

# Evaluation of Purple Asparagus's *Delicious Nutritious Adventures Program*



The Center for Elementary Mathematics and Science Education (CEMSE) at the University of Chicago conducted an evaluation of Purple Asparagus's Delicious Nutritious Adventures program during the 2012-2013 school year. The focus of this evaluation was to understand student and family participation in the Delicious Nutritious Adventures program activities, and the knowledge, behavioral, and attitudinal outcomes for participating students and their families.

## Data Collection:

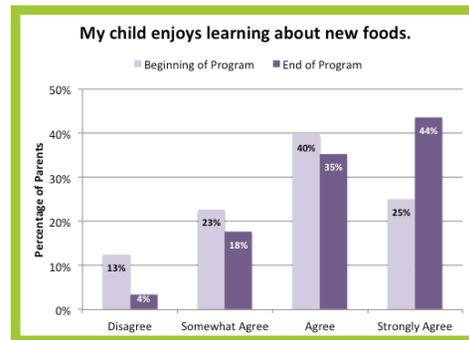
The evaluation took place in 10 first grade classrooms (246 students and their families) in 4 schools, representing 25% of the total number of students served by the program.

## Data Sources:

- Student Questionnaires
- Parent Questionnaires
- Student Focus Groups
- Parent Interviews
- Lesson Observations
- Family Workshop Observations

## Student Outcomes

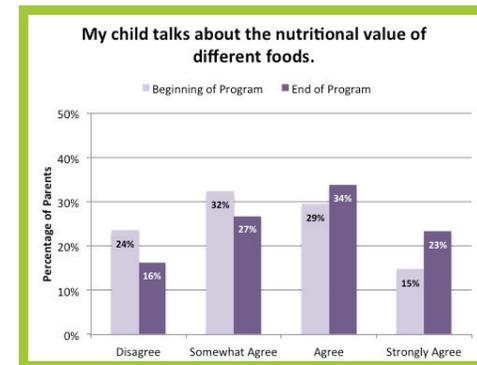
- **Students' interest in learning about new foods increased over the program year.**



**Parent quote:** I LOVE what you do. You make my Jack so much more willing to try foods. Jack is a very tough eater, and I hope this project continues.

- **Students' interest in making healthy food choices increased over the program year.**

**Parent quote:** I think the program opened her eyes with regards to being healthy and what can be considered healthy. Like a seven year old is asking you if it's healthy for you? She never asked that before, she would just eat it, and either like it or not. But now she asks if it's healthy.



- **The majority of parents perceived that their children ate more fruits after participating in the program.**

On the end-of-year parent survey, more than half (57%) of parents agreed that their child now eats more fruits, and a large percentage (44%) also agreed their child eats more vegetables.

- **Delicious Nutritious Adventures was a positive and enjoyable experience for students.**

**Student quote:** I love PA because you can learn about fruits and veggies and you can try new things.

**Parent quote:** Jonah was very excited about Purple Asparagus and learned a lot!

- **Students were very willing to try new foods introduced throughout the program.**
- **Students came into the program with positive attitudes about healthy eating and those attitudes were sustained.**

## Family Outcomes

---

---



- *Families of participating students vary widely in their eating habits and mealtime needs.*

- *Almost half the parent sample finds it challenging to serve fresh fruits and vegetables to their children.*

**Parent quote:** *When I cook, mostly I think of what kind of meat would I serve first, then I think of all the side dishes. I do always try to do a veggie and a starch. But then sometimes that's like the main dish is too laborious, the side dishes going to fall away...like the veggie falls away. I'd like to change that, and eat more veggie.*

- *Purple Asparagus increased many families' awareness about practicing healthy eating habits.*

On the parent survey, 66% of parents said that Purple Asparagus had inspired them to try cooking different recipes

- *The majority of parents made one or more of the Purple Asparagus recipes at home.*

The majority of parents (76%) prepared one or more Purple Asparagus recipes at home. On average, parents made between two and three Purple Asparagus recipes over the program year.

- *Parents of participating students expressed a positive view and a good understanding of the program in general, and many showed interest in participating in future program activities.*

On the end-of-year parent survey, 28% reported that they would be likely to participate in future family workshops; 10% were interested in volunteering; 19% were interested in attending Purple Asparagus community events, and 23% were interested in participating in a recipe exchange.

- *Parents found the workshops useful, but for different reasons, including learning about new recipes and observing how to get children excited about eating healthy foods.*

---

---

## Questions?

Amy Cassata – [acassata@uchicago.edu](mailto:acassata@uchicago.edu)  
Sarah Rand – [srand@uchicago.edu](mailto:srand@uchicago.edu)