

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 on HungerandHealth.org for a target audience of individuals experiencing food insecurity. All handouts posted on www.HungerandHealth.org have been approved using the DANEH checklist.

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Check "no" if the content is based on outdated information (including MyPyramid).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)

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: _____

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

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. Click Review
- b. Click Spelling & Grammar
- c. Click Options
- d. Select Show readability statistics

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 <https://readabilityscore.com/>.

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.

<http://www.readabilityformulas.com/frygraphreadabilityformula>)

Comments: _____

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

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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