas (Graue & Walsh, 1998). I attempted to allow the children to initiate conversations with me and engaged in program and play activities with them in an attempt to establish rapport. For example, I often cooked alongside the children and played games with them even though on occasion I felt awkward doing so. It also helps to establish trust by interacting with children at their eye level (Holmes, 1998), which I also attempted to do.

Most fieldworkers who engage in participant observation with children adopt the “friend role” (Holmes, 1998). The researcher exerts no authority over the children and establishes a trusting relationship that is modeled after the friendship bond. Again, I attempted to do this through my role as a camper-helper.

I re-established rapport with the children prior to the interviews by having casual conversation with them in the presence of their parent in most cases, explaining the
interview process including their role in the process, and giving the children a picture to color with pencil crayons or markers. Again, I think I was successful in establishing rapport and trust with the children as evidenced by several facts: 1) during the camp I was told by two children I was their “favourite helper”, 2) two other children gave me pictures they had coloured after their interview, and 3) one child gave me a copy of her favourite recipe after the transcript release meeting.

3.7 Data Analysis Procedures

Qualitative research is inductive. This means that the patterns, themes, categories, and understandings come from the data; they emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on the data prior to collection and analysis (Morse & Field, 1995; Patton, 1990).

Qualitative research generates overwhelming volumes of data. Document review yields excerpts, quotations, or entire passages from program records, official publications and reports (Patton, 1990). The data from observations consist of descriptions of people’s activities, behaviors, and actions (Patton, 1990). The data from interviews consist of direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge (Patton, 1990). The challenge in qualitative analysis is to make sense of the overwhelming volumes of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns, and construct a framework for communicating the essence of what the data reveal (Broughton, 1991; Patton, 1990).

In the course of gathering data, ideas about possible analysis and interpretation of data will occur (Patton, 1990). Throughout the entire data collection and analysis process, I wrote notes to myself in the form of a reflexive journal. A reflexive journal is
a kind of diary in which the researcher regularly records information about methodological decisions, reflections on data, as well as the researcher’s own perceptions about the observations and interviews (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By keeping a reflexive journal, I could write down my thoughts about the data as they occurred and then develop these thoughts further if relevant. No matter how preliminary these thoughts may be, they begin the analysis process (Glesne, 1999). Researchers must remain open to new perspectives as they work with the data; writing reflexive notes facilitates openness to new perspectives (Glesne, 1999).

In qualitative research, data analysis begins immediately after finishing the first observation or interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Maxwell, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). As soon as data collection begins, the researcher begins preparing data for analysis (Morse & Field, 1995) by expanding on field notes and transcribing interviews.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data management and data analysis are integrally related and there is no firm boundary between them. Immediately after each observation and interview, I reviewed and expanded on my field notes in my reflexive journal. Rewriting and reorganizing field notes is an opportunity for analysis (Maxwell, 1996). I also wrote down ideas and interpretations in my reflexive journal. When the observation or interview is still fresh in the researcher’s mind, insights can occur that might otherwise be lost (Patton, 1990). During data collection, this preliminary reflection helped me focus questions and areas of discussion, as well as begin the process of analysis (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

Documents and observations were reflected on in my journal and were further analyzed by key events—that is, the data is presented by describing major events and
activities that make up the program (Patton, 1990). Interview data was reflected on in my journal, initially analyzed during transcription, and analyzed further through content analysis.

The actual process of transcribing interviews is an opportunity for analysis (Maxwell, 1996). Interview data was transcribed verbatim from the tapes; however, identifying information such as names were omitted and replaced by a word describing the relationship to the interview participant (e.g., husband, other child, friend). As I was preparing my data for detailed analysis—that is, transcribing interview tapes—I began to form ideas about categories and themes. As I was transcribing I made a list of these possible categories and continued to write ideas and interpretations in my reflexive journal. A more detailed analysis of the transcripts followed.

Content analysis was used for the more detailed analysis of transcripts. Content analysis is an analysis by topic in which the researcher identifies, codes, and categorizes the primary patterns in the data (Morse & Field, 1995; Patton, 1990). A coded segment or data chunk may consist of a few words or sentences, or may be more than a paragraph (Morse & Field, 1995).

The initial step in content analysis is reading through all interview transcripts that are to be analyzed (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990). I read the transcripts immediately after transcribing each interview, before each transcript release meeting, and immediately before actual coding. During this reading, I continued to write notes on what I saw in the data and developed tentative ideas about what I might do with the different parts of the data and how I might code it (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990). Some of these ideas became primary category labels.
Coding is the main strategy for categorizing data (Maxwell, 1996). The goal of coding is to rearrange data into categories that facilitate the comparison of patterns and themes (Maxwell, 1996; Patton, 1990). “Codes are tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 56). In other words, codes identify the content in the interview and category labels are descriptive names for each group of data (Morse & Field, 1995). The key is that these codes are grounded in or emerge from the data (Maxwell, 1996).

Coding not only helps the researcher to sort the data, it helps the researcher to uncover underlying meanings in the text (Morse & Field, 1995). I developed a comprehensive coding system (Miles & Huberman, 1994). That is, I coded almost everything that was discussed during the interviews. My codes took the form of straightforward category labels and were attached to data chunks in the transcripts.

Initially I kept the categories as broad as possible without overlapping. It is difficult during the initial data-coding stage to work with more than 10 major codes and still keep them distinct; therefore few categories are chosen in the initial stages of the analysis (Morse & Field, 1995). As more data accumulates and the process of naming and locating the coded segments proceeds, categories divide and subdivide (Glesne, 1999; Morse & Field, 1995). This enables the data to remain manageable and permits subcategories to be derived from the larger domain (Morse & Field, 1995).

In this study, transcripts were analyzed by reviewing each interview and grouping together answers from different participants to common topics or questions. Each group of interviews (i.e., children and parents) were analyzed separately. To code, I read through each transcript on my word processing program (Microsoft Word) and
marked data chunks that cohered to similar topics with a code in square brackets ("[code]"). While reading and coding transcripts, I simultaneously clustered the chunks of coded data into a new document containing evolving categories and subcategories. My peer debriefer, who was also my research supervisor, reviewed the evolving codes and categories on a regular basis as a check on my interpretation of the data. As I continued to code and categorize, I continued to differentiate categories reorganizing and relabeling as necessary. This clustering of data set the stage for describing the results and making recommendations.

The next step was to put the categories together to build an integrated explanation (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). I did this by first examining, comparing, and summarizing the material within each category and then comparing across categories to look for possible linkages. This eventually lead to overarching themes that explained the research findings (Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

3.8 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness—meaning that the findings of a study are worth attention—is important for judging the quality of qualitative research. Trustworthiness of a study is judged through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Quality of the research can also be judged by the relationship between the researcher and those who participate in the study (Lincoln, 1995).

A study has credibility if it truly investigates what it is intended to investigate (Kvale, 1996). This study used peer debriefing, member checking, prolonged engagement, and persistent observation to establish credibility.
Peer debriefing provides an external check on the inquiry process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This consisted of exposing my ideas and interpretations to my research committee through ongoing discussions and exploration regarding various aspects of the study. My research supervisor reviewed and considered relevant sections of my reflexive journal. My research supervisor also reviewed the research data and emerging categories during analysis.

Member checks involve feeding the data and findings back to the participants and asking whether they believe the results are an accurate account of their experience (King, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checking was an ongoing process during each interview. This was especially important with the children to ensure I understood their descriptions. Any comments that were not clear to me were immediately clarified with the participant during the interview. During the transcript release meetings, parents and children reviewed their own transcripts. Parents read their transcripts on their own to determine accuracy. Two parents declined the opportunity to review their transcript. While the parent was reviewing their own transcript in another room, I verbally reviewed the child’s transcript with the child. All children reviewed their transcripts with me.

Prolonged engagement and persistent observation were also used to establish credibility. This was achieved by spending sufficient time at the camps and focusing in detail on those elements that were most relevant to the study (Glesne, 1999).

Transferability is the element of trustworthiness that refers to the ability of readers to apply the research findings to other contexts and situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This was achieved through thick description. This detailed description is
necessary in order to make it possible for readers to connect their own stories to those presented in the study and thus make transferability judgements (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggest that a study be judged dependable if the reader can follow the decision trail of the research process. By documenting the process of data collection and analysis in detail and making note of inquiry decisions and methodological shifts, a researcher can develop a data trail and ensure the dependability of their analysis. My reflexive journal and participant database was used to document these aspects of the study and create a data trail.

The point of confirmability is to judge whether or not the data are confirmable or logical; that the findings and conclusions are grounded in the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The data trail, which also includes the codes and categories that were developed from the data, was important in establishing confirmability.

The reflexive journal and data trail were extremely important for establishing the trustworthiness of this study. The reflexive journal not only included decisions about data collection and analysis but also included my own perspectives and biases about the research.

An external audit was conducted to establish dependability and confirmability (Appendix J). The reflexive journal, data trail, transcripts, other raw data, category summaries, and thesis were given to an auditor for review. The auditor was not directly involved with the Food Fun Program evaluation but was experienced in qualitative research and nutrition education. In the assessment of confirmability, the auditor ascertained whether the findings were grounded in the data, whether the analytic
techniques were logical, and to what degree the researcher’s bias may have influenced the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In the assessment of dependability, the auditor judged the appropriateness of methodological decisions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

According to Lincoln (1995), the authenticity criteria as well as several other emerging criteria can be used to judge how research is conducted. In general, these criteria address the relationship between the researcher and the research participants. Some questions to consider include: what context was the research conducted; who benefited from the research; whose voice was heard; was trust established; was there collaboration with the research participants; and was the researcher honest about his/her standpoint (Lincoln, 1995; Rappaport, 1990). In this study research was conducted in the context of the program being evaluated and in the homes of the research participants; the future participants of the program will benefit if the results are used to improve the program; the voices of the research participants are presented; trust and rapport seemed to be established between the research participants and the researcher; there was collaboration throughout the research with the NRVC director, the camp counselors, and with representatives of research participants through pilot interviews; and I presented my standpoint in the “Researcher’s Story” of the “Methods” section. Many of these issues are also closely related to ethics (Lincoln, 1995).

3.9 Ethics

Qualitative methods of inquiry are highly personal (Patton, 1990). Qualitative interviewers ask participants to reconstruct their experiences and in this process a measure of intimacy develops. Because of this intimacy, participants may share information they normally would not have shared (Patton, 1990). Participants may feel
vulnerable because they are “being watched” during observation. They may also feel vulnerable because the information they share could potentially have a negative impact on the program (Kvale, 1996). It was important not to minimize participants’ sense of risk at being involved in this qualitative evaluation.

The potential risks and benefits of participating in a qualitative study are usually communicated to participants through the process of informed consent (Kvale, 1996). Informed consent usually involves letting participants know the purpose of the study, what process will be used for the evaluation, what may be asked in an interview, who the information is for and how the information will be used (Patton, 1990; Rubin & Rubin, 1995).

There is usually no justifiable reason for trying to mislead participants and such unethical behavior may lead to controversy when reports are presented (Posavac & Carey, 1997). Patton (1990) recommends full and complete disclosure of the evaluation process.

The NRVC director and staff were fully aware of the evaluation and how it would proceed. Upon orientation, the counselors were informed of the evaluation by the NRVC director and then later in a face-to-face meeting with me. Parents and children in the selected camps were informed that the Food Fun Program was being evaluated. This occurred via letter (Appendix B) prior to the start of the camp in which their child was registered.

Confidentiality was maintained throughout the study. I have not and will not share the names or any other identifiable information of those who did or did not participate in the study. I personally transcribed the tapes from the one-on-one and
focus group interviews. Field notes and transcripts have been and will be only seen by myself and, as necessary, the research team (i.e., supervisor, committee, and auditor). The focus group facilitators and the camp counselors signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix K) to ensure names of children and information shared during the focus group interviews remained private from sources outside the study. The auditor, who reviewed the raw data, also signed the confidentiality agreement to ensure information regarding the study was not shared with outside sources.

Informed written consent was obtained from the counselors for their interviews (Appendix L) and from the parents for both their own interviews and their children's focus group and one-on-one interviews (Appendix M). Assent was obtained from the children for both the focus groups and interviews (Appendix N).

Prior to one-on-one and focus group interviews, the study procedures were explained to the participants. At this time, the children themselves were also verbally asked if they wanted to participate in the focus group and/or interview.

Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the evaluation process at any time and that all data directly related to them would be destroyed. Participants also had the option of refusing to answer any question(s). Participants were assured that the information they provided would not be traced back to them. Names of participants were omitted and/or replaced with pseudonyms. Aggregate data was presented whenever possible. Where it was necessary to show individual examples, pseudonyms were used.

During transcript release meetings, transcript/data release forms were provided for participants in order to authorize the use of their responses for the purposes of this
research. Parents were given an opportunity to read and revise their own transcripts (Appendix O). Parents were not given an opportunity to review their child’s transcript. This helped to protect the children from possible repercussions of negative information (e.g., barriers to integration of program experiences) that they may have shared with the researcher. In face-to-face meetings, the researcher verbally reviewed interview transcripts with the children and provided them with an opportunity to give transcript release (Appendix P). The camp counselors were also given an opportunity to review the written transcripts of their interviews and provide data release (Appendix Q). All study participants provided transcript/data release. Only minor editorial changes (e.g., spelling) were necessary as a result of the transcript review process.

Application for approval of the research protocol was submitted to the Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioral Science Research at the University of Saskatchewan and approved on June 2, 2000 (Appendix R). Data obtained from the study will be kept for a period of five years by the research supervisor, as per university regulations, and then destroyed.

3.10 Summary

As this evaluation was exploratory in nature, qualitative evaluation methods were used to address the research questions. Typical case sampling was used to select camps for inclusion in the evaluation. Qualitative interviews were the main source of data collection; however, participant observation, focus groups, and document review were also used to collect data.

I observed three camps during the data collection phase, as a participant observer, in order to gain an understanding of the program and to establish rapport with
the participants. Discussions were held with the NRVC Director to enhance my understanding of the program. The camp counselors were interviewed twice during the program to obtain their perspectives on camp activities. Focus group interviews with the participants were used to gain participants' perceptions of program activities, to begin to obtain information about what participants “took home” from the program, and to obtain information for subsequent qualitative interviews. The focus groups were conducted at the end of each selected camp by a trained facilitator. Children and parents were interviewed by the researcher six weeks after camp participation. Interviews were conducted with children and parents, individually, in their homes. These qualitative interviews were used to obtain descriptions of participants’ Food Fun Program experiences, what program experiences they integrated into their lives, and what facilitated and/or prevented integration of program experiences into their lives.

Observations were recorded using field notes and analyzed for key program activities. Interviews and focus groups were tape-recorded and interviews were transcribed verbatim. Parent and child interviews were separately analyzed for common themes and categories.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore Food Fun Program experiences that children may have integrated into their lives at home and what may have influenced integration of experiences. A description of the Food Fun Program is presented to illustrate camp activities followed by themes illustrating both the parents' and children's perspectives.

4.2 Food Fun Camp

4.2.1 Overview

The Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre (NRVC) within the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition developed the Food Fun Program and has offered it every summer since 1998. It is located on the University of Saskatchewan campus in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition Foods Lab. The Food Fun Program is a five-day summer camp for boys and girls 8–12 years old. The camp runs from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. each day. Six to seven camps are offered each summer. The cost of the program is $150.00 per child per week. The camp is facilitated by two upper year nutrition students who are hired as camp counselors. The focus of the camp is fun with food, cooking, and nutrition. Children are taught basic cooking skills, food and kitchen safety, and basic nutrition in an interactive, hands-on environment. Cooking, indoor and outdoor activities, games, crafts, food experiments, and field trips are the basis of daily activities.
4.2.2 Enrollment

A maximum of 12 children are enrolled each week of camp. Parents can enroll their children by registering them anytime throughout the spring and summer prior to their chosen week of camp. The registration form includes the child’s name, parent/guardian’s name, contact information (phone number and mailing address), medical information (allergies or other conditions program staff should be aware of), and preferred week of camp. Payment of $150.00 is required upon registration. This registration fee includes the cost of all materials and supplies children will need throughout the week as well as a take home cookbook of all recipes made during the camp.

Immediately after participants register, they are mailed a confirmation of enrollment and a parental consent form. The consent form outlines the general components of the camp including the use of food ingredients, stovetops, and ovens, field trips off and on campus, and indoor and outdoor games and activities. The consent form must be signed by parents prior to their child starting camp.

Approximately 1–2 weeks before children start their camp, parents are mailed a letter containing additional information about the program. The letter provides guidelines regarding what time parents should drop-off and pick-up their children, the exact location of the camp with directions, general information regarding planned activities, and guidelines regarding clothing appropriate for safe cooking and physical activity (e.g., no open-toed shoes). Parents are assured that their children will be supervised during all activities and over the lunch hour. They are also informed that
their child will need to bring a bagged lunch but that snacks will be provided throughout the day.

4.2.3 Program Setting

Food Fun camps are held on the University of Saskatchewan campus in the College of Pharmacy and Nutrition Foods Lab and in two adjoining rooms equipped with couches, tables, and chairs. The Foods Lab is set-up in such a manner that each pair of children had their own stovetop and oven as well as measuring cups and spoons, utensils, mixing bowls, and oven mitts. Cookie sheets, pots, pans, plates, glasses, tea towels, dish cloths, and food ingredients were stored in common areas within the Foods Lab. A sink with running water was shared by each group of four (i.e., two pairs) and served as hand- and dish-washing stations. There was also an additional sink located at the Lab entrance that was used solely as a hand-washing station.

During the Food Fun Camp, all food preparation activities were held in the Foods Lab. Other activities including coloring, work sheets, food experiments, food tasting, and some games were also held in the Foods Lab. Crafts and some games were held in one of the two adjoining rooms. Some games and field trips were held outside on the University campus grounds. The main field trip to a grocery store was held off-campus. Lunch was eaten in one of the adjoining rooms.

For most food preparation activities, children worked with a partner. Counselors usually assigned partners and changed them regularly. For other activities and games children participated individually, in small groups, or as one large group.
4.2.4 Typical Daily Activities

Each week of camp had the same general format that was pre-determined by the NRVC director who developed the program. However, each day of camp had a different theme that was chosen by the counselors. Themes were as follows:

- Monday—Cook’s Tools and Kitchen Rules
- Tuesday—All Foods Can Fit
- Wednesday—Snack Attack
- Thursday—Food From Afar
- Friday—Party Hardy

The counselors generally chose activities, recipes, and/or instruction that revolved around the daily theme. For example on Monday, which was Cook’s Tools and Kitchen Rules day, the children did an activity to become familiar with the layout of the Foods Lab and were given a hand-washing demonstration. On Tuesday, All Foods Can Fit, children discussed Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating. Snack Attack day revolved around healthy snacking and children participated in a label reading activity. On Food From Afar day, the children prepared a variety of ethnic recipes. Friday was Party Hardy day when the children prepared food and decorations for the wind-up party in which guests, usually parents, were invited to attend.

The counselors indicated in an interview with the researcher that the best way to describe the Food Fun Camp would be to explain a typical day.

Counselor B: “Like a typical day maybe. That’s what I would describe and I would just tell them what we would do in a typical day.”
Interviewer: “Okay so pretend I’m that person and describe it to me.”
Counselor A: “Well that we do cooking in the morning and the afternoon and we do crafts and they learn about basic nutrition. How to plan healthy snacks and meals.”
Counselor B: “Games. Like food related or nutrition related games.”
Counselor A: “Basic, basic cooking tools and knowledge.”
Interviewer: “Basic cooking tools and knowledge about?”
Counselor A: “Knowledge on how to cook, like you know cooking 101 sort of thing. Cooking terms.”
Counselor B: “So we’re teaching them about cooking equipment and techniques. And just how to understand, like reading recipes and understanding them.”
Counselor A: “And follow directions (laugh) I guess. Because they really learn how to follow a recipe. I found there was some kids who came here, they didn’t know to sort out the methods, like the directions part, from the ingredients list. And when they were starting their recipes what they would do is just put everything in the way it was listed in the ingredients.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
Counselor A: “So they really learned how the ingredients is just what you need and the method is how you prepare it.”
Interviewer: “Right.”
Counselor A: “So they learned that.”
Counselor B: “Mmm, yeah.”

Based on my observations and field notes, camp documents, interviews and conversations with counselors, parents, and children, a typical day was structured as follows:

8:30–8:45 a.m. Welcome and review of the day’s activities.
8:45–9:15 a.m. Instruction based on the daily theme which usually consisted of a short group discussion followed by a related game, other activity, and/or worksheet.
9:15–10:45 a.m. Food Preparation. Children were paired up, given their recipe, reviewed their recipes, gathered their ingredients, prepared their recipe, tasted the products, and cleaned up. Independent activities such as coloring sheets, work sheets, and quiet games were available for children who finished preparing their recipe and cleaning their work area.
10:45–12:00 p.m. Group games inside or outside, other group activity, or field trip.
12:00–1:00 p.m. Supervised lunch. Children had the option of watching a video during lunch hour.
1:00–2:30 p.m. Craft, game, food experiment, and/or other activity.
2:30–4:15 p.m. Food preparation. Children were paired up, given their recipe, reviewed their recipes, gathered their ingredients, prepared their recipe, tasted the products, and cleaned up. Independent activities were available for those who completed their tasks.
4:15–4:30 p.m. Independent activities or group game and dismissal.
Although this was the structure of a typical day, days were flexible based on length of time it took to complete specific activities, children’s interests, and the weather. For example, if recipes on one day took more time to complete than recipes on another day, then less time would be spent on the following activity or group game. Or, if children particularly liked playing games outside and the weather was warm and dry, then less time may have been spent doing a craft or playing a game inside.

Food preparation was the main activity. There were two food preparation activities each day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Counselors gave each pair of children one recipe to prepare. Usually three different recipes were distributed between the pairs in the morning. In the afternoon, all pairs usually prepared the same recipe.

Children were responsible for all stages of food preparation. Once receiving their recipe, children were encouraged to read the entire recipe and then proceed to gather the necessary ingredients. Each pair then prepared their recipe, deciding among themselves how to divide the responsibilities. Counselors assisted children in locating ingredients and then rotated among the pairs observing and helping as needed or as requested by the children. As each pair completed their food preparation, they then commenced cleaning their work areas and washing their dishes. Independent activities such as coloring sheets, work sheets, and quiet games were available for children who had completed their food preparation and cleaning tasks.

Once all the products were ready for consumption they were displayed on a common counter and children had an opportunity to taste all the products prepared. Any left-over food was divided between the children to eat later or take home. If all pairs
had made the same recipe, they tasted and kept their own product. One parent described the Food Fun Camp in this way:

P19a: “Um my impression is they went in and were divided into small groups of two, not always with the same person. And that they were either assigned or had some choice of things to make and that the kids were making different things so that on a given day they may make six or eight things and she may make two of them with the friend helping. And then they would get a chance to sample each others if they wanted to. And they, I don’t know how they divided the jobs between the two of them, I assume they just talked amongst themselves and decided who wanted to do what.”

A wide range of recipes were chosen by the counselors. The recipes varied each day but were usually the same each week. Some examples of recipes included shining star biscuits, fruit cones, pinwheel sandwiches, orange-cranberry muffins, spaghetti and meat sauce, fried rice with ham, smoothies, gorp (trail mix), homemade granola bars, crunchy maple yogurt, homemade banana pudding, and cracker nachos.

A variety of games, crafts, field trips, and other activities enhanced and yet provided relief from food preparation activities. One child said during an interview, “...a camp without games is no camp at all. But this camp had games but it helped you with nutrition stuff and stuff like that basically” (C16a). Games were usually food or nutrition related and reinforced concepts discussed during morning instruction. The games were often versions of commercial games. For example, “Foodopoly” was based on the game Monopoly, “Food Bingo” was a version of BINGO, and “Nutri-twister” was based on the game of Twister. Both indoor and outdoor games were played. Many of the games, especially the outdoor games, required physical activity, for example “Upset the Fruit Basket”. Other activities including worksheets, label reading, taste testing, stories, experiments, group discussion, and brainstorming were used to teach and/or reinforce general food or nutrition-related concepts.
The fifth day of each camp had a slightly different format and was based on the Party Hardy theme. On this day the children hosted a wind-up party and invited guests, usually their parents, to visit the camp and taste food they had prepared. The party was held from 3:30–4:30 p.m. on every Friday of each camp. Children showed their guests the Lab and served the snacks they had prepared that day. At this time children received their camp cookbooks and parents received a package containing Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating, Canada’s Physical Activity Guide to Healthy Active Living, and handouts on healthy snack ideas, breakfast, and lunch ideas for children.

4.2.5 Food-Related Concepts and Skills

Everyday there was instruction that was usually based on the daily theme. Instruction consisted of a short group discussion (i.e., 10–15 minutes) followed by a related game, other activity, and/or worksheet. The concepts and skills introduced during instruction were reinforced through daily activities.

Basic food preparation and cooking concepts and skills were introduced on the first day (Cooks Rules and Kitchen Tools theme) through instruction and subsequently reinforced everyday through preparation of recipes. These general concepts and skills included cooking terms and methods (e.g., chop, dice, fold, grate), how to read and follow a recipe, how to operate a stove and oven, how to measure dry and wet ingredients, and safe food handling procedures. The counselors felt that the children were taught these aspects of food preparation as was evident during their interviews.

Interview 1
I: “...So, what do you guys think the kids are taking home from the camp if anything?”
Counselor B: “Um I think a lot of the techniques that you teach on the first day. Like cutting while you hold the knife away from you and washing their hands before they start.”
Counselor A: “That’s a big one.”
Counselor B: “Some of those really important things I think that they’re remembering because they’re remembering to do it everyday like I see them wash their hands and sometimes we don’t even tell them.”
Counselor A: “And some kids reminding other kids, did you wash your hands?”
Counselor B: “Yeah, yeah. Or they’re telling each other you know (unintelligible) or what ever. So some of the basics that we teach them the first day.”
Counselor A: “And I think they’re getting different ideas. Like you know how kids just have a few ideas on how to prepare one or two snacks or something. I think they’re getting ideas how you use like you know basic things in your kitchen. How to prepare different snacks and hopefully more healthy too. I think they’re getting that. Just different ideas.”
Counselor B: “Yeah.”
And later...
Counselor B: “Basic cooking knowledge and understanding of how to follow a recipe and understanding the difference between just a teaspoon and a cup in a recipe is something that we deal with. And then trying new foods. Different combinations.”
Counselor A: “Learning how to prepare foods that they can handle on their own.”

With respect to food preparation, many children talked about learning to cook at the Food Fun Camp and they described several specific aspects of cooking that they had learned. Children learned how to measure, how to use an oven and/or stove, as well as how to use a knife to cut food.

C18a: “Well we learned that um we learned how to measure stuff, we learned how to use an oven, uh how to set the temperature. And how to work with another person because you had to work with somebody other than yourself except when we had the experiment. And it was actually fun because you got to know different people during the week. Cause I was paired up with — (camper) two times. Then I was paired up with my sister.”

C16a: “We made lots of stuff. And you learn about nutritious stuff. And you learn how to measure. And how to use an oven and a stove. I had no idea what so ever how to do that and now I have a better, I know how to better now I guess. And it’s fun because you play games outside like food games. It was fun. And one day we made lunch, but most people didn’t know so they brought their own lunch anyway. So yeah, and we had partners so that was good. Like each time was different and once we got to pick [partners]. And we learned how to cook basically.”
C11a: “It was fun to learn to make and learn recipes. That was fun, that’s what I liked. Also learning how to use an oven. And learning like ah teaspoons, half a cup.”
Interviewer: “Pardon me?”
C11a: “And half spoons and stuff.”
Interviewer: “Okay. Um I forgot what I was going to ask you. Um oh I know, what do you think you learned at food fun camp?”
C11a: “What do I think I learned.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C11a: “How to cook. Um how to eat healthy things and um learning.”
Interviewer: “Okay. Um what did you learn about cooking?”
C11a: “What did I learn about cooking.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C11a: “Um I learned how to clean up after cooking. Um how to use how to really cut stuff. And how to work the burner on the oven. And mmm that’s all I can think about.”
Interviewer: “Okay. What did you learn about eating healthy things?”
C11a: “Um like apples maybe three times a day or something. Or drink some milk or to watch what you usually eat.”

Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating was the basis of instruction around nutrition. Nutrition-related concepts that were introduced during instruction were reinforced through a variety of activities including for example games, worksheets, stories, taste testing, and label reading. Daily themes, including All Foods Can Fit, Foods From Afar, and Snack Attack, focused on different aspects of nutrition. All Foods Can Fit provided children with an overview of Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating with emphasis on variety. Foods From Afar also emphasized variety in that children were exposed to and given an opportunity to taste a variety of ethnic foods. Snack Attack introduced the concept of moderation and choosing healthy snacks based on green light (go ahead choose these snacks anytime), yellow light (use caution when choosing these snacks), and red light (stop and think about how often you choose these snacks) snack guidelines. Instruction on the last day of camp was not based on the theme Party Hardy but instead focused on the Vegetables and Fruit Food Group of
Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and ways to increase vegetable and fruit intake. This was reinforced by for example making a fruit pizza for the wind-up party.

During interviews, the counselors described what they thought the children learned at the Food Fun Camp about nutrition.

Interview 1
Counselor B: “And then throughout the whole week we talk about the food guide.”
Counselor A: “Mmm. Mmm.”
Counselor B: “And everything ties in basically. Like every game has something to do with the food groups.”
Counselor A: “Right.”
Counselor B: “So understanding those.”
Counselor A: “And everyday like you saw had a theme. So, with the ethnic day they learned different foods. And they got to taste different foods. And then with the snack day they learned how to prepare healthy snacks. And they learned the red light green light yellow light snacks. And then with the vegetables and fruits we got them brainstorming ideas about how they could eat more vegetables and fruits.”

Interview 2
Counselor A: “A fun environment to learn the basics of cooking. And basically healthy eating, all foods in moderation”
Counselor B: “I think it has definitely gotten them, maybe not the cooking part, but all the other games and activities just got them thinking about food more. Like just looking at what they’re eating.”
Counselor A: “Opening their eyes.”
Counselor B: “What food group it fits in or how much sugar it has, or just paying more attention to it. Which is a goal because they’re looking at what they’re eating and they’re thinking what else can I try to fix it a little bit. Um just everything that we did had food in it some how. So I think just looking at what they’re eating more. I think that’s what those kids learned. And then there’s the basics of cooking. How to read a recipe, the things that we ingrained in them ten times a day, read the recipe.”

Although the children talked mostly about learning to cook at the Food Fun Camp, they also described learning about nutrition. With respect to nutrition, children described learning about healthy snacking, specifically green, yellow, and red light snacks. The children also described learning about what seemed to be the food groups.
“Once we went to the fair, we made snacks, we learned about nutrition, about red and green and yellow light snacks, and um we learned how to cook stuff.”

Interviewer: “Mmm. You and I played football at the fair didn’t we (laugh)? So tell me about the red and yellow and green light snacks.”

C12a: “Well a green yellow I mean a green light snack is like apples, oranges, stuff like that. And orange juice. Yellow is like chocolate milk and not one hundred percent orange juice. And yellow light I mean red light is um like chocolate bars, brownies, and stuff like that”

Interviewer: “Mmm. What did you learn about nutrition?”

C12a: “Mmm that’s like the green, well um that like we learned some stuff like parts of the food groups. And the nutrition parts that green light red light stuff.”

Interviewer: “Mmm. So tell me what you learnt about the food groups at food fun camp.”

C12a: “Well just the names of the groups. You put up your hand and just say one food from that food group and then say as many foods as you can.”

C5a: “It was fun. But when we played Foodopoly it was fun learning all about those food um about the fruits and vegetables, meat products, um milk and eggs so.”

Interviewer: “So those are the food groups that you learned? Is that what those are?”

C5a: “Yep. Well usually I didn’t know what peanut butter was in. I thought it was in, I thought it was in grains.”

Interviewer: “But where is it?”

C5a: “Meats.”

4.3 Parents

Analysis of data from the parent interviews resulted in 11 categories. By comparing data within and between categories, three major themes emerged related to the research questions in addition to contextual information about children’s food-related activities at home. First, I will present an overview of the categories, describe the context of food-related activities at home, and then discuss the major themes and corresponding categories in more detail.
4.3.1 Overview of Categories

Many of the categories helped to describe and illustrate the major themes, while some of these categories and others helped to provide context and understanding about children’s lives at home with respect to food-related activities. The 11 categories, each with several subcategories, are outlined in Table 4.1. I will draw from several of the categories to describe the context of children’s lives at home with respect to food-related activities as well as to describe each of the major themes from the parents’ perspective.

4.3.2 Context of Food-Related Activities at Home

During interviews after the Food Fun Camp, parents described food-related activities that their children were generally involved in at home as well as how they, and others, were involved. This contextual information about food-related activities at home helped to provide understanding about the environment in which Food Fun Camp activities may or may not have been integrated. The description includes usual food-related activities children were involved in as well as integrated Food Fun Camp experiences.

Mothers were the primary individuals responsible for food-related activities in the home although those interviewed did say that others in the family, such as husbands and children, did help occasionally. A few of the parents felt that responsibility for food-related activities was a collective effort within the family.

P12a: "I would say it’s a pretty big role in all that. I get the groceries. I plan the meals to a certain extent. If I plan them and then I have to change everything because ——’s (husband) working late or I’m late or something so it kind of goes to heck. But I cook most of the meals although —— (husband) makes the lunches. And C12a helps out with cooking sometimes but mostly the responsibility for cooking is mine.”
Table 4.1 Parent Categories and Subcategories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>SUBCATEGORIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for enrolling children in the Food Fun Camp</td>
<td>Child’s interests&lt;br&gt;Learn about cooking/nutrition&lt;br&gt;Attended last year&lt;br&gt;Needed child care&lt;br&gt;Try something different&lt;br&gt;How parents found out about Food Fun Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s past opportunities to participate in food-related programs</td>
<td>No past programs&lt;br&gt;Other programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ role in the family with respect to food-related activities</td>
<td>Primary&lt;br&gt;Shared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents’ approaches to their children’s food-related activities</td>
<td>Food preparation/Cooking&lt;br&gt;Meal planning&lt;br Groceries shopping&lt;br&gt;Nutrition&lt;br&gt;Food/Eating&lt;br&gt;Food/Kitchen safety&lt;br&gt;Cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s food-related activities at home in general</td>
<td>Prepare food/cook&lt;br&gt;Bake&lt;br&gt;Use kitchen equipment&lt;br&gt;Help with grocery shopping&lt;br&gt;Set table/Clean kitchen&lt;br&gt;Look at recipe books&lt;br&gt;Choose foods/meals&lt;br&gt;Talk about food&lt;br&gt;Talk about nutrition&lt;br&gt;Talk about food/kitchen safety&lt;br&gt;Help with gardening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents feelings about children’s involvement in food-related activities</td>
<td>Positive&lt;br&gt;Neutral&lt;br&gt;Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s perception of Food Fun Camp</td>
<td>What children did at camp Feedback from children Value/Satisfaction Suggestions for improvement How the camp was run</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Fun Camp recipes made at home</td>
<td>Smoothies Pinwheel Sandwiches Banana Pudding Spaghetti Sauce Calzones Muffins Sunflower Cookies Black-eyed Susans Quesadillas Pretzels with Personality Fried Rice with Ham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent’s perception of changes in child since Food Fun Camp</td>
<td>More confident More aware of nutrition Help more often Help with different activities Try new foods Make food on own more often Prepare different foods Experimenting with food More aware of food/kitchen safety Better at setting table/cleaning kitchen Intent to make food No changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barriers to involvement in food-related activities at home</td>
<td>Time Children’s involvement in other activities Parents’ behaviours Cleaning not a barrier Children’s physical limitations Ingredients unavailable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Factors that facilitated involvement in food-related activities at home</td>
<td>Parents/Others’ behaviours Food Fun Camp Child’s attributes Ingredients/Equipment available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many parents felt that food preparation was an activity that their children could do with some degree of supervision.

P10a: "...We were together in the kitchen. I don’t leave her by herself, you know making things. But, because she likes to do things on her own, when she’s doing one thing I’ll be doing something else...”

Some parents approached food preparation and/or cooking as a normal part of their child’s routine.

P10a: “But it’s a normal routine for her to come home and be in our kitchen. It’s not like she’s you know playing outside and I have to call her in to help. That’s just part of our, how our home life is. We come home, change our clothes and go get supper organized you know.”

P17a: “They each prepare their own lunch.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P17a: “And they have, they’ve been doing that for a long long time. Since they were in kindergarten kind of thing I started them out.”

Other parents approached food preparation and/or cooking as an activity they would like their child to be involved in or involved in more but did not insist that their child be involved.

A few parents seemed to consider food preparation and/or cooking as an important life skill for everyone and applied this in relation to their children. This was expressed by parents who grew up in families where cooking did not seem to be considered a life skill in which all members of the family should be involved.

Although parents were primarily responsible for planning meals, whether in advance or immediately prior to meal preparation, on occasion some parents gave their children food options and the child chose or parents asked children for ideas. This occurred either for specific meals (e.g., breakfast, lunch, supper), on certain days (e.g., Saturday or Sunday), or for special occasions (e.g., birthdays).
P8a: “...Um I’ll offer him different preferences you know for supper would you prefer we did this or that? And he can make a choice that way...”

P12a: “...sometimes I’ll say what do you want to have for dinner. Like for tonight. He chose a can of rigatoni or what ever and that was fine. But um usually I don’t ask because he’ll say pizza. He’s got certain favorite things so I don’t ask him, unless you want to make those particular things there’s no point in asking...”

The few parents who planned meals, most often the evening meal, in advance (i.e., 1–2 weeks) usually involved their children in planning the menu. This involvement consisted of the child choosing one or two meals for the menu.

With respect to nutrition, parents’ approaches varied. However, most approaches were in relation to what the parents termed as “junk” food. Some parents didn’t allow “junk” food or allowed it only on occasion, others suggested healthier options in place of “junk” food, and some parents tried to teach what they considered to be general healthy eating principles.

P14a: “...We don’t buy a whole lot of well I call it junk. We don’t buy a lot of chips. Once in awhile we buy a bag of candies. Uh something you know something like that. Or a bag of chips you know I mean if there’s a hockey game on and we’re going to watch it well then sure.”

P19a: “Um she usually has crackers for a snack. They don’t eat much treats for a snack. We don’t let them do that...”

The extent and nature of children’s involvement in meal preparation has been largely unexplored (Corwin et al., 1999). In the Food Fun Camp study, all of the children prepared food at home on their own and/or with an adult to some extent. Although all of the children prepared food on their own, the level preparation required before the food was to be eaten ranged on a continuum from none or very little preparation to following a recipe with many ingredients. On one end of this preparation continuum, food was ready-to-eat and required no preparation other than to take it out
of the package, or required some assembly but required no cooking or equipment such as, for example, a fruit cup, pre-packaged cookies, peanut butter and crackers, cereal, or sandwiches.

Interviewer: “Oh what about snacks. Does she make snacks?”
P11a: “Um.”
Interviewer: “Or get her own snacks?”
P11a: “She’ll get her own like a bed time snack quite often, that’s the one that she gets. If I don’t get it for her then she gets it yeah. And it will be a cookie or a bagel or a bun. Or something like that.”

Interviewer: “Does she get her own snacks or does she have snacks, does someone get them for her? How does that work?”
P14a: “Mainly they get their own snacks. Because after school they’re, I’m usually not home for about ten or fifteen minutes after they are home. And they usually are in the cupboard. They want something good to snack on. So it’s pretty much that they’re on their own for that.”
Interviewer: “Okay, so.”
P14a: “And it’s usually stuff that’s you know that I’ve purchased that’s ready in the cupboard and they just have to, like maybe a fruit cup or cookies or whatever is in the cupboard basically.”
Interviewer: “Okay. Um so does C14a help herself then to snacks?”
P14a: “Yes.”

The middle of the continuum consisted of preparation that involved recipes with few ingredients and some measuring and/or required some cooking. This included foods such as packaged pudding mix, boxed macaroni and cheese, eggs, crackers with cheese melted in the microwave, canned soup, salads, grilled cheese sandwiches, tortilla roll-ups (i.e., pinwheel sandwiches—a Food Fun Camp recipe) and hotdogs.

P13a: “We do have what we call Wednesday night live off the land night. Where basically the kids have to get their own supper. And um like she’ll make herself a can of soup or you know she’ll make herself a grilled cheese sandwich.”

The other end of the continuum consisted of food preparation that included recipes with several ingredients, lots of preparation work using a variety of kitchen equipment and/or cooking, like fried rice, smoothies, calzones, French toast, quesadillas, and coated
Most of these recipes, including fried rice, smoothies, calzones and quesadillas, were recipes from the Food Fun Camp.

P4a: "...I know she made the fried rice while her grandparents were here. The fried rice that came in the um cookbook from the food camp."
Interviewer: "Okay. And how did she go about doing that? Describe the process that she went through. Were you around while she was doing that?"
P4a: "I was no where to be found. She did it by herself so I don't even know."
Interviewer: "That's fine."
P4a: "Well grandpa was here but I don't think he really did much. I precooked the rice for her because we boil that and that was all I did. She fried it herself. She uh I guess I was in the house. She fried it herself, she chopped the onions by herself, she um we skipped the ham. She scrambled the egg you know did the eggs. She added the soy. She did the whole works by herself."

Most of the children also prepared food and/or cooked with an adult. The child's level of involvement ranged on a continuum from the parent taking a lead role and directing the child to do certain tasks to the child taking a lead role with the parent assisting. When the child prepared food and/or cooked with an adult who assumed the lead role, the child usually stirred, poured, or retrieved ingredients as instructed by an adult, or did other activities not requiring kitchen equipment.

P11a: "... Oh we made pizza the other night that's what it was. She requested pizza. I knew there was something we had done just recently. Yeah. We had homemade pizza and she was helping get the dough into the pan and I had everything ready and she put stuff on, the sauce and the meat, cheese."

Many of the children who prepared food and/or cooked with an adult taking the lead role also measured ingredients as instructed or used a variety of utensils or other kitchen equipment.

P12a: "He helps in cutting up vegetables and stuff but that isn't an actual recipe. I mean I don't think I have either so."
Interviewer: "Okay. What about stirring things on the stove."
P12a: "Yeah like tonight he opened the can, he poured it in the pot. I turned the stove on and he stood there and stirred it until it was bubbling. And then he said it was ready so I turned it off and poured it in the bowl for him."

71
A few of the children occasionally assumed more of a lead role when they prepared food and/or cooked with an adult. In these cases the child read from a recipe, measured, and/or used kitchen equipment or appliances.

A few of the children had baked on their own at home although an adult was usually close by (i.e., in the household). These children typically made items such as cookies or cakes. In some cases the recipe made was from the Food Fun Camp. These recipes included black-eyed susans and pretzels.

P13a: “Yeah. Um it was pretty hot to bake. You know I think there was a day when she called me to bake but we don’t have air conditioning so she hasn’t done any in this last while. But she has on her own like made cookies. She made a brownie once.”

Some of the children baked at home with an adult. Items baked included cookies, buns, muffins, and cakes. In most cases the child participated in activities as directed by the adult and in other cases the parent helped out as needed (e.g., taking items out of the oven, heavy mixing, or cleaning). In a few cases the recipe made was from the Food Fun Camp, these included the orange cranberry muffins and sunflower cookies.

Many of the children used kitchen equipment at home. A few of the children used the stove and/or the oven. When children used the stove and/or oven, an adult was usually present. For those children that used the oven, the parent removed hot items from the oven in almost all cases. Many of the children used a microwave oven.

P17a: “She can set the oven. And she, I was probably putting the pans in and out. Because she was nervous to burn herself.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P17a: “Or maybe I would get her, I might have, no I think probably what I did was I got her to put in the cold pan. And then I would pull it out when it was done baking.”
P4a: “Oh yeah microwave, you asked about appliances, microwave. She uses the microwave.”
Many parents described their children using appliances and utensils such as toasters, mix masters, hand mixers, blenders, can openers, graters, vegetable peelers, and knives.

P10A: “Um she can use, she uses the grater. And she uses of course the knives and cutting boards. She also uses a blender. She uses the beater like when you’re making a cake. You know the electric beater. Um toaster. The only thing I don’t think she’s ever used nor do we use it a lot anyway is the food processor. But we use the grater a lot. You know for grating vegetables and cheese.”

Most children were involved in setting the table before a meal and/or clearing it off after a meal. Setting the table seemed to be a task that children did when they were asked to by their parents. Helping to clear off the table seemed to be a task children were expected to do. Of the children who helped clear the table, a few of them helped put dishes in the dishwasher.

P3a: “She sets the table when I ask her.”

P11a: “She doesn’t usually ask to set the table but I usually ask her to set the table. Um clearing well that’s a job we all have to do. That’s just how it goes. They have to help with clearing the table.”

Many children participated in grocery shopping with their parents. Children’s involvement usually consisted of retrieving items as directed by their parents while at the grocery store. Children often helped choose fruits or vegetables.

P8a: “Well I’ll have him go select the fruit or the vegetables. Okay go get me this or go get me that. And he might see a different kind of apple or a new kind of fruit or vegetable and he wants to try. Usually I will but occasionally depending on the price or if he wants an apple-pear four days running and they’re three dollars each everyday well no we’re not going to do that again for a snack.”

Some parents revealed that their children also tried to influence grocery purchases.

These were usually items that the children liked but that the parents seldom purchased.
Some of the parents indicated that their children looked at recipe or cookbooks. When looking at recipe books children often expressed that they would like to make certain recipes, however this did not always lead to actually making a recipe.

P9a: “Often he’ll pick things out of his other cookbook and I don’t have the things that he wants to make and it kind of gets put off and then we forget about it you know.”

According to the parents, children were sometimes involved in choosing foods for meals. This involvement consisted of the children making meal suggestions at the parents’ request or children choosing from options listed by the parents. Occasionally, children made requests on their own.

Some of the parents indicated that their children talked about food. The most common topic children talked about was their food preferences.

P5a: “They will complain about their lunch from time to time. That they would have liked this, that, or the other...”

Some of the parents indicated that their children talked about nutrition. Food groups and nutrients were the most common topics children talked about.

P12a: “…You know like he’s always telling me that pizza has all the food groups. And he knows what the food groups and that are. He knew that before. Um no I don’t think he’s talked about nutrition in particular.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P12a: “Any more than he did before. He learned it in school so.”
Interviewer: “Okay. So when he does talk about those things, even though it’s not anything more, mostly it’s about the food groups or?”
P12a: “Yeah. Or you know he’ll say eat vegetables because they give you fibre. So he knows that vegetables give you fibre. He’ll say you better eat it its got fibre in it. But I don’t think that came out of the food camp. I think we’ve kind of taught him as we’ve gone along.”

According to the parents, some of the children also talked about food and/or kitchen safety. The most common issue children talked about was safe handling of knives.

P4a: “…You know how you hold your fingers back like that. She told me that.”
Interviewer: “When you’re cutting you mean?”
P4a: “Yeah when you’re cutting whatever. And uh she’s been doing that. She’s been quite conscientious about it. She’s very careful with knives and things.”

Most of the parents felt positive (i.e., good) about their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Some of these parents wanted their children to be more involved in food-related activities at home and some of these parents wanted their children’s involvement to remain the same.

P9A: “Well we haven’t done a great deal. As I said because things have kind of been busy with school but I feel good that he wants to get involved.”

Interviewer: “Would you like him to be more or less involved than what he is right now?”
P9A: “Oh more. More.”

Interviewer: “Okay. And what kind of things would you like him to be doing?”
P9A: “Uh I’d like him to take more responsibility. Not necessarily cooking all the time but maybe helping out a little bit more in the kitchen. You know on the food side of it, you know the meal time preparation. But then I guess that’s up to me to get him more involved. You know he is a child after all and he’s either watching t.v. or playing outside out with pals which is what we did like we never had any involvement as children except for drying the dishes.”

A few parents felt neutral or negative about their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home because they didn’t think their children were involved as much as they (the parents) would have liked.

4.3.3 Major Themes

The three major themes that emerged from the parents’ data include perception of the Food Fun Camp, integrated Food Fun Camp activities, and factors that influenced children’s involvement in food-related activities at home.

4.3.3.1 Perception of Food Fun Camp

Most parents indicated that their children had had no opportunities before Food Fun Camp to participate in food-related programs. However, this was often discussed in
When parents were asked about their reasons for enrolling their children in Food Fun Camp, many indicated that it had to do with their children’s interests, especially interest in cooking and helping out in the kitchen. Learning about food, nutrition and/or cooking was a main reason for enrolling children in Food Fun Camp. Some parents seemed to hold hope that the camp would teach their children about or at least increase their interest in “…food things and kitchen things and cooking things.” (P3a) The idea that their children might learn something while at the same time having fun seemed appealing to the parents. This was true even for parents with children who had attended camp twice. Other reasons for enrolling children in the Food Fun Camp included the children attending camp the year before, needing child care, and wanting the children to try something different. The Saskatoon Leisure Guide, as well as word of mouth, were the primary ways that parents found out about the Food Fun Camp.

Parents’ perceptions about what their children did at the Food Fun Camp as well as how the camp was delivered seemed to come from discussions with their children about the camp and reading the camp brochure. Parents’ perceptions of what their children did at camp were quite general in nature. For instance, many parents indicated that their children did hands-on activities, namely cooking, at the Food Fun Camp. Some of the parents indicated that there was some type of nutrition component to the camp and a few parents indicated that there were field trips.

P3a: “Had fun with food. She learned to make things and just probably learnt the basics of what you need to know for cooking. The measurements, the methods, those sorts of things…”
P12a: "Well he cooked some stuff (laugh). Learnt about some different recipes. Made some friends. Had fun with the various little hobby things that he did with the potatoes and all that kind of stuff sort of craft things. And I think he got more of an interest in cooking because afterwards he was all excited to try out some of these recipes. And he did make those like pizza pocket things [calzones]. And he wanted to make those smoothies with fruit and yogurt so we made those…"

P14a: "My impression was that she had a lot of hands on experience. So things that she had brought home they had made at camp so that was that was good. Um and there’s a bit of some on the Canada food guide…"

P18a: "Oh gosh lots of things. I got to hear lots of stories every day. Um they had a lot of hands on activities."
Interviewer: "Mmm."
P18a: "And they really enjoyed those. They feel they’re really proud of their baking and they had um oh we got lots of information. Trivia types. Mom did you know that da da dah. So we got lots of that from both girls. So they had the knowledge part um they told us about their activities. Where they went. I’m trying to remember they went to a store and a few little trips. But that hands on baking and those types of things, that was really that was fresh with them, we heard lots about that."

Parents often discussed feedback they received from their children about the Food Fun Camp. Feedback was usually discussed in relation to the nature and amount of feedback that parents received. Connor et al. (1986) pointed out in their evaluation of the Future Fit cardiovascular health education and fitness program that, although subject to wide individual differences, the extent to which children talk at home about their activities may indicate their level of interest and involvement in those activities. Some parents indicated receiving little feedback from their children about the Food Fun Camp while others received a lot of feedback. Feedback was mostly positive or neutral in nature, and usually quite general. For instance, most parents indicated that their children said they had had fun. The most common topic parents described their children talking about was the activities they did each day, specifically the recipes they made.
P3A: “I know they went on a hike one day. But she didn’t really focus very much on anything else other than food. Which is probably good I guess. Did you do something else (laughing)?”

Interviewer: “When she did talk about the food preparation part do you remember the kinds of things she was saying at all about it?”
P4a: “Food preparation.”
Interviewer: “You said that she thought it was great but did she give you any idea about what they made or?”
P4a: “I’m not really giving you what you need to know am I? Okay. What they made?”
Interviewer: “Yeah or how they went about it or any of those kind of details.”
P4a: (shakes head no)
Interviewer: “No? Okay.”
P4a: “That’s what I mean, it was pretty general.”

Interviewer: “Okay. So did C17a talk to you about the food fun camp?”
P17a: “Yes.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. And what kind of things did she say?”
P17a: “Oh she had a lot of fun, she enjoyed trying the different recipes. She enjoyed the other kids she was with. She enjoyed the teachers who were with her. She found the days went by fast. Every morning that it was time to get ready for food fun camp she would, there was no prompting or hurrying her up she was set, ready and raring to go.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. Did she talk to you about the camp during the week of the camp?”
P17a: “Oh yes at the end of every day she would say what they had done. The different recipes and the different activities other than the cooking.”

Very few parents received negative feedback from their children. Two parents indicated that their children would have liked to have done more cooking and one parent indicated that her child would have liked to have known ahead of time that she didn’t need to bring a lunch on one particular day.

Most parents seemed satisfied with the experience their children had at the Food Fun Camp. Generally parents considered the camp to be a “good” one that their children enjoyed. This was evidenced throughout most interviews by comments such as “he had a blast when he was there and I think he’d be willing to go back again, and that’s important to me” (p6a), “I thought it was a good camp” (P9a), “I think she enjoyed it
and I think it was good for her” (P11a), “it was overall a positive experience for her to be at the camp” (P14a), “I was really impressed actually” (P15a), “it was just a wonderful experience for her” (P17a), and “it was wonderful, worth every cent, it was great” (P18a). There were very few negative comments about the Food Fun Camp. Negative comments about the camp were usually described in conjunction with positive comments.

The results indicate that parents were satisfied with the experience their children had at the Food Fun Camp. The nature of feedback that parents received from their children seemed to influence parents’ satisfaction with the camp. That is, if parents perceived that their children had fun at the camp, then parents seemed satisfied with the experience their children had at the camp. In addition, if parents perceived that their children learned something while at the camp, this also seemed to positively influence their satisfaction with the camp.

The nature of feedback that parents received, as well as the amount of feedback that parents received, seemed to influence parents’ perception of what the children did at the Food Fun Camp. The results indicate that parents had only a general understanding of what the children did at the Food Fun Camp possibly because they received little feedback about specific activities and mostly feedback about whether or not the children were enjoying themselves.

4.3.3.2 Integrated Food Fun Camp Experiences

According to the parents, many of the Food Fun Camp recipes were made at home. These included smoothies, pinwheel sandwiches, banana pudding, spaghetti
sauce, calzones, orange cranberry and blueberry corn muffins, sunflower cookies, black-eyed susans, quesadillas, pretzels, and fried rice with ham.

In many cases the camp recipes were made by the children on their own as explained by these parents:

P16a: “Mmm. Mmm. She made us some well I’ll say pretty well completely, she made us lunch one day. And she made a recipe that was in the food camp. It was the tortilla roll-ups [Food Fun Camp pinwheel sandwiches]. And she loved them. And she did a great job of them…”

P17a: “Well this was probably last week. She said oh mom can I try this recipe I learned at food fun camp? Sure. Cause she had seen that I had those flour tortillas in the fridge. So I said sure. So she pulls these out and she puts some sauce on it and grated some cheese and put it on and then said okay we have to put these in the frying pan for a few minutes so she did these up. So that was our appetizer that night before the meal…”

In some cases camp recipes were made at home by children and parents together.

P17a: “Oh we had to make cookies. Those sunflower cookies. She really likes to make those. And so what I tend to do if she initiates that she wants to make cookies or what ever then I just am on standby to help. I kind of let her set the pace and if she needs help I help her.”

P11a: “The muffins. We’ve made the two muffins and the sunflower cookies. Yeah.”

In a few cases parents made camp recipes alone, as described by this parent:

P11a: “And I made it [spaghetti sauce] here a couple of weeks ago. I made that when I was doing a whole bunch of baking and stuff and I froze it and that’s what we’re having for supper tonight. I put it in the freezer.”

When describing food-related activities that their children were involved in at home, some of the parents indicated that their children looked at recipe or cookbooks. Children often expressed that they would like to make certain recipes; however, this did not always lead to actually making a recipe. In some instances children looked at the cookbook from Food Fun Camp.
Interviewer: “Okay. Has she made any of the recipes from the cookbook [Food Fun Camp cookbook]?”
P14a: “I don’t think we have actually.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P14a: “She’s pulled it out several times.”
Interviewer: “Okay. So when she pulled it out and was looking through recipes, what was she doing that for?”
P14a: “Um she likes to look through it.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
P14a: “She’ll say like well we made this one and it was really good or you know she’s got that one favorite one that she wants to keep making, it’s a dairy shake of some kind a milkshake. So I don’t know. I think she just likes to look through it.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P14a: “It kind of brings back memories or you know, knows what she wants to try and doesn’t want to.”

Almost all parents perceived changes in their child since their child attended Food Fun Camp. Many parents felt their child’s confidence with food-related activities at home had increased since attending Food Fun Camp as evidenced by the following quotes.

P12a: “I think it’s given him more confidence that he can actually make something where as before he didn’t think he’d be able to actually do it himself...”

And later...
P12a: “He’s never, he’s helped me by stirring it but that would have been his job, stirring. And he would help with icing a bit but he wanted to do the whole thing himself this time. And you know he put the ingredients in and he wouldn’t have done that in the past.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
P12a: “Yeah so just more independence and confidence I think.”

P4a: “...Um she seems a lot more confident. And calmer. Usually she’d be in there like a dirty shirt and you’ve got to be here but she has to stand there too just to see what you’re doing. Obviously the person in charge, shall we say, needs to see what she’s doing so that’s the best view but she doesn’t have to have the best view all the time now because she already knows what’s going on.”
Counselor B: “Yeah. I think they knew how to cook or they had cooked or they wanted to cook and just by giving them the recipes to take home I think that helps like just because you know the recipes were written for kids and they knew they could do it.”

Interviewer: “So what are you saying, they’ll take the book home and.”
Counselor B: “Yeah and use it so like maybe if they were at home they didn’t have a cookbook for kids.”
Counselor A: “Or like just an adult one or something.”
Counselor B: “Yeah. That might of sort of prevented them from doing it. I don’t know. I think just confidence or something. It just seemed that they had the recipe book and all the kids that I talked to on Friday were like I’m going home and I’m making this.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
Counselor B: “Out of this book. I just kind of think they thought they could do it because they cooked out of that book.”

Later in the interview, children’s confidence was raised again.

Counselor B: “…I think a lot of them have more confidence that they can cook and they know how to do it because they’ve done it for five days straight. That I think will help them at home.”
Counselor A: “The confidence’s a big thing. I think they have confidence. Like maybe they weren’t intimidated before, maybe they were. But I think they will be able to walk into the kitchen and say mmm you know I think I can do that. Where as they may not have before.”

Confidence gained at the camp, as identified by the counselors, may have transferred into confidence with food-related activities at home, as was identified by the parents. In
Liquori and colleagues' (1998) evaluation of the Cookshop school program, children in grades 4–6 also seemed to benefit from intense skill development activities and increased their perception of their ability, or self-efficacy, to prepare foods.

Some parents felt their children were more aware of nutrition, helped more often and with different food-related activities, and/or were more willing to try new foods.

Interviewer: “Mmm. Okay. What, if any, changes have you noticed in C8a since he’s been to food fun camp?”
P8a: “Um he mentions about having things from all the food groups more. And that’s really about the only change. Not necessarily that he always does it, what is actually on his plate, but he knows about it and he knows all the food groups and having a balanced meal.”

Interviewer: “How has he shown you that he knows about that?”
P8a: “Well I’ve asked him. When he said that I said well what do you mean by that? What did you learn about that? And he’d say well meats and alternatives and that’s the way he says it meats and alternatives. Dairy, fruit and vegetables, and the grains. So he’s able to pick out what’s not.”

P3a: “She’ll grab, she’ll walk into the kitchen now and I never noticed her doing this before and if I’m stirring something she’ll take over and stir it. When I was making jams and stuff she was doing that sort of thing.”

P18a: “…She really loved that yogurt or both of them made those smoothies. Oh yeah. I had to buy tonnes of yogurt, that’s right. I forgot. The smoothies were wonderful. And those, oh it’s coming back now and they made the other one too. That’s the only time C18b will eat fruit. I have never been able to get her. I should thank you guys for that. I could never get this child to eat fruit since the day she’s walked.”

Some of the changes parents’ perceived in the children may have been experiences children had at the Food Fun Camp and hence integrated into their lives at home. For instance, several nutrition topics were covered at the Food Fun Camp and some parents perceived that their children were more aware of nutrition. Similarly, the Youth Cooking School summer program showed significant gains in nutrition knowledge among 8–12 year old children (Winter et al., 1999). Trying new foods was encouraged at the Food Fun Camp and was also a change parents identified in their
children. Helping with different food-related activities at home may have been related to the range of practical experiences the children had with food preparation at the camp and the confidence they gained through practice while at the camp. Winter et al. (1999) also found in their evaluation of the Youth Cooking School summer program that participants’ perceived behaviours toward food preparation (“I could bake a good food product by myself”), food safety (“I understand and apply safe food handling practices at home”), and nutrition (“I could choose and eat foods each day from all the food groups”) changed as a result of the program. In the Future Fit program changes in children’s knowledge and attitudes transferred into changes in behaviours at home as reported by 62% of the parents (Connor et al., 1986). These results suggest that children do tend to take home what they learn in nutrition education programs.

A few parents thought their children made food on their own more often and prepared different foods since attending Food Fun Camp. Experimenting with food preparation, more awareness of food and/or kitchen safety, better at setting the table and/or cleaning the kitchen, and intent to make food were described by very few parents. One parent indicated she perceived no change in her child’s food-related activities since attending Food Fun Camp.

4.3.3.3 Factors that Influenced Food-Related Activities

There were several factors described by parents that seemed to inhibit or facilitate children’s general involvement in food-related activities at home.

Several elements of time were described by many parents as a barrier to their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. General lack of time due to
busy schedules was one element of time preventing children from being involved in food-related activities, as described by these parents:

Interviewer: “Okay. So are there any other things that might inhibit C11a from being able to do more activities like you would like her to be doing?”
P11a: “Just time. I work from nine till five so by the time I get home, get her home, she’s like got piano to do and school work and stuff and I kind of like to get her to do that right away.”

Interviewer: “You had mentioned that you would like her to be you know possibly more involved with food preparation. What’s holding her back from being more involved?”
P16a: “Time.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
P16a: “I mean she does have dance classes, she does art, she’s done gymnastics but she doesn’t do that anymore. She does music. And she’s got to practice and that kind of thing. So it is strictly a time factor. And she’s still got to be a kid right. So even though I’m saying yeah it would be nice for her to help, I’m not going to expect it of her all the time. She’s part of the family, I mean she’s got to be a kid first.”

Parents reported that children asking to do food-related activities at inappropriate times was another barrier. Parents perceived inappropriate times to be just before bed or supper time or when the parent was not available to supervise.

P4a: “It’s usually just poor timing.”
Interviewer: “Okay. So poor timing. What do you mean by that?”
P4a: “You know well the other night, I think it was on the weekend, the Italian cheese bread. I keep coming back to that, it is very good I will admit. It takes probably about an hour and a half to make let’s say. To mix and knead and let it rise and put it together and bake it and everything. And we were in the middle of cleaning out the storage closet and I just like to be available. Readily and easily available, sitting here reading my book and she can just say mom blah blah blah. Rather than have to put something down or whatever, and come here and then go back. I think I would be her biggest stumbling block (laughing).”

P17a: “… Like it’s crazy right now during the week with activities, and back and forth. And we don’t get to sit together very much for a supper meal so we try to do it on the weekends. But you know if I ask her to do something she’s usually quite eager if it’s something in the kitchen to help out with. She’s quite eager to help. And I probably don’t ask her as much as I should and sometimes when she is asking to do something it’s maybe not the best time to do it.”

Husband: (entered room) “Like make cookies just as she’s going to bed.”
P17a: “Yeah like no no this is not a good time of night. We have to plan this a little bit. Go to bed. Or you know she’ll want to make something but I don’t have the ingredients on hand. So if she wants, you have to plan ahead…”

The other element of time described by parents as a barrier was that involving their children in food-related activities took more time than doing it themselves. Parents didn’t feel they could take the time they perceived as necessary to involve their children in food-related activities because of the families’ busy schedules or because of the parents’ lack of patience.

P4a: (whispering) “I love it when she’s around.”
Interviewer: “Like around helping in the kitchen?”
P4a: “Yeah. But if she just didn’t slow me down so much. Maybe I should just have more patience.”
Interviewer: “So would you like him, at his age right now, would you like him to be more or less involved with these activities?”
P12a: “I think it’s just about right. Yeah. I mean we’re very busy and work a lot of hours so I don’t always have the time you know it takes a little bit longer when he’s helping sometimes.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
P12a: “Uh unless he’s you know cutting up veggies or setting the table then that’s great. But when he was making the calzones it took a little longer you know and you kinda have to be patient with him. So we don’t always have that kind of time. But I think it’s good. Yeah. He’s done more and like I think it’s good that he shows the interest. He enjoys it, it’s not like I’m telling him to do it, he wants to do it.”

Children’s involvement in other activities was described by many parents as a barrier to involvement in food-related activities. In some cases children were more interested in these other activities, parents or children gave these other activities priority over food-related activities, and/or children didn’t have time to do food-related activities because of involvement in these other activities.

P2a: “I don’t think she could be more involved without being less involved in other things. She reads a lot, she’s diligent about doing her homework and extra projects and she plays double bass and goes swimming and plays with her friends… But her interests you know sometimes she’s more into playing her double bass and sometimes she’s computers.”
P9a: "Oh the school work. Oh and about the time. He likes to get out and about after school. And then the homework is an issue you know and it takes him a while to do his homework because he likes to be very neat. So that is the main thing we do in the evening now. And he’s starting basketball. So he really doesn’t have a lot of time left to do all the things. Plus I work so many days a week and in that case like this week I worked at five fifteen. Well you know I go to work and then I come home it will be after midnight so the next day I’m a bit goofed up. So it’s going to be mainly the weekends that we spend any time. Or when he doesn’t have anything to do.”

P12a: “Other than he’s distracted and he wants to do something else. You know play Nintendo or whatever. But it’s usually just (unintelligible) supper and I’m rushing to put something together. Now it might even be me saying well go and clean the porch and I’ll call you when it’s ready. You know, but I don’t think there’s anything that discourages him from doing it. ——’s (husband) encouraged him too, my husband.”

Children’s involvement in food-related activities at home was often restricted by parents due to the parents’ concern about their children’s safety. Parents seemed to be most concerned about their children burning themselves if they used the stove or oven or cutting themselves if they were allowed to use a knife.

P10a: “Yep um there’s things she’s not allowed to do. She’s not allowed to turn the stove or the oven on without us there. Anything that’s big like a cabbage that takes a sharp knife she’s not allowed to. She knows taking things out of the oven isn’t something she needs to do. We’ll do it for her.”

Interviewer: “Mmm. Okay. So if she was more involved, what would you want her to be doing?”

P20a: “Mmm, even washing veggies for supper. What other things could she help me with? I just don’t want her to get splattered with anything hot from the stove I just worry about that. What else? I worry about cutting herself with a knife too. But you know what I mean I could give her you know a job that is easier like that you know chances are slimmer of her cutting herself. Like I did let her oh she did peel potatoes for me once. We were having supper and she volunteered to help and I said well would you like to peel potatoes and she said me peel potatoes with a knife. And I said yeah as long as you’re careful you know. Okay. And she peeled about three potatoes. So she did good.”
Cleaning up after food preparation was described by parents as a task that their children did not do very well. However, this was not usually described as a barrier to having children involved in food-related activities at home.

Parents’ and/or others’ behaviours, such as giving encouragement and purposefully involving children in food-related activities, were described by many parents as factors that facilitated children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Social support from parents, as well as teachers and school food service personnel, may also be helpful in encouraging children to modify their eating behaviours (Corwin et al., 1999). In the Food Fun Camp study, encouragement was usually given to children by parents, grandparents, and/or siblings. Encouragement was verbal and usually consisted of complimenting children after tasting something they had made or urging children to do food-related activities, such as prepare food.

Interviewer: “Okay. So what about, does she get encouragement from you to come and do that kind of stuff?”
P3a: “Oh yeah!”
Interviewer: “Okay, what about other family members?”
P3a: “Um after they’ve tasted her cooking they definitely want her to make more (laughing). After they tasted her cracker hors d’oeuvres they wanted more, how did you do that C3a? Well that was the seven year old. He was quite excited about these things. So yeah I think she’s gotten encouragement from the family...”

P10a: “…On the weekends especially Saturday, like we encourage her, what do you want to bake today, what do you want to cook? She brings out the cookbooks and I tell you we have lots of them. And she’ll go through and she picks. She goes to the pantry and brings out all the ingredients and you know no problem.”

Purposefully involving children in food-related activities was usually described as an ongoing strategy for facilitating children’s involvement in food-related activities at
home. That is, helping out in the kitchen was a situation some children just “grew up with” (P15b).

P15b: “She seems she doesn’t need much encouragement for that kind of stuff, to be involved with food. And I think it just comes, even when she was really really little she’d stand up at the counter.”
P15a: “We’ve always done the Christmas cookie thing.”
P15b: “You’d just get her to stir something or what ever. Always explaining to her this is why we’re adding the flour now.”
P15a: “She learned to crack an egg when she was about three years old.”
P15b: “Yeah so all kinds of little things like that. She just sort of grew up with it.”

However, parents also described involving their children in food-related activities, by giving them specific tasks to do, as a strategy they used or planned to use more often since their children attended Food Fun Camp.

P9a: “…He just said that he enjoyed the time he spent there and he enjoyed making the different dishes and that he would like to make more at home. Of course which we’re going to now that you know the Fall’s coming you know he’s not going to be outside all the time playing. I’m hoping to spend more time letting him make cookies and supper and more doing more things like that…”

A few parents involved or planned to involve their children in different activities than what they had been involved in before attending Food Fun Camp.

P5a: “…C5b has, I’ve started having her regularly peel her vegetables which I didn’t have her do before the camp. But once she came back and told me that she had done it regularly at camp I said fine, we’ll let you try…”

Parents’ feelings about their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home may have influenced children’s involvement in food-related activities. Most of the parents felt positive about their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. However, regardless of whether parents felt positive, neutral, or negative about their children’s involvement in food-related activities, most wanted their children to be more involved as illustrated here:
Interviewer: “Would you like him to be more or less involved than what he is right now?”
P9a: “Oh more. More.”
Interviewer: “Okay. And what kind of things would you like him to be doing?”
P9a: “I’d like him to take more responsibility. Not necessarily cooking all the time but maybe helping out a little bit more in the kitchen. You know on the food side of it, you know the meal time preparation. But then I guess that’s up to me to get him more involved. You know he is a child after all and he’s either watching t.v. or playing outside out with pals which is what we did like we never had any involvement as children except for drying the dishes.”

Interviewer: “How have you felt about C19a’s involvement in these food related activities in the past six weeks?”
P19a: “Well I guess I’ve always felt that for somebody who’s eleven she should be more involved. I mean at twelve she can be baby sitting. That means she should be able to take care of herself and somebody else. So that’s why I told her that I’d thought it was time that she start actually making dinner. I think the more she does that the more independent she’ll get about doing different things in the kitchen.”

Parents’ desire to have their children more involved with food-related activities at home may have been related to the encouragement children received that facilitated their involvement in food-related activities. Parents’ desire to have their children more involved with food-related activities may have also been related to whether parents actively involved their children in food-related activities. That is, if parents wanted their children to be more involved, they may have encouraged them to be more involved or intentionally involved them in food-related activities.

Children’s attributes, such as personality or interest in cooking, were described by some parents as possibly facilitating children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. In other words, parents felt that if children were interested in cooking they were more likely to participate in food-related activities at home.

Having the appropriate ingredients and/or equipment available for children to participate in food-related activities seemed to help to facilitate children’s involvement
Many parents described the Food Fun Camp as a factor that facilitated their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Children’s general participation in the camp, and specifically the hands-on activities at the camp, were the factors cited most often.

P4a: “Uh, I think she’s a little more confident in there.”
Interviewer: “In what way?”
P4a: “I don’t know she just goes about her business. She doesn’t seem to stop as much and ask as many questions. Of course practicing it everyday probably really helps. You know because if you do something for fifteen minutes today and then you don’t do it again for a long while.”
Interviewer: “You mean practicing everyday during the week of camp?”
P4a: “Yeah at the camp. She seems a lot more confident. And calmer…”

Interviewer: “So what would you say are the reasons for her you know offering to help in the kitchen more often or you know being more interested in what you’re doing?”
P6a: “Well, I think being more around an oven and mixing bowl and you know they did a lot of that stuff with their hands. I think she enjoyed that. She enjoyed that messy part (laughing) and we’d like to do it more.”
Interviewer: “So you mean the actual experience of.”
P6a: “Of doing it.”
Interviewer: “Like having a chance to do it?”
P6a: “Absolutely.”
Interviewer: “Sort of sparked her interest?”
P6a: “I think so, I think it has. She had interest before but I think now she feels like on her own she can make her own thing. And she didn’t feel that before. And she just feels like she knows her way around the kitchen better.”

Indeed, Lytle and Achterberg (1995) state that hands-on learning is one instructional technique that is effective in promoting learning and behaviour change.

The variety of recipes children were exposed to at camp, and the camp’s peer environment and fun atmosphere, were other factors perceived by parents that
facilitated changes in their children's in food-related activities at home. Although related to food preference rather than behaviour, other researches have found similar aspects of programs to affect change in children. Liquori and colleagues (1998) suggested that the experience of having fun, working in small groups, and enjoying eating may have been important contributing factors to the effectiveness of the Cookshop school program in enhancing children's preferences for targeted foods (i.e., vegetables and whole grains).

There were several changes in children's food-related activities at home that parents felt were facilitated by the hands-on nature of the activities at Food Fun Camp, as well as the variety of recipes, peer environment, and fun atmosphere. The most salient change related to these aspects of the camp as identified by parents included children having more confidence in their ability to participate in food-related activities at home. Educational skill-building activities should target improving children's confidence in, for example, their ability to prepare healthy meals and snacks (Corwin et al., 1999). Parents also felt that these aspects of the camp gave their children more interest in participating in food-related activities at home and more awareness of healthy eating. Children participating in different food-related activities, making different foods, and experimenting with food preparation were other changes a few parents attributed to these specific aspects of the camp.

Interviewer: “So what, if any of those changes in her would you actually attribute to her participation in the food fun camp?”

P17a: “Probably her eagerness and her confidence. And that I think really showed her that she could create things. You know those cookies that she created from scratch. She can't remember what she put in them. And she tried them here one day, she said I think I can do it exactly the same way. I just let her go and she created these cookies. And she baked them and they were not the greatest and nobody said anything. She just tried them and said these are gross.
And she threw them out. So I said, the suggestion I made there was maybe she should try to follow recipes for a while and then as she gets more confident then she can maybe create again. But I said yeah I think it’s important to learn what different ingredients you need to create a cookie or a muffin or a cupcake or whatever. Yeah. But she’s not afraid to try or chip in and do something. And rarely will she say well I can’t do that if it’s something in the kitchen.”

Interviewer: “Mmm.”
P17a: “I say well can you do this and oh yeah yeah.”

Interviewer: “Okay. So how do you feel about C11a’s involvement? Or how have you felt about C11a’s involvement in the past six weeks with the things that you’ve described to me?”
P11a: “Good. It’s good it’s picked up. And showed that she’s got a little bit of interest and I think it stemmed partly from the food camp.”

Interviewer: “Okay. What about, you had mentioned that she’s conscious about you know types of food, what about that?”
P13a: “I can’t think of anything specific but I know she’ll say something like oh we have to have bread we don’t have all the four food groups. Like she’s mentioned that, like not a lot but a couple of times when we’re together. Oh we don’t have all the food groups and stuff like that. That may have made her more conscious of that.”

Interviewer: “Where do you think that came from?”
P13a: “I think that came from camp.”

4.4 Children

Analysis of data from the children’s interviews resulted in seven categories, each with several subcategories. The results and discussion presented describe the context of children’s lives at home with respect to food-related activities, as well as the three themes that emerged from comparison between and within categories. First, I will present an overview of the categories, describe the context of food-related activities at home, and then discuss the major themes and corresponding categories in more detail.

4.4.1 Overview of Categories

Many of the categories helped to describe and illustrate the major themes, while some of these categories and others helped to provide context and understanding about children’s lives at home with respect to food-related activities. The seven categories,
each with several subcategories, are outlined in table 4.2. I will draw from several of
the categories to describe the context of children’s lives at home with respect to food-
related activities, as well as to describe each of the major themes from the children’s
perspective.

4.4.2 Context of Food-Related Activities at Home

During interviews after the Food Fun Camp, children described their general
involvement with food-related activities at home. Children’s description of their food-
related activities helps to provide understanding about their home environments and
possible integration of food-related camp experiences.

With respect to food-related activities at home, all children indicated that they
had prepared food and/or cooked on their own and with an adult. This concurs with
Baranowski and colleagues’ (1993) study in which most of the children reported
participating in some type of food preparation. In another study, 35% of fifth grade
students reported consuming meals prepared by themselves or another child (Melnik et
al., 1998). The children who participated in the Food Fun Camp described preparing a
variety of foods on their own. These foods included items requiring little or no
preparation such as yogurt, cereal, crackers with cheese, and toast, to items requiring
more manipulation such as sandwiches, salads, and foods heated in the microwave, to
items requiring cooking on a stove such as canned or packaged soup, scrambled eggs,
and packaged macaroni and cheese.

C14a: “Um I just well we make our own lunches.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C14a: “Cause well my mom doesn’t come home for lunch cause she has work.
So we just come home for lunch to let the dog out. So I gather stuff up like,
yogurt. Some cookies. And a bun with jam. And brownies. Veggie pieces and
some chocolate.”

94
### Table 4.2 Children Categories and Subcategories

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<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food-related activities at home</td>
<td>Prepare food/cook</td>
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<td>Bake</td>
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<td>Set table/clean kitchen</td>
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<td>Shop for groceries</td>
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<td>Choose foods/meals</td>
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<td>Use kitchen equipment</td>
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<td>Look at recipe books</td>
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<td>Garden</td>
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<td>Cook/Make meals</td>
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<td>Bake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children’s perception of the Food Fun Camp</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Games</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Field Trips</td>
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<td>Instruction</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Crafts</td>
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<td>Staff/Other Campers</td>
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<td>Children’s perception of what they learned at Food</td>
<td>Food/Nutrition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fun Camp</td>
<td>Cooking</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>Banana Pudding</td>
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<td>Fried Rice with Ham</td>
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<td>Black-eyed Susans</td>
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<td>Silly Sandwiches</td>
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Table 4.2 (continued)

| Barriers to involvement in food-related activities at home | Busy with other activities  
Parents won’t let me  
Don’t know how  
Don’t have ingredients  
Too short (height) |
| Factors that facilitated involvement in food-related activities at home | Parents ask me/let me help  
Parents help me  
Knowing how to read  
Interested in cooking |
C15a: "...and I made lunch for my parents."
Interviewer: "Oh. What did you make them?"
C15a: "Grilled cheese sandwiches."
Interviewer: "Mmm. What kind of cheese was inside them?"
C15a: "I think marble. Or cheddar."
Interviewer: "So who cut the cheese?"
C15a: "I did."
Interviewer: "Mmm. And who fried them?"
C15a: "I did. I cook a lot."
Interviewer: "Who turned on the oven, or the stove I mean?"
C15a: "I did."

Children also described helping adults prepare and/or cook a variety of foods. These foods included items such as pancakes, salads or vegetables for a meal, spaghetti and sauce, soup, scrambled eggs, pizza, lasagna, quiche, and meatballs. When preparing food with an adult, children usually described their role to be that of stirring, assembling, and cutting and in a few cases measuring ingredients and cracking eggs.

C8a: "I didn’t make anything my by myself but I helped mom do a lot. Like prepare supper."
Interviewer: "What kind of things did you help mom with?"
C8a: "I chopped the celeries, stirred the soup, added the celery, shredded the carrots with a peeler..."

Many children indicated that they had baked with an adult or on their own. In almost all cases, children baked cookies or cakes. A few children indicated that they had not baked since the Food Fun Camp.

C11a: "I helped her sometimes make cookies. Um sometimes make bread, no, mmm salad, maybe sometimes make corn or something like that or put cheese on the barbeque."
Interviewer: "You put cheese on the barbeque?"
C11a: "Oh cheese on the hamburgers."
Interviewer: "Oh okay. Um so you helped your mom before you went to food fun camp. You helped your mom make cookies. So when you guys made cookies what did you do?"
C11a: "Um, mix."
Interviewer: "What was your job?"
C11a: "Probably the mixing. Sometimes putting in ingredients. Taking stuff out of the fridge."
The food preparation and baking activities described above do not include camp recipes that the children made at home as this is discussed under the upcoming theme, “Integrated Food Fun Camp Experiences”.

Many children indicated that they had helped set the table before a meal and/or cleared off the table after a meal.

C12a: “I usually set the table.”

C8a: “Mmm. Most often when we’re done yes I usually clear off the placemats and the cups and the plates and the utensils and that’s all.”

Some children indicated that they had helped with grocery shopping. Children described retrieving food items, pushing the cart, choosing foods, and eating samples while grocery shopping with their parents. One child said, “I might go get the stuff that she [mom] forgot or go ahead and get it.” (C4a) This is similar to Baranowski and colleagues’ (1993) findings that most children participated in food shopping. These children also reported influencing what their families purchased by for example putting items on the shopping list and requesting items. Children’s involvement in choosing foods while grocery shopping was also studied by Robinson (2000). Fifty-four percent of the children in Robinson’s study said that an adult chose the foods while grocery shopping and 35% of children reported having some choice from a selection given by an adult.

Some of the children that participated in the Food Fun Program evaluation described choosing foods for meals. Children usually indicated that their parents asked them what they wanted for certain meals and then children listed their preferences. In a
few cases, children asked for certain foods without seeming to be prompted by their parents.

C6a: “Lunch. I do that all the time too. Like my mom will occasionally ask me what I want in my lunch and then I usually say a pita or a sandwich. Like I’ve noticed pitas now and they are really good.”

This concurs with Robinson’s (2000) findings in which children chose what they liked 11% of the time for breakfast, 3% of the time for lunch, and 16% of the time for the evening meal. However, Robinson found that, overall, children perceived that adults had a high degree of control over their food.

Some children indicated using a variety of kitchen equipment or utensils, including knives, measuring cups and spoons, microwave, and oven.

Interviewer: “What about measuring cups. Do you ever use measuring cups?”
C5b: “Yeah. For eggs. For milk, for water.”
Interviewer: “What about measuring spoons?”
C5b: “Yeah.”
Interviewer: “What do you use those for?”
C5b: “Flour, baking soda, salt. Uh.”
Interviewer: “When do you use them?”
C5b: “When I bake cakes and all that stuff.”

Some children indicated that they had looked at recipe books at home. One child said, “I have two ‘for-kids-only’ cookbooks. So I like to go through those and see what’s in there.” (C14a)

Many children wanted to be more involved with food-related activities at home and a few children did not want their involvement in food-related activities at home to change. The children that wanted to be more involved with food-related activities at home wanted to be more involved with making meals and baking.

Interviewer: “C11a would you like to be more or less involved with food type activities at home?”
C11a: “More.”
Interviewer: “What kind of things would you like to be doing?”
C11a: “Uh baking more, like maybe starting to make meals or something.”

Interviewer: “C12a would you like to do more or less food type things here at home?”
C12a: “More.”
Interviewer: “More. What kind of things would you like to do?”
C12a: “I’d like to help my mom cook. And sometimes if my dad’s cooking I could help him cook.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. And how would you help them?”
C12a: “Like get some ingredients for them. And I could help ‘em cook it. And I could tell them when I think it’s ready. And that’s basically it.”
C19a: “Well I actually like what I’m doing now.”

4.4.3 Major Themes

The three major themes that emerged from the children’s data include perception of the Food Fun Camp, integrated Food Fun Camp activities, and factors that influenced children’s involvement in food-related activities at home.

4.4.3.1 Perception of Food Fun Camp

Generally children seemed to consider the Food Fun Camp as “fun”. When the children described the Food Fun Camp, they almost always talked about the cooking and often about the games. Comments about these aspects of the camp were mostly positive or neutral in nature and seemed to be what made the camp “fun”.

Children indicated that they liked the cooking. Children often referred to recipes that were made at the Food Fun Camp. Recipes talked about the most included pretzels, smoothies, cookies (black-eyed susans), pinwheel sandwiches, and fried rice with ham. There were very few negative comments about the cooking and recipes.

C11a: “Mmm. I thought the food fun camp was very fun and I’d like to go next year.”

Interviewer: “Is there anything else that you want to tell me about the food fun camp?”
C14a: “The only thing that I know is that it was the best.”
Interviewer: “It was the best?”
C14a: “Mmm.”
Interviewer: “What made it the best?”
C14a: “Cooking.”
Interviewer: “Yeah.”
C14a: “Yeah. And the hikes and stuff. Making meals.”

Interviewer: “Okay. So let’s talk about food fun camp. What did you do at food fun camp?”
C19a: “Bake and make stuff.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. What did you make?”
C19a: Um pretzels, smoothies, um nacho snack things.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C19a: “Mmm, uh pinwheel sandwiches or something like that.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C19a: “And lots of stuff.”

Children also seemed to like playing the games, especially Nutri-twister and Foodopoly, as illustrated in these quotes.

C5a: “Well they were fun. I remember the Monopoly.”
Interviewer: “Foodopoly?”
C5a: “Foodopoly ah yeah. And twister.”
Interviewer: “Oh yeah, yeah nutrition Twister.”
C5a: “Yeah. And that’s all I can remember. And oh yeah those pop quiz.”
Interviewer: “Oh yeah the slylock fox. The cards?”
C5a: “Yeah. (unintelligible)”

C16a: “Well I want to go next year if I can. Cause it was really fun. And I would like to do more cooking around the house or something like that. I don’t have any time but if I would, I would do lots more.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. Okay. What was fun about the camp?”
C16a: “Everything was fun basically. Like okay what was I going to say. Okay a camp without games is no camp at all. But this camp had games but it helped you with nutrition stuff and stuff like that basically.”

There were no negative comments about the games.

Some of the children described the field trips they went on, particularly the trip to a grocery store.

C8a: “...And I remember going on the field trip to —— (grocery store).”
Interviewer: “Okay. And what did you do on that field trip?”
C8a: “We got to go into all the parts of the building where nobody, where only the cooks are suppose to go and we got to go in there. And we got to go into a freezer. And that’s what we did. And we got treat bags.”

The few children that talked about the instruction, described the themes. The themes that seemed to stand out were Snack Attack (green, yellow, and red light snacks), Foods From Afar, and Cook’s Tools and Kitchen Rules.

C8a: “And we had a theme everyday and we got to try out some foods that —— (counselor A) prepared...”
Interviewer: “You mentioned that there was different themes. What were some of those themes?”
C8a: “Um cook’s tools and kitchen’s rules. Um snacking or snack time. Foods from afar. And that’s what I can remember.”
Interviewer: “What did you do on the cook’s rules kitchen tools day?”
C8a: “We did we had to read a lot. We had to read the three sheets that you guys gave us. Answer the questions and that’s what we did”
Interviewer: “What about the food from afar day? What did you do that day?”
C8a: “Um we got to try foods and the other person brought, other people brought foods and told us about it but I didn’t bring any food because I didn’t get a note for it”
Interviewer: “Oh okay.”
C8a: “And that’s what I did on food from afar.”

Interviewer: “Can you remember any of the themes from the week?”
C6a: “Themes? Well we had the Chinese theme. And we also had the Italian theme and we also had the lunch kind of theme, the snack or lunch theme.”
Interviewer: “Okay, and what about that?”
C6a: “Well, for the snack or lunch theme we made pinwheel sandwiches and stuff like that.”
Interviewer: “Okay.”
C6a: “And another thing was like looking around the kitchen or something like that and then we learned where the stuff was and there was like numbers on it so we would know where the stuff was.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C6a: “And I think one of the other things was healthy snacking.”

Few children were able to describe the crafts and this was usually upon prompting by the interviewer.
Some of the children talked about the staff and other children at the camp. The children liked the counselors and that the counselors were available to help them when they needed it. They also liked working with partners.

Interviewer: “What did you like about the cooking?”
C18a: “Uh that we didn’t exactly do it by ourselves because we had other people helping us, but everybody wasn’t exactly hovering around people all the time like say oh don’t do that don’t do that. The instructors were letting us do it ourselves and we made recipes on our own. And if we made a mistake we just go over.”
Interviewer: “And if you made a mistake, what was that?”
C18a: “If we made a mistake we just go over and ask and if we had a question…”
C19a: “Um well I liked how we got to work with partners.”

4.4.3.2 Integrated Food Fun Camp Experiences

According to the children, many of them had made at least one Food Fun Camp recipe at home, usually with a parent but sometimes on their own. In a few cases, children made camp recipes at home with a friend and in a few cases parents made camp recipes on their own. Camp recipes made at home included banana pudding, fried rice with ham, banana berry smoothies, fruit pizza, cracker nachos, orange cranberry muffins, sunflower cookies, calzones, gorp, salad envelopes, spaghetti sauce, pinwheel sandwiches, silly sandwiches, vegetarian chow mien, quesadillas, and parfaits. The vegetarian chow mein, quesadillas, and parfaits were included in the Food Fun Camp cookbook as extra recipes that were not actually made at the Food Fun Camp. There were a few children who wanted to make camp recipes at home but had not yet done so. The recipes these children wanted to make included pretzels, banana berry smoothies, fruit pizza, and fried rice with ham. The banana berry smoothies seemed to be the most popular camp recipe at home.
Interviewer: “So some of the things that you made at food fun camp, have you made any of those at home lately?”
C12a: “Yep. I made two things.”
Interviewer: “What?”
C12a: “We made a smoothies and we made the calzones.”
Interviewer: “Okay. And who is we?”
C12a: “Me and my mom made the smoothies and me and my mom and my dad drank some of it. And my mom helped me with the calzones and um that’s how they helped. Well my dad he usually needs to work on some stuff like his work or something.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. So tell me about making the calzones.”
C12a: “Me and my mom we made the stuff to go inside at first and then we made the dough. We didn’t make the dough but we got the dough ready and then we put the stuff in and then we made sure there was no holes in them and then we put them in the oven and then for supper we each got two of them.”
Interviewer: “Mmm. So when you and your mom were making the calzones, what part did you do and what part did your mom do?”
C12a: “Um, my mom helped me put a few of the ingredients in and told me what to put in and I cut up a few stuff and read what to do a few times and put in most of the stuff and put it in the oven.”

Interviewer: “Have you been doing any of the things that you learned or did at food fun camp at home lately?”
C14a: “Nope. But I wanted to do some stuff in the book.”
Interviewer: “What did you want to do?”
C14a: “Best ever berry, berry and banana smoothies.”
Interviewer: “Mmm.”
C14a: “That was good. And pretzels.”
Interviewer: “Pretzels. Yeah.”
C14a: “Um that’s about it.”

Some children indicated that they had looked at recipe books at home. They looked at the Food Fun Camp cookbook or other recipe books.

Interviewer: “Have you read any cookbooks since you’ve been home from food fun camp?”
C20a: “Yep. To help my mom with some of those parties.”
Interviewer: “Oh. What cookbooks did you read?”
C20a: “Like that one that we got in food fun camp. And a couple of other kind of appetizer books.”
Interviewer: “Mmm okay. What made you decide to look at the food fun camp cookbook?”
C20a: “Cause I said there’s lots most of it was like actually like mostly appetizers. There was only like a couple of desserts.”
4.4.3.3 Factors that Influenced Food-Related Activities

Although sometimes difficult for children to describe and for me to interpret, children did identify factors that influenced their involvement in food-related activities at home.

The main barrier that children identified as limiting their involvement in food-related activities was their involvement in other activities. Many children indicated that activities such as play, homework, piano or dance lessons, and sports activities prevented them from being involved in food-related activities at home.

Interviewer: “Mmm. So what’s stopping you from doing more?”
C11a: “Um playing.”
Interviewer: “Playing.”
C11a: “And mmm I might have other things to do like piano, practice dance, pretty soon I’ll be going to soccer. So I still try to have room for cooking.”

Interviewer: “Would you like to be more or less involved with cooking and meal preparation at home?”
C16a: “More but I’m always busy with dance and stuff so I can’t really. Cause when I get back from dance supper’s ready so I can’t help with it.”

Some children also indicated, with comments such as “sometimes my parents don’t let me” (C15a), that their parents restricted their involvement in food-related activities at home. Other barriers described, although by very few children, were “sometimes I don’t know how to do something” (C16a), “not having the ingredients” (C14a), and “if I can’t reach stuff” (C8a).

Factors that facilitated involvement in food-related activities were more difficult for the children to describe. However, a few children did indicate that parents asking them to help or letting them help, parents being able to help them when they needed it, and being able to read facilitated their involvement in food-related activities at home.

Interviewer: “So what helps you to be able to do stuff in the kitchen?”
C12a: “Um I just, my mom asks me or my dad asks me so I just help them and they tell me what to do and I just like go get the stuff and I do it.”

C16a: “Yeah I can understand the recipe most of the time. But if it’s something I’m lost with like I can’t think of anything right now that I wouldn’t know. But if I come across something that I don’t know I’ll ask.”

Although indicated by very few children, being interested in cooking was another factor described that seemed to help them be involved in food-related activities at home.

C11a: “Cooking is really fun and really interesting. And then sometimes I like to help my mom.”
Interviewer: “What do you like about helping your mom?”
C11a: “What do I like. That she, now that I’ve gone to the camp she lets me do more things than before.”
Interviewer: “Like what kind of things?”
C11a: “Um measuring and using the blender, putting stuff in the oven, putting the stuff in the muffin tins, the cookie sheet. That’s what I like doing.”

Children’s interest in cooking may have been related to wanting to be more involved in food-related activities at home. Many children indicated that they wanted to be more involved with food-related activities, specifically making meals and baking. This desire to be more may have facilitated children’s involvement in food-related activities at home.

Interviewer: Okay. You said earlier I think that you want to do more stuff at home. Did you say that?
C14A: Mmm.
Interviewer: What kind of things would you like to be doing?
C14A: Cooking.
Interviewer: Cooking.
C14A: Making supper.
Interviewer: You want to make supper. Mmm. What do you want to make for supper?
C14A: I don’t know. Lasagna.
Interviewer: Lasagna or something like that.
C14A: Pizza.
Interviewer: Mmm.
C14A: Mmm like spaghetti.
Children's perception of the camp may have also influenced involvement in food-related activities at home. Children considered the Food Fun Camp to be “fun” and most often indicated that it was the cooking at the camp that made it “fun”. Because children seemed to have had a positive experience with cooking at camp, this may have facilitated their desire to do more food-related activities at home.

4.5 Summary

4.5.1 Food Fun Camp

The Food Fun Program was a week-long summer day camp for children 8–12 years old. The focus of the camp was fun with food and nutrition in a hands-on, interactive environment. Food preparation was the main daily activity. Children prepared a variety of recipes using a wide range of skills. Games, crafts, worksheets, experiments, other activities, and instruction were also incorporated into daily activities. The main food-related concepts and skills taught through daily activities and instruction included cooking terms and methods (e.g., chop, dice, fold, grate), how to read and follow a recipe, how to operate a stove and oven, how to measure dry and wet ingredients, and safe food handling procedures, as well as Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating with a focus on variety and moderation.

4.5.2 Parents

Mothers were the primary individuals responsible for food-related activities at home, although according to the parents interviewed children were involved occasionally. Parents indicated that children were involved in a wide variety of food-related activities at home. All children were involved in preparing food and cooking to some degree and some children were involved in baking, using kitchen equipment,
helping with grocery shopping, setting the table and/or cleaning the kitchen, and talking about food, nutrition, and food or kitchen safety. Parents felt positive about their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home and many wanted their children to be more involved.

Generally parents were satisfied with the Food Fun Camp. Parents’ satisfaction with the camp and parents’ understanding about what children did at the camp seemed to relate to the amount and nature of feedback they received from their children. Parents received little feedback regarding specific camp activities and therefore only had a general idea about what children did at the camp. The feedback that parents received from children was positive (i.e., “it was fun”) and as a result parents seemed satisfied with the children’s camp experience.

Based on the results from the parent interviews, several camp experiences appeared to be integrated into children’s lives at home. Parents’ indicated that their children made camp recipes at home. Parents also indicated that their children looked at recipe books at home and in some cases this was the Food Fun Camp cookbook. Parents said their children were more confident with food-related activities at home since Food Fun Camp. This confidence may have been transferred from the confidence parents indicated children gained at camp. Parents also indicated that their children participated in different food-related activities at home since attending Food Fun Camp. This may have transferred from the Food Fun Camp because children had the opportunity to practice a range of food-related activities at the camp. The involvement in different food-related activities at home may have also been related to confidence gained at camp. Children were also more willing to try new foods. At camp, children were
exposed to a variety of foods and were encouraged to try new foods; this experience may have been integrated into life at home. At Food Fun Camp children were given information about nutrition in a variety of formats (instruction, games, and other activities) and parents said their children were more aware of nutrition at home since attending Food Fun Camp. Again, this may have transferred from camp experiences.

Parents’ identified time as a notable barrier to children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Specifically, parents described a general lack of time due to busy schedules, children asking to do food-related activities at inappropriate times, and a perceived necessity for more time if children participated in food-related activities.

Children’s involvement in other activities and parents’ restriction of activities were also salient barriers.

Factors that seemed to facilitate involvement in food-related activities, according to the parents, included encouragement from parents, grandparents, and/or siblings, parents actively involving their children in food preparation at home, and children’s participation in hands-on food-related activities at the Camp. The confidence that children gained through hands-on activities and other aspects of the Food Fun Camp seemed to help facilitate children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Parents’ feelings about their children’s involvement in food-related activities may have affected whether they encouraged or actively involved their children in food-related activities. Most parents wanted their children to be more involved in food-related activities at home, so they may have been more likely to give children encouragement or actively involve them.
4.5.3 Children

With respect to food-related activities at home, all children indicated that they had prepared food and/or cooked on their own and with an adult. Many children indicated that they had baked on their own and/or with an adult and helped set and/or clear off the table. Some children indicated that they had helped with grocery shopping, helped choose foods for meals, used kitchen equipment and utensils, and looked at recipe books. A few children indicated that they had helped with gardening at home. Many children wanted to be more involved with food-related activities at home, specifically making meals and baking.

Children’s perception of the Food Fun Camp was that it was “fun”. According to the children it was the cooking, as well as the games, that made the camp “fun”. Children described making several Food Fun Camp recipes at home, including recipes that were in the camp cookbook but were not actually made at the camp. Children also read the camp cookbook at home.

The main barrier to involvement in food-related activities that children identified was their involvement in other activities. The second most common barrier was restriction of activities by parents. Other barriers described, although by very few children, included not knowing how to do an activity, not having the needed ingredients, and not being able to reach necessary ingredients or equipment.

A few children described facilitating factors such as parents asking them to help or letting them help, parents helping them when they asked for help, and being able to read. Although indicated by very few children, interest in cooking may have also helped them to be involved in food-related activities at home. Many children indicated they
wanted to be more involved with food-related activities at home; this may have been related to their interest in cooking. The combination of being interested in cooking and wanting to be more involved with food-related activities at home may have facilitated their involvement in food-related activities. In addition, children’s perception of cooking at the Food Fun Camp as “fun” may have been related to their desire to be more involved with food-related activities at home and therefore may have facilitated involvement in food-related activities.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study explored the integration of children’s experiences at a food preparation and nutrition day camp into their lives at home. This study also explored what may have inhibited and/or facilitated integration of experiences. Conclusions with respect to the research questions are presented here, followed by recommendations to the NRVC, study limitations, suggestions for future research, and implications for professionals.

5.2 Research Question 1

What Food Fun Program experiences did children integrate into their lives at home?

The results show that children integrated experiences they had at the Food Fun Camp into their lives at home. At the end of the camp, children received a book containing all the recipes made at the camp. Both the parents and the children reported making smoothies, fried rice with ham, banana pudding, muffins, cookies, calzones, pretzels, quesadillas, spaghetti sauce and pinwheel sandwiches. These camp recipes were made at home by children, children and parents together, and in a few cases by parents alone. Not only were recipes from the camp cookbook made at home, but children also read the camp cookbook without necessarily preparing the recipes. This was reported by both the children and the parents. Considering these results, the camp cookbook is an important component of the Food Fun Program.
Parents indicated that their children gained confidence with food-related activities at the camp and that after the camp children were more confident with food-related activities at home. There were several other experiences described by parents that may have been experiences from the Food Fun Camp that children integrated into their lives at home. At camp, children prepared a wide range of foods using a variety of skills and kitchen equipment, were exposed to a variety of foods and encouraged to try them, and were instructed on nutrition in a variety of formats. Parents indicated that after the camp, children participated in different food-related activities, were more willing to try new foods, and were more aware of nutrition. These experiences may have transferred from the camp into children’s lives at home.

5.2.1 Research Question 1.1

What inhibited integration of program experiences into participants’ lives?

Parents and children discussed several barriers to children’s general involvement in food-related activities at home. Both the parents and the children indicated that children’s involvement in other activities and parent’s restriction of activities were barriers. Parents also indicated that time was a main factor inhibiting their children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. These same barriers may have also influenced the integration of food-related camp experiences.

Parents’ perception of the Food Fun Camp may have also inhibited integration of camp experiences into children’s lives at home. Parents had only a general understanding of what children did at the Food Fun Camp. For example, parents did not seem to be aware that children were shown and had the opportunity to practice how to safely cut with a knife and operate a stove/oven. Understanding camp activities had the
potential of alleviating concerns about safety. However, this lack of understanding on the parents’ part may have allowed restriction of activities due to concerns about safety to continue.

Parents’ restriction of children’s food-related activities and parents’ understanding of the Food Fun Camp may have inhibited integration of camp experiences into children’s lives at home. To alleviate these barriers and help facilitate integration, it may be important to actively engage parents in the Food Fun Camp and other food preparation and nutrition education programs for children.

5.2.2 Research Question 1.2
What facilitated integration of program experiences into participants’ lives?

Both the parents and the children identified parent behaviours as a factor that facilitated children’s involvement in food-related activities at home. Specifically, parents indicated that giving their children encouragement by complimenting them or urging them to participate in food-related activities at home helped to facilitate children’s involvement. Children indicated that their parents asking them or letting them participate in food-related activities facilitated their involvement at home. According to the children, having parents available to help them if they desired their parents’ help also facilitated their involvement. The parental behaviours that influenced children’s general involvement in food-related activities at home may have also influenced integration of food-related camp experiences.

The Food Fun Camp was another factor identified by parents that influenced children’s general involvement in food-related activities and therefore may have also
influenced integration of camp experiences. Specifically, the hands-on nature of the camp and the confidence children gained while at the camp were identified.

There were other factors, not identified by the parents or the children but salient to the research findings, that may have facilitated integration of camp experiences into children’s lives at home. Parents’ feelings about their children’s involvement in food-related activities and children’s perception of the Food Fun Camp are two such factors.

Parents’ feelings about their children’s involvement in food-related activities may have facilitated integration of camp experiences. Many parents wanted their children to be more involved in food-related activities at home. Therefore, they may have been more likely to encourage or purposefully involve their children in such activities, thereby giving their children opportunity to integrate their experiences from camp into their lives at home.

Children’s perception of the camp may have also influenced integration of camp experiences into life at home. Children considered the Food Fun Camp to be “fun” and most often indicated that it was the cooking at the camp that made it “fun”. Because children seemed to have had a positive experience with cooking at camp, this may have facilitated their desire to do more food-related activities at home and, therefore, the integration of camp experiences.

These results again show that it may be important to engage parents in the Food Fun Camp and other programs for children, not only to reduce barriers, but to help facilitate integration of program experiences. A hands-on approach to children’s program activities, that in part seems to bestow confidence, also appears to be important.
5.3 Recommendations to NRVC

Based on the results of the Food Fun Camp evaluation, several recommendations can be made to the NRVC that may help them make decisions about and set direction for the program.

5.3.1 Engage Parents

Parents' behaviours, such as giving their children encouragement, asking their children to participate in food-related activities, and restricting children's food-related activities, seem to have an impact on children's involvement in food-related activities at home. In light of this, I would recommend that the NRVC explore creative ways to engage parents in the Food Fun Camp to help facilitate integration of camp experiences into life at home. Some possible ideas the NRVC could investigate as ways to engage parents include:

1) Sending a brief description of concepts and skills learned each day home with the children. Each child could fill out their own description or note. For example, "Today I learned how (or learned about)..." and "Today I cooked/made...". This would help give parents a better understanding about what their children did at the Food Fun Camp.

2) Making better use of the wind-up party held on the last day of camp. Parents did not seem to know what to do once they got to the party. Their children usually showed them their workstation and then proceeded to eat the food the children had prepared. However, more could be done at this time to engage the parents. There could be posters or photographs on the walls depicting the skills and concepts the children learned throughout the week.
There could be a somewhat formal or planned interactive presentation by the counselors and/or children describing or illustrating the skills and concepts they learned throughout the week. Maybe this could be a game of some sort that the children and their guest could pair up to play that would demonstrate, by the answers the children gave, what the children learned throughout the week.

3) Taking photographs of children doing activities throughout the week of camp. These pictures could then be on display at the wind-up party as mentioned above. Pictures of children opening the oven, working at the stove, cutting with a knife, hiking, playing games inside and outside, going on field trips, eating, etc. could be included. Photographs may help stimulate discussion between the parents and the children about what they did during the week. A group photo, as well as a child specific photo, could then be sent out to the families after the camp as a keepsake or memento.

4) Developing a newsletter for parents. The newsletter could be sent out before camp to those that have registered, at the end of the camp as follow-up, and one or two times after that to continue to engage parents. The first newsletter could replace the letter sent out to parents before camp describing the general activities children will partake in while at the camp. More detail could be provided in a newsletter format. The follow-up newsletters could provide specific information about the skills and concepts children learned and provide parents with ideas for ways to involve their children in food-related activities at home.
5.3.2 Reorganize Camp Cookbook

The Food Fun Camp cookbook is obviously important as take-home memorabilia as indicated by the reports that children looked at the book at home. As well, the cookbook was important for enabling children to integrate camp recipes into life at home. For these reasons, I think the NRVC should consider further developing the camp cookbook. Reorganizing the cookbook may help to facilitate integration of recipes into life at home. The camp cookbook could be reorganized into a more traditional cookbook format including a table of contents and sections for different types of recipes. That is, instead of organizing the cookbook by day (i.e., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.) it could be organized by type of recipe such as desserts, main dishes, appetizers and/or snacks.

5.3.3 Affirm Skills Learned at Camp

The camp cookbook could also be used to affirm skills and concepts children learned at the Food Fun Camp. There could be a section in the cookbook where the counselors or the campers could check off what the children learned at the camp (e.g., I learned how to use a knife to cut, I learned how to turn on the oven, I learned how to measure dry ingredients, I learned how to use a cheese grater, etc.). The cookbook could include the kitchen rules, information about measuring, and kitchen tools and terms to help reinforce these skills and concepts. The cookbook could still include the food jokes as the children seemed to like those. Some of the coloring sheets and worksheets the children did throughout the week could be added as the children may enjoy doing them again. One child I interviewed had colored on several of the pages in her cookbook and had written at the top of each recipe what she thought of it (i.e., “excellent”, “very
tasty", “okay”). There could be a space on each recipe for the children to do this.

Reorganization of the camp cookbook along with the suggested additions may help to further facilitate use of the camp cookbook at home as well as facilitate integration of camp experiences.

5.3.4 Maintain Camp Format

Several aspects of the Food Fun Program should be maintained in order to continue supporting integration of skills and concepts. I would recommend that the NRVC continue to use hands-on food preparation and cooking activities as a nutrition education strategy. I would also recommend that the NRVC continue to use a wide variety of recipes at the Food Fun Camp. Many of the recipes were made at participants’ homes but different children/families integrated different recipes into their lives at home. The most popular recipes at the Food Fun Camp in 2000 were smoothies, spaghetti sauce, pretzels, fried rice with ham, banana pudding, and quesadillas. The food and nutrition related games, such as Nutri-Twister, Foodopoly, and Food Bingo, were also a strong component of the Food Fun Camp. These games should be continued as they were enjoyed by the children and helped to reinforce concepts and skills.

5.3.5 Revisit Goals and Objectives

With respect to program direction, the NRVC may consider revisiting the goals and objectives of the program (Appendix A) and broadening them to expand on what was initially the intent of the camp—specifically, defining expected behaviour changes as precisely as possible. Integration of camp recipes into children’s lives at home was an unanticipated outcome of the Food Fun Program. Given the results of this study, making at least one Food Fun Camp recipe at home, or further to that, integrating a
camp recipe into life at home, seems to be a fair outcome of the Food Fun Program. However, given the range of factors that seem to influence children's food-related activities at home, behaviour change such as this may not be a fair outcome without also addressing some of the influencing factors as described.

5.4 Limitations

Some limitations to this study have been identified. The limitations include 1) participant selection, 2) the interview setting, and 3) the difficulty with time differentiation.

The standard in qualitative research is to purposefully select participants that can provide the researcher with a great deal of information about the issues of central importance to the research. In this study the camps were purposefully selected; however, the participants themselves were not. There were fairly small numbers in the program (i.e., 12 per camp) and all the children got to know me through my participant observation of the camps. For these reasons, it was thought to be most appropriate to give all parents and children in the selected camps an opportunity to participate in the study. This helped to avoid what may have been seen as favoritism on my part and avoided potential conflict between the children.

Interviews were conducted in participants' homes. These homes were often busy and sometimes there were distractions during interviews. In a few situations, other family members came in and out of the interview setting. This caused me and/or the interview participant to lose our train of thought. Also, there were some circumstances in which the parent was within earshot of the child being interviewed and vice versa. This may have affected the interview participants' responses.
During interviews, it was difficult for participants to differentiate between food-related activities children were involved in at home before camp and after camp. Participants typically fell into a pattern of talking about the activities children were “usually” involved in. Therefore, it was difficult in this study to determine integrated camp experiences other than those that were discussed in the results.

5.5 Future Research

Further research should be conducted to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the Food Fun Program. More qualitative research, such as an extension of this study or a different research focus, could be conducted. An extension may involve follow-up interviews at a later time or an in-depth look at specific findings. For example, it may be interesting to look at confidence and how that plays a part in food-related activities before and after camp. The focus of my research was on behaviour and experience; another study could focus on opinion, value, or knowledge. Quantitative research could be used to test knowledge, or based on my research, one could develop a list to compare specific food-related skills at home before and after camp or develop a variety of behavioural and psychosocial outcome measures for quantitative evaluation.

5.6 Implications for Professionals

The ability to prepare and cook food is an important life skill. Due to today’s busy lifestyles, children may not have opportunity for intensive learning and practice at home. Programs for children that address food preparation and cooking through hands-on experience may be important. However, time is also limited in the school setting.
Therefore, health educators should consider offering programs for children outside of school settings, such as in the summer.

Hands-on cooking experiences with accompanying instruction and a variety of reinforcing activities seemed to have had a positive impact on integration of Food Fun Camp experiences into children’s lives. Copies of recipes prepared by children in the program were especially important as take home memorabilia for encouraging integration. This knowledge may provide health educators with creative ideas about teaching food preparation and nutrition to children.

To be effective, food preparation and nutrition education programs should include strategies that involve parents. Involving the family would provide parents with information needed to help reinforce what children learn in the program. Health educators should include creative methods of family involvement in children’s programs. However, educators should also be aware that lack of time may be a barrier to parental involvement. Therefore, strategies that involve parents should not be time intensive and should expand on existing components of the program.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A  Food Fun Program Goals and Objectives
Appendix B  Invitation Letter
Appendix C  Interest Form
Appendix D  Demographic Profile
Appendix E  Focus Group Interview Guide
Appendix F  Focus Group Facilitator Guidelines
Appendix G  Counselor Interview Guide
Appendix H  Parent Interview Guide
Appendix I  Child Interview Guide
Appendix J  Audit Report
Appendix K  Confidentiality Agreement
Appendix L  Counselor Consent
Appendix M  Parent Consent
Appendix N  Child Assent
Appendix O  Parent Transcript Release
Appendix P  Child Transcript Release
Appendix Q  Counselor Data Release
Appendix R  Ethical Approval
Appendix A

Food Fun Program Goals and Objectives

**Goal**
To enhance children’s knowledge and understanding of food and nutrition through creative, fun, and challenging experiences and activities.

**Program Objectives**
1) Develop, implement and evaluate a summer food and nutrition day camp for children 8–12 years of age
2) Develop age-appropriate, creative and stimulating nutrition education materials, resources and activities for use by camp participants
3) Involve children’s parents in the program

**Learner Objectives**
Upon completion of the camp, the children will be able to:
1) Select and prepare nutritious snacks and foods
2) Practice safe food handling techniques
3) Describe the purpose of Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating
   a. Name the food groups
   b. Classify foods correctly into the groups
   c. List the directional statements
   d. Describe vitality
4) Conduct basic food experiments
5) Demonstrate a willingness to try new and different foods
Appendix B

Food Fun Camp 2000

Special Project

This is Your Invitation to Participate in a Special Project
Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre is interested in learning about what campers learn from the Food Fun Camp.

My name is Naomi Shanks and I am conducting this research project as part of my master’s degree in nutrition. To learn about the Food Fun Camp I will be at the camp during the week. I will participate in activities and help out the counselors.

I am inviting you and your child to participate in this study. If you and your child are interested in helping out with the study you will be asked to participate in:

- a 45 minute interview with me about four to six weeks after the camp, scheduled at a time convenient for you.

Your child will be asked to participate in:

- a 30 minute group interview with other kids in the camp on the last day of camp
- and a 45 minute interview with me on the same day as your interview.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary and will in no way affect the services you or your family receives from the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre. You can participate in all, some, or none of the study. Confidentiality is very important. The names of those who do or do not participate in the study will not be shared.

If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact me (966-6346 or 373-6397) or my research supervisor, Shawna Berenbaum (966-5836). We’d be happy to answer your questions.

Please fill out the attached form to let me know if you and your child might be interested in participating in the study. Have your child bring it to the first day of camp. I will be at the camp to collect the forms. If you are interested in the study, I will contact you to discuss it in more detail. At that time, you will have an opportunity to confirm your interest in participating.

Sincerely,

Naomi Shanks
Food Fun Camp 2000: Special Project

Are you interested?

Please check the appropriate boxes. Write your name, your child’s name, and your phone number on this form. Send this form with your child to the first day of camp.

☐ Yes, we are interested in participating in the Food Fun Camp study in the following ways:
  - Campers’ Group Interview
  - Camper one-on-one Interview
  - Parent one-on-one Interview

☐ We would like more information before we decide to participate in the study.

☐ No, we do not want to participate in the Food Fun Camp study.

Parent/Guardian’s Name: ________________________________
Camper’s Name: ________________________________
Phone Number: ________________________________

Thank you!

Return this form on the first day of Camp.
Appendix D

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Demographic Profile

Please answer the following questions about your family. This information is necessary in order to describe the participants in the study. The information will be presented in aggregate form only.

1. How many times has your child attended the Food Fun Camp, including this year?
   - One time
   - Two times
   - Three times

2. What is the highest grade completed by your child who attended this year’s Food Fun Camp?
   - <Grade 2
   - Grade 2
   - Grade 3
   - Grade 4
   - Grade 5
   - Grade 6
   - Grade 7
   - >Grade 7

3. How many brothers and/or sisters does your child who attended Food Fun Camp have?
   - None
   - One (age: ________)
   - Two (ages: ________)
   - More than two (ages: ________)

4. Who does your child who attended Food Fun Camp live with? For this question, check all that apply.
   - Myself.
   - My spouse or partner.
   - My child’s brothers and sisters.
   - My child’s other caregiver(s).
   - Other, __________________________

5. What are the occupations of the adults in your household? For this and the following questions, consider yourself to be “Adult #1”.

   Adult #1 __________________________

   Adult #2 __________________________
6. What is the highest level of education completed by the adults in your household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult #1</th>
<th>Adult #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Some grade school</td>
<td>• Some grade school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed grade school</td>
<td>• Completed grade school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some high school</td>
<td>• Some high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed high school</td>
<td>• Completed high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Some post-secondary education (i.e. university, college, etc.)</td>
<td>• Some post-secondary education (i.e. university, college, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Completed post-secondary education</td>
<td>• Completed post-secondary education</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. What is the employment status of the adults in your household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adult #1</th>
<th>Adult #2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Full time (&gt;20 hours per week)</td>
<td>• Full time (&gt;20 hours per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Part time (&lt;20 hours per week)</td>
<td>• Part time (&lt;20 hours per week)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Casual</td>
<td>• Casual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unemployed or choose not to work</td>
<td>• Unemployed or choose not to work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. What is your approximate gross family income?

- <$20,000
- $20-34,999
- $35-49,999
- $50-64,999
- >$65,000
- Choose not to answer
- Don’t know

Date ___________________           Participant # ________________
Introduction:
Hi. My name is __________. I’m here today to ask you some questions about the Food Fun Camp. Naomi is going to help me by writing down some notes during our talk. I want you to tell me about the camp. I’m going to ask you questions and I would like you to give me as much information as possible about the camp because I’ve never been to it. Is it o.k. if I ask you some questions now?

What made you come to the Food Fun Camp?

What did you learn at Food Fun Camp?

Possible Probe: Please explain.
Tell me more about that.

How would you describe the Food Fun Camp to your friends? What would you tell them?

Possible Probe: How do you know when you’re having fun?

Have you been doing any of the things you learned at camp at home this week? (If yes) What kind of things?

Possible Probes: Have you made any of the recipes? Tell me about that.
Have you shared anything you learnt with your parents or siblings?
Have you helped make supper?
Have you made your own breakfast?

Before you came to camp, what kind of activities (cooking, baking, making snacks, picking meals) did you do at home?

Possible Probes: Tell me more about the kind of activities you did at home. Describe what kind of activities you did at home before you came to camp.
Appendix F

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Focus Group Interviews – Facilitator Guidelines

Purpose of the Focus Group

1. To enhance the description of a typical camp.

2. To obtain information and/or ideas for subsequent child and parent interviews.

In general, I am searching for description (depth and detail), not likes or dislikes.

Role of the Facilitator

You are the group leader who facilitates the discussion, asking questions and listening to the answers of the whole group. Create a comfortable atmosphere so that the participants will be willing to talk. Sit at the participants’ eye level. Try to keep the focus group interview fairly informal.

Ensure everyone has a chance to speak. Avoid letting one or two children dominate the entire discussion. Encourage those who tend not to be highly verbal to share their views as well. You may have to address someone specifically if they have not contributed to the discussion.

Let the participants discuss among themselves and respond to each other’s answers. Remind the children that they do not have to agree.

It is very important that you try to keep questions as open-ended as possible (avoid questions that require “yes/no” responses). If you do ask a “yes/no” question, ensure you follow-up the question by asking them to explain or describe their answer.

The Interview Guide

The interview guide is just that, a guide. Word the questions in your own way and in an order that seems appropriate to you. Ask probing and follow-up questions as necessary to obtain needed depth and detail. Try to ask all the questions listed on the guide. However, if a theme or issue is discovered related to the purpose of the interview, feel free to go with that line of questioning.
Probing

Encourage participants to share stories – usually by probing.

Probes help to obtain depth, let the participants know that you want more detailed information, encourage participants to elaborate, and help to clarify or fill in missing information. They also let the participants know that you, the interviewer, are paying attention. Probes help to ensure you are getting a reasonably accurate and understandable answer while encouraging the participants to keep talking.

Examples of probes:

- lean forward slightly and silently
- “go on”
- “give me an example”
- “what happened then?”
- “I don’t quite understand, could you explain that to me again?”
- “what do you mean by ______ (e.g., fun or boring)?”
- “tell me more about that”

Probe until you understand the answer and the context of the answer. But, don’t probe too much as the participants may feel like they are being interrogated.

Follow-up Questions

Follow-up questions help to obtain depth of information by pursing themes that are discovered during the interview and by elaborating on the context of answers. It is difficult to determine what the follow-up questions might be prior to the interview as they are based on the participants’ responses to the main questions. Use your curiosity to your advantage.

Listen for partial narratives or stories, unexplained lists, and one-sided descriptions of behavior. Encourage participants to elaborate on these. For example, if a participant says they cooked, played games and did crafts in the camp but only elaborated on the cooking, ask them to elaborate on or describe the games and the crafts as well (e.g., what kind of games, describe the craft).

If a question seems too broad or abstract (e.g., no one answers the question), be more specific or give some possible examples.

M. Naomi Shanks

July 2000
Appendix G

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation
Counselor Interview Guide

1st Interview

How did the Food Fun Camp go this week?

Possible Probe: Would you describe this week’s camp as typical? In what way was it “typical”.

How would you describe the Food Fun Camp to someone who didn’t know what it was?

Possible Rephrase: Let’s assume I don’t know anything about the camp. How would you describe it to me?

2nd Interview

How did the Food Fun Camp go this week?

How was this camp different from the previous camps?

Possible Probe: Was there anything that changed the overall delivery of camp activities? If so, please explain. Were any of the specific activities delivered differently? If so, what made you decide to change it?

How was it similar?

What do you think the Food Fun Camp achieved?

Possible Rephrase: What do you think the campers learned? Please describe some specific examples? What do you think the campers will “take home” from camp?
Appendix H

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation
Parent Interview
Guide

What first encouraged you to enroll your child in the food fun camp?

What opportunities has your child had to participate in other food-related programs or camps?

What is your role in the family with respect to food-related activities?

What is your impression of what your child did at the food fun camp?
What did your child tell you about the food fun camp?

Describe the food-related activities your child has been involved in at home, since food fun camp.

How have you felt about your child’s involvement in food-related activities at home since food fun camp?

Would you like your child to be more or less involved with food-related activities at home?
If more, what food-related activities would you like your child to do?

What do you think inhibits or discourages your child from being involved in food-related activities at home?

What do you think helps or encourages your child to be involved in food-related activities at home?

What, if any, food-related activities are different now than what your child did before participating in the food fun camp?

What, if any, food-related changes in your child would you attribute to your child’s participation in the food fun camp?
Appendix I

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation
Child Interview Guide

What food type activities did you do at home before you went to food fun camp?

Tell me what you did at food fun camp.

What did you like about food fun camp?

What do you think you learned at food fun camp?

Tell me about the food type activities that you’ve been doing since you got home from food fun camp.

If no free narrative, read list of possible examples (read cookbooks; help prepare a meal; stir; use a knife to cut foods; fill measuring cups and spoons; add ingredients to a bowl; get ingredients; beat ingredients with a whisk; crack an egg; use a grater to shred ingredients; bake; use kitchen equipment such as microwave, stove, oven, can opener, blender, etc.; set the table; clean off the table; do the dishes; choose foods for supper, lunch, breakfast, snacks; make snacks; help shop for groceries; garden).

Would you like to do more or less food type activities at home than what you’re doing now?

If more, what stops you from doing more food type activities at home?

What helps you to do food type activities at home?

Is there anything else that you’d like to tell me about the food fun camp?

Is there anything else that you’d like to tell me about the food type activities that you do at home?
Appendix J

Audit Report for Naomi Shanks

I was asked to complete this audit by Naomi Shanks (researcher). I began by familiarizing myself with the thesis materials to be audited (cassette tapes, qualitative research binder, thesis, participant transcripts, etc.) My goal was to establish dependability and confirmability of “The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation”.

The thesis was reviewed and I self-selected two themes to assess confirmability of the research. The following themes were selected for in-depth review:

4.4.3.1 Perception of Food Fun Camp
4.4.3.3 Factors That Influenced Food-Related Activities

The themes were confirmable when traced from the findings presented in the thesis to the original data. Items sent for review were well-labeled and clearly coded; this allowed me to readily trace the selected themes back to the original data on cassette tape.

Dependability of the data was established in the two major themes selected for review. Respondents’ language was presented without bias in quotations. Rational for findings was well-supported with examples and references from the interviews. Inferences made by the researcher appear clear, logical, and unbiased.

In my opinion the researchers’ results are confirmable, dependable, and strongly based in the raw data collected in the interviews.

Sheila Brown

March 6, 2002
Appendix K

*The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation*

**Confidentiality Agreement**

I, __________________________, agree to keep all information related to this study confidential. I will not share the names or any other identifiable information about the study participants with anyone in any way. Nor will I discuss participants’ responses with any one other than the researcher.

______________________________
Auditor/Facilitator/Counselor’s Signature

Date

______________________________
Researcher’s Signature

Date

Any questions or concerns about the study may be directed to M. Naomi Shanks (966-6346 or 966-6397), Dr. Shawna Berenbaum (966-5836), or the Office of Research Services (966-4053).
Appendix L

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Consent Form – Camp Counselors

I understand that:

1. The purpose of this study is to describe the experiences children take home from the Food Fun Program. The data collected will be given to the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre in the form of a master’s thesis. The results of the study may also be shared in other publications or presentations.

2. I will be interviewed by the researcher and asked to describe the Food Fun Camps. The other counselor and I will be interviewed together. We will be interviewed at the end of both camps selected for the study. Each interview will take about 45 minutes and will be scheduled at a convenient time.

3. The discussions will be tape-recorded but I can have the tape-recorder turned off any time I wish.

4. There are no foreseeable physical or emotional risks to participating in this study.

5. I am a volunteer in this study. I can withdraw from the study at any time or refuse to answer any questions without fear or penalty. Neither withdrawal from the study nor the comments I make will affect my employment with the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre or my current and possible future involvement (reference letters, courses, etc.) with the NRVC Director. If I withdraw from the study, all my data collected will be destroyed.

6. Precautions will be taken to protect confidentiality. Others on the research team may see the typed notes from the interviews but my name will be replaced by a code name or number. The auditor may listen to the interview tapes but he or she will sign a confidentiality agreement. The information the other counselor and I provide will only be used to obtain a description of the two camps. The researcher will not share my name in any discussions, publications, or presentations. However, I am aware that those who know, through other means, that I was employed as a Food Fun Camp counselor will probably know I was part of this study.

7. The other counselor will know I participated in the study and hear what I say in the interviews. I agree to keep information provided during the interviews private from sources outside of the study. I am aware that the other counselor will also be asked to keep information private.
8. I will be told of any changes in the study that may affect my participation in the study.

9. During the study, interview tapes and transcripts will be locked in the researcher’s office when not in use. After the study, all data from the study will be stored with the researcher’s supervisor at the University of Saskatchewan for five years and then it will be destroyed.

10. Upon request, I will receive a summary of the results following the completion of the study.

11. If I have any questions about the study, I can contact Naomi Shanks, student researcher at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph # 966-6346 or 373-6397); Dr. Shawna Berenbaum, supervisor of this study at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph# 966-5836); or the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph# 966-4053).

I, __________________________________________, agree to participate in the Food Fun Program study. I hereby acknowledge that the study and the consent form have been explained to me and that I have received a copy of the consent form for my own records.

_________________________________________  ______________________________________
Camp Counselor’s Signature                    Date

_________________________________________
Researcher’s Signature

Date
Appendix M

*The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation*

**Consent Form – Parents**

I understand that:

1. The purpose of this study is to explore what children learn from the Food Fun Program. The data collected will be given to the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre in the form of a master’s thesis. The results of the study may also be shared in other publications or presentations.

2. My child will participate in a group interview with other children who attended the same Food Fun Camp. A trained facilitator will conduct the group interview. The group interview will take place on the last day of the camp and will take about 30 minutes. The children will be asked about what they did and learned at the Food Fun Camp.

3. I will be interviewed by the researcher and asked to describe what I think my child learned at the Food Fun Camp. The interview will take about 45 minutes of my time and will be scheduled at a time convenient for me. The interview will take place about four to six weeks after my child attends the Food Fun Camp.

4. My child will be interviewed by the researcher and asked to describe what he/she thinks he/she learned at the Food Fun Camp. This interview will take approximately 45 minutes and will be scheduled at a time convenient for my child and I. The interview will take place about four to six weeks after my child attends Food Fun Camp.

5. The discussions will be tape-recorded but my child or I can have the tape-recorder turned off any time we wish.

6. There are no foreseeable physical or emotional risks to participating in this study. It is possible that my child may feel uncomfortable during the interview because he/she may have never been in an interview-type situation before. The researcher will take steps, such as getting to know my child before the interview, to decrease this possible discomfort.

7. My child and I are volunteers in this study. We have the right not to answer any questions we don’t want to, to leave the discussions at any time, and to withdraw from the study entirely. If we take these actions, it will not affect our involvement in the Food Fun Program or the services we receive from the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre now or in the future. If my child or I withdraw from the study, our data will be destroyed. The comments my child or
I make, whether positive or negative, will also have no affect on the services we receive from the Nutrition Resource and Volunteer Centre.

8. Precautions will be taken to protect confidentiality. The researcher will not share my name, my child's name, or any thing else that could identify us with any one other than the research team. Others on the research team may see the typed notes from the interviews but real names will be replaced by code names or numbers. The auditor may listen to the interview tapes but will sign a confidentiality agreement. Group data will be presented whenever possible. It may be necessary to show individual examples, but code names or numbers will be used.

9. Other children who participate in the group interview will know my child participated and will hear what my child says during the group interview. Because there will be other people involved in the group interview, the researcher can not ensure the confidentiality of the information shared during the group interview.

10. The facilitator who conducts the group interview will hear what my child says and may know my child’s first name. The facilitator will sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure he/she does not share this information with anyone. The counselors will not be involved with the group interview but they will know whether or not my child participates in the group interview. The counselors will also sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure they do not share this information with anyone.

11. I will be given an opportunity to review my interview transcript before it is used in the study. The researcher will review my child’s interview transcript with my child before it is used in the study. In order to ensure the confidentiality of my child’s responses, only the researcher, and as necessary the research team, will be privy to my child’s responses. My child’s responses will not be shared with me or the camp counselors.

12. During the study, the interview tapes and transcripts will be locked in the researcher’s office when not in use. After the study is completed, all data will be stored with the researcher’s supervisor at the University of Saskatchewan for five years and then it will be destroyed.

13. I will be told of any changes in the study that may affect my child’s or my participation in the study.

14. Upon request, I will receive a summary of the results of the study following the completion of the study.
15. If I have any questions about the study, I can contact Naomi Shanks, student researcher at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph# 966-6346 or 373-6397); Dr. Shawna Berenbaum, supervisor of this study at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph# 966-5836); or the Office of Research Services at the University of Saskatchewan (Ph# 966-4053).

I, __________________________, agree to participate in the Food Fun Program study.

I, __________________________, agree to allow my child, __________________________, to participate in the Food Fun Program study.

I hereby acknowledge that the study and the consent form have been explained to me and that I have received a copy of the consent form for my own records.

Parent/Guardian’s Signature

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date
Appendix N

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Letter of Assent – Children

Dear ______________________,

I would like to know what campers did and learned at the Food Fun Camp. I am going to be at your camp so I can learn about it.

At the end of the camp, I would like you to talk about the Food Fun Camp with some other campers. I would also like to talk to you, by yourself, about one month after the camp is over. I want you to tell me about what campers learned at the Food Fun Camp.

I would like to put what you tell me about the Food Fun Camp in my report. My report will be about the Food Fun Camp. I don’t want to forget anything you tell me. So, if you don’t mind, I’d like to use a tape recorder when you share stories about the Food Fun Camp.

You can choose not to be part of my project at any time. It’s okay if you decide not to take part. You will still be able to go to Food Fun Camp just like the other campers.

There is space here for you to let me know that you want to be part of my project.

Your Signature: _____________________________

My Signature: _____________________________

Date: _____________________________

If you have any questions, you can talk to your parents or me. You can talk to me at camp or phone me. My phone number is 373-6397.
Appendix O

*The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation*

**Transcript Release Form – Parents**

I, ____________________________, have been given an opportunity to review my interview transcript. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to M. Naomi Shanks to be used in the manner described to me in the consent form. I have received a copy of this transcript release form for my own records.

_________________________________________  ________________________________
Parent/Guardian’s Signature                      Date

_________________________________________  ________________________________
Researcher’s Signature                           Date

Any questions or concerns about the study may be directed to M. Naomi Shanks (966-6346 or 966-6397), Dr. Shawna Berenbaum (966-5836), or the Office of Research Services (966-4053).
Appendix P

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Transcript Release Form – Children

Child’s Name

Today, Naomi talked to me about our interview. She reminded me of some of the things I told her about the Food Fun Camp. She told me that she would like to use what I told her in her report. Naomi’s report will be a book about her project.

By signing my name on this form, I am going to let Naomi use what I told her in her report. Naomi is going to give my parent(s) a copy of this form to keep in a safe place.

Child’s Signature

Date

Researcher’s Signature

Date

If you have any questions you can talk to your parents or phone Naomi at 373-6397. You can also phone Dr. Shawna Berenbaum (966-5836) or the Office of Research Services at the university (966-4053).
Appendix Q

The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation

Data Release Form – Counselors

I, ________________________, hereby authorize the use of the information I provided during the interviews with the researcher for the purposes of this research as described to me in the consent form. I have received a copy of this release form for my own records.


Camp Counselor’s Signature

Date


Researcher’s Signature

Date

Any questions or concerns about the study may be directed to M. Naomi Shanks (966-6346 or 966-6397), Dr. Shawna Berenbaum (966-5836), or the Office of Research Services (966-4053).
UNIVERSITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON ETHICS IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

NAME: N. Shanks  BSC#: 2000-85
Division of Nutrition and Dietetics

DATE: June 2, 2000

The University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research has reviewed the Application for Ethics Approval for your study "The Food Fun Program: A Qualitative Evaluation" (00-85).

1. Your study has been APPROVED.

2. Any significant changes to your proposed study should be reported to the Chair for Committee consideration in advance of its implementation.

3. The term of this approval is for 5 years.

I wish you a successful and informative study.

Valerie Thompson, Chair
University Advisory Committee on Ethics in Behavioural Science Research

VT/bjk