Developing & Assessing Nutrition Education Handouts (DANEH) Checklist

The Developing & Assessing Nutrition Education Handouts (DANEH) checklist was created by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Foundation as part of the Future of Food (FOF) project. The purpose of the DANEH checklist is twofold: 1) to screen existing nutrition education handouts in order to establish the inclusion/exclusion of important quality components, and; 2) as a tool to use in developing quality nutrition education handouts. The checklist incorporates 21 constructs identified as quality indicators to be included in nutrition education handouts, based on a literature review. The constructs are categorized into five main topic areas: content; behavior focus; cultural sensitivity; written word; and organization/readability.

Results of DANEH validation testing proved that DANEH is a valid tool and has good interrater reliability for handouts for a general low-income audience when RDNs are the reviewers. It is recommended that a score of 18 out of 21 possible points (86%) by two reviewers is the cutpoint for handouts to be considered high quality handouts. For handouts with a score of 17, it is recommended that a 3rd reviewer rates the handout using DANEH. It is recommended that handouts with a score of 16 or less are not considered high quality.

The DANEH checklist is used to vet nutrition education handouts for inclusion in the FOF Healthy Food Bank Resource Hub website for a target audience of people facing food insecurity. All handouts posted on www.healthyfoodbankhub.org have been approved using the DANEH checklist.

Adjusted DANEH Checklist for Audiovisual Materials
The NE WIC program has adjusted the DANEH Checklist to be appropriate for the evaluation of audiovisual (AV) materials. Look for the red boxes throughout the checklist for altered instructions if you are evaluating AV materials.

Maximum score for audiovisual materials is 13 points. It is recommended that a score of 11 out of 13 possible points (85%) by two reviewers is the cut point for AV materials to be considered high quality. For AV materials with a score of 10, it is recommended that a third reviewer rate the handout. AV materials scoring 9 points or less are not considered high quality.

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Nutrition Education Handout Checklist
Scoring Criteria

Content:
Current, accurate, and consistent with USDA Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate
(required 'yes' for approval)
Yes ☐
Check "yes" if the content promotes current, evidence-based recommendations, and is consistent with USDA Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate.
No ☐
Check "no" if the content is based on outdated information (including MyPyramid).
Comments: _____

_____

Promotes relevant health issues for target audience
Yes ☐
Check "yes" if the content addresses a relevant health issue of the target audience (i.e., reducing sodium for African-American audiences).
No ☐
Check "no" if the content is not relevant to the target audience (i.e., eating organic fruits and vegetables for low-income audiences).
Comments: _____

_____

Clear purpose
Yes ☐
Check "yes" if it is immediately clear what the handout will tell you or how it can help you.
No ☐
Check "no" if you have to read much of the content before you realize what the handout will tell you or how it can help you.
Comments: _____

_____

Total Content Score _____

(3 possible 'yes' responses)

Behavior Focus:

One or two main themes

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the handout contains no more than two main themes. For example, a handout with ten strategies to shop on a budget has one main theme, shopping on a budget.

No ☐

Check "no" if the handout contains three or more main themes. For example, a handout that covers tips for healthy snacks, physical activity, and bedtime routines contains three main themes.

Comments: _____

_____

Specific examples of desired behavior

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the handout clearly instructs a person what to do, and how to do it through specific examples. For example, "Play active games with your kids, like hide-and-go-seek, double Dutch jump rope, or tag."

No ☐

Check "no" if the handout provides vague recommendations without specific examples of desired behavior. For example, "Be more physically active."

Comments: _____

_____

Total Behavior Focus Score _____
(2 possible 'yes' responses)

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Cultural Sensitivity:

Culturally appropriate content for target audience

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the handout is intended for a general audience and includes many cultural food and behavior practices. Check "yes" if the target audience is a specific culture, and the handout includes appropriate food and behavior examples for that culture.

No ☐

Check "no" if the handout is intended for a general audience and does not include culturally diverse food and behavior practices. Check "no" if the target audience is of a specific culture and the handout does not represent appropriate food and behaviors for that culture.

Comments: _____

_____

Culturally appropriate images for target audience

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the handout is intended for a general audience and includes images that respectfully represent many cultures, including the people, places and foods pictured. Check "yes" if the target audience is a specific culture, and the handout includes images of people, places, and foods from that culture.

No ☐

Check "no" if the handout is intended for a general audience and does not include images that respectfully represent many cultures. Check "no" if the target audience is of a specific culture and the handout does not include appropriate images representing that culture.

Comments: _____

_____

Total Cultural Sensitivity Score _____
(2 possible 'yes' responses)

Written Word:

Simple, common words

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if simple, common words are used frequently, with limited use of abbreviations, acronyms, and technical jargon.

No ☐

Check "no" if complex and unfamiliar words are used frequently or if abbreviations, acronyms, and technical jargon appear excessively.

Comments: _____

_____

Positive messages

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if messages focus mostly on the positive behavior desired, i.e. "do this."

No ☐

Check "no" if the messages focus mostly on the negative behavior to change, i.e. "don't do this."

Comments: _____

_____

Active voice, second person (you/your), conversational tone

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the handout refers to the second person (i.e. "you/your"), stays in the present tense, and uses a conversational/friendly tone. For example, "Offer healthy and tasty after school snacks for your kids, like grapes or cheese sticks."

No ☐

Check "no" if handout refers to the third person, uses the past tense, and/or is too formal. For example, "Parents need to provide nutrient-dense foods in-between meals for their children and adolescents."

Comments: _____

_____

Repetition of key words and/or new concepts

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if key words and/or new concepts are repeated effectively for reinforcement, or if repeating key words is not necessary (i.e. for a very short handout).

No ☐

Check "no" if repeating key words and/or new concepts would be effective for reinforcement, but are missing.

Comments: _____

Total Written Word Score _____
(4 possible 'yes' responses)

Organization and Readability

Logical order, most important message first

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if the information is displayed in a logical order, with the most important messages listed first.

No ☐

Check "no" if information is disorganized, and/or the most important messages do not appear until later in the handout.

Comments: _____

_____

Short paragraphs

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if each paragraph is short (60 words or less) and only contains one topic. Check "yes" if the handout does not contain paragraphs.

No ☐

Check "no" if each paragraph is long (over 60 words) and/or contains two or more topics.

Comments: _____

_____

Space around headings and text

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if there is a ½ inch margin around the perimeter of the handout and has at least a double space before headings.

No ☐

Check "no" if the margins are less than ½ inch around the perimeter of the handout and/or there is little space before headings.

Comments: _____

_____

Blocks of text are left-justified

Yes ☐

Check "yes" if blocks of text are left-justified.

No ☐

Check "no" if blocks of text are centered or right-justified.

Comments: _____

_____

Bullets, numbers, and tables

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if bullets, numbers, and/or tables appear often.
No ☐
Check "no" if the handout contains mostly text, and few bullets, numbers, or tables.
Comments: _____

_____

Several informative headings/subheadings

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if several headings/subheadings are present to help identify what the text will tell you next.
No ☐
Check "no" if few headings/subheadings are present, and/or if the headings/subheadings do not inform you what the text will tell you next.
Comments: _____

_____

Easy to read font

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if font is at least 12 point, and is serif (with feet, like Times Roman) or sans serif (without feet, like arial).
No ☐
Check "no" if font is smaller than 12 point, and is fancy or curly.
Comments: _____

_____

Important text is bolded or underlined if necessary

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if emphasizing text, bolding and underlining are used. Check "yes" if no emphasis of text is needed, (i.e. for a very short handout).
No ☐
Check "no" if emphasizing text uses all caps or italics.
Comments: _____

_____

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Purposeful and relevant images

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if images show instruction or the desired behavior, are placed near relevant text, and include captions when necessary to describe the behavior or emphasize a point.
No ☐
Check "no" if images do not show instruction or the desired behavior, are not placed near relevant text, or do not include captions as necessary.
Comments: _____

_____

5th grade reading level

For AV materials, evaluate your script

Yes ☐
Check "yes" if handout is written at or below a 5th grade reading level.
No ☐
Check "no" if handout is written at a 6th grade reading level or higher.

Three options for determining reading level:
Option #1: Word Readability Program

1. Set up readability program:
a. File
b. Options
c. Proofing
d. Show readability stats

2. Select, copy, and paste text into Word. Fix any sentences that were separated when cutting and pasting from pdf to Word.

3. Under Review, click Spelling and Grammar Check.

4. Look for the FleschKincaid Grade Level of the bottom of the Spelling and Grammar box.

Option #2: Readability Score Website
1. Visit app.readable.com/text/

2. Select, copy, and paste text into the online readability score tool. (No need to fix any separated sentences.)

3. Look for the FleschKincaid Grade Level at the right of the screen.

Option #3: Readability Formula By Hand

1. Select three samples of 100 word passages randomly.

2. Count the number of sentences in all three 100 word passages, estimating the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest 1/10th.

3. Count the number of syllables in all three 100 word passages. Make a table as follows:

	Number of Sentences	Number of Syllables
First 100 words		
Second 100 words		
Third 100 words		
Total		
Average		

4. View http://www.readabilityformulas.com/graphics/frygraph2lg.jpg and enter the graph with Average Sentence Length and Number of Syllables. Plot where the two lines intersect. Area where dot is plotted signifies the approximate reading grade level of the content.

5. If you find a great deal of variability, you can put more sample counts into the average.

*(Source: Readability formulas, readabilityformulas.com)

Comments:

_____

_____

Total Organization and Readability Score _____
(10 possible 'yes' responses)

2 possible 'yes' responses for AV material evaluation

Total Score _____

Overall Comments:

Approval

In my professional opinion, I consider this handout a quality nutrition education handout.

☐ Yes

☐ No

By: _____   **Date:**

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10. National Cancer Institute. Clear & Simple. Developing Effective Print Materials for Low-Literate Readers. http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/cancerlibrary/clear-and-simple/page1 Accessed December 10, 2012.

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