

Mini-Interventions

What is a Mini-Intervention?

Participants of the Metabolic Magic interactive curriculum are learning about healthy living, and now it is time to put that knowledge into practice. The mini-intervention component is an opportunity to utilize this information outside of the classroom and place it into a real world context. The hope is that through these group projects that provide hands-on experience, participants will gain the confidence to not only practice healthy living in their own lives, but to be change agents among their peers, families, and communities.

We believe that kids have the ability to make good choices for themselves and the best way for them to implement a Mini-Intervention is to take ownership. Becoming change agents among their peers, families and communities not only fosters confidence, but also empowers youth to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.

The following interventions were all created by students and their peer groups with the guidance of adults. We encourage within your class discussion that students also come up with their own “Mini-interventions”. The important aspect of these projects is that they are initiated by the students: they are the change agents.

The examples provided here are guidelines. They can be duplicated or used as an outline for a new project. Students can try one of the examples first and then do their own. These can also be tailored to suit the educational setting, and individuals involved.

The role of the adults is in helping with organization and planning, and guiding students as they navigate the larger community. For example, adults would go along with students to meetings with community members or stakeholders, show them how to make appointments and who they need permission from. In other words, adults open doorways for students to be able to realize their project.

Guidelines for all Mini-Interventions:

- While most of these are best done in group settings with the guidance of an adult, there are a couple that could be done individually. We want to make sure all participants in our program have the opportunity to use this important component of Metabolic Magic. Please keep in mind the safety of the student if they are out in the community either alone or with a group, and use discretion.
- At the end of the project, students are asked to write up a formal summary of what transpired during the project, describing the process, how it was accomplished, what issues arose and how they were dealt with, and any other reflections on the experience.

List of mini-interventions

Suggested Case Studies for use	Title of Mini-Intervention
CS1	A Week of Healthy Lunches [°]
CS2	Dinners To-Go [°]
CS2	Food Fair
CS2-CS3	Healthy Living Brochure ^{*°}
CS2-CS3	Healthy Cookbook for Kids in the Know
CS2-CS3	Partners in Food and Fitness
CS3-CS4	All-Out Ad Campaign [°]
CS3-CS4	Fitness Theatrics
CS4	Map Quest [°]
CS4	Closing the Loop [°]
Any Case Study	Photo or Video Essay of Home, School & Work Environments ^{*°}
Any Case Study	Meet the Expert
<p>* Suggested if the group only has 1 day for a mini-intervention ° Appropriate for an individual student to complete on their own</p>	

Learning objectives:

- To be self-starters
- Contact professionals
- Make phone calls to schedule appointments
- Conduct informational interviews
- Negotiating (for example, negotiate pricing for professional services if needed)
- Interpersonal skills
- Working cooperatively with a team
- Gain self-confidence
- Community involvement

A Week of Healthy Lunches *(Suggestion after CS1)*

Using MyPlate (from the USDA) as a reference, students will assess the proportions of protein, fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy in their lunches, as well as the amount of whole vs refined foods. Students will then plan how to adjust their lunches to be more nutritionally balanced. An optional “School Lunch Survey” can be used, which is found in the Nutrition Factory under *CS1, Student Materials*.

Guidelines:

- Students will discuss MyPlate and the recommended proportions of meals.
- Students will capture images (photographs or drawings) of their lunches for one week and label the proportions of protein, fruits, vegetables, grains and dairy
- Students will keep track of what percentage of their lunch is made of refined vs whole foods
- Students will brainstorm adjustments to their lunches that will improve their nutritional balance and/or nutritional density
- Students may present their results and recommendations to their parent/guardian or their school

Dinners To-Go *(Suggestion after CS2)*

Students will select 3-6 nutritious main course recipes from a cookbook focused on healthy meals. Students will also select complimentary side dishes for each main course prepared.

Pre-Activity discussion questions:

- What qualifies as a healthy meal?
- What are the biggest challenges to preparing and packaging meals?
- Can budget friendly meals also be healthy?
- When preparing meals, how will work areas be kept clean and sanitary?

Guidelines:

Depending on the number of students in a class, they will divide into teams.

Each team will be given a budget to follow.

Each team will select a main dish and side dish to prepare.

Teams will divide up assignments (prep, cook, package, clean up) for the meal.

- Once recipes are chosen, a grocery list will be made and items priced out according to the budget.
- Teams will decide how they will package their meals.
- A trip to the grocery store will be made by the teacher or facilitator.
- If possible, students may also make a trip to the grocery store to select the food for the recipes.
- If students are in a school with a food lab, preparation for each meal will take place there.
- If possible, students without access to a school foods lab, will be able to use the school cafeteria to prepare and package their meals.
- If students need to prepare meals at home, they can take photos or make a video of the preparation and packaging for their meals.
- An ingredient list, nutrition label cooking instructions will also be included with each meal.

Community engagement: Students research and reach out to professionals in the community such as food companies, restaurants or grocery stores. Students can create a presentation of their project and present to a local food proprietor who can provide feedback and advise students on next steps.

Food Fair *(Suggestion after CS2)*

Students will organize a Healthy Food Fair in the School Cafeteria for families.

Planning Discussion Questions:

- How will we fund the supplies? (Ex. School donation, bake sale, local business donation)
- What information should we present during the fair? (examples below)
 - Healthy meals at home
 - Food Justice
 - Healthy Fast Food options
 - Local healthy food businesses
- What is the best time to have this event?
 - Meet with administrator

Guidelines:

- Complete planning discussion questions to determine resources and the information you want the community to have
- Split class or group into different tables
 - Each table will be responsible for organizing educational material (ex. Handouts, recipes, activity resources)
- Table Ideas
 - Game: Match nutrition label to food item
 - Have 5-7 bowls of different packaged food items
 - Participants will match printed nutrition labels with the food item in 2 minutes
 - When the answers are revealed, there will be information if the food item is a red light, yellow light, or green light food
 - Food Demo: [Apple Salsa with Whole Wheat Pita Chips](#)
 - Print Recipe Cards
 - Presentation of Hidden salt and Sugar: Sugar Cube Activity
 - Present 5 popular beverages
 - Volunteer will use sugar cubes to guess how much sugar is in each beverage
 - Facilitator Will reveal answers and have the volunteer adjust the number of cubes for visual
 - Energy Balance Movement Station
 - Facilitation of simple movements to increase heart rate ex. Jumping Jacks, hopping, split lunges, arm circles

Healthy Living Brochure *(Suggestion after CS2, CS3, or if the group has only 1 day to do a mini-intervention)*

Students will utilize a variety of media (photos, drawings, quotes, stories, etc.) to create a “for kids by kids” healthy living brochure. The brochure can be printed and distributed to medical offices and schools in the area or other relevant organizations.

Pre-activity discussion:

Using Problem based learning, students answer questions that will allow them to learn about “healthy living” before making the brochure.

- What do you consider to be healthy living?
- What are macro and micronutrients and why are they important to health?
- According to the American Dietetics Association, how many servings of fruits and vegetables should we eat a day? How much vitamins and minerals?
- What is “traffic light eating”?
- According to the CDC, how much physical activity do youth need?
- What happens to your body/brain/emotions when you exercise?
- What are some effects of stress on the body and mind?

Guidelines:

- Students will define and discuss the need and value of a healthy living brochure.
- Students will discuss the content of the brochure and consider how to make it teen friendly.
- Students will work as a team to decide how to produce content for the brochure.
- Students will discuss as a team where the brochure could be distributed and how to connect to those entities.
- Content might include: stories, interviews, facts, quotes, photos and drawings.
- Students will design the brochure in the digital format as well as a printed version.
- Students will critique the brochure content themselves. Teachers may provide feedback or guidance although the project is student-led.
- Digital brochures can be created with online platforms such as Canva or Issuu.

Healthy Cookbook for Kids in the Know *(Suggestion after CS2 or CS3)*

Guidelines:

- Group discussion of ready-made healthy snacks they enjoy, as well as recipes for healthy snacks.
- Consider using fresh food grown in the community garden in the recipes.
- Brainstorm the structure and design of the cookbook to make it “teen friendly.”
- Break into four smaller groups. Each group creates a recipe and finds its nutritional information, researching where to find such information such as FDA.gov, food labels, kidshealth.org, or other sources. Alternatively, focus on nutritional components (rather than amounts), so that information can be used to create balanced meals.
- Group 1. Search for and/or create healthy snack recipes
Group 2. Search for and/or create healthy breakfast recipes
Group 3. Search for and/or create healthy lunch recipes
Group 4. Search for and/or create healthy dinner recipes
- Design the cookbook including the cover. Photos, drawings and quotes could be used to compliment the recipes. Credit the origin of the recipe.
- Create mock-ups of possible cookbooks from student designs.
- Investigate the cost of printing and spiral binding..
- Discuss having a digital copy of the cookbook available.
- Organize a fundraiser to sell the cookbook and donate the funds back to the community garden.

Partners in Food and Fitness *(Suggestion after CS2 or CS3)*

Middle school students pair up and mentor younger students about healthy food and fitness choices. i.e.--Partners in lunch, after school activities, etc. Create a lesson or activity to do with their mentees or plan out an ongoing project where they check-in regularly with each other.

Guidelines:

- Middle school students will discuss the value of mentoring younger students in the area of healthy food and physical fitness.
- Middle school teachers/facilitators will coordinate with teachers/facilitators at the grade school to develop a plan to allow mentor/mentee experiences.
- Students will discuss and decide how to approach mentoring the younger students.
- Students will create a survey for fifth graders to discover eating and physical fitness habits.
- Students will work together to develop a lesson plan(s) to present to the younger students based on the results of the survey.
- Teachers at both levels create permission forms for parents/guardians.
- Students plan time to meet with mentees with the teacher's guidance.
- Younger students come to the middle school classroom for a planned lesson and assignment of mentors.
- Both mentors and mentees agree to keep food and activity journals to share when they meet.
- Mentors meet mentees twice each month during the semester or school year as allowed by scheduling.
- Mentors utilize email, handwritten notes or another form of communication to send "healthy habit" reminders to mentees daily or weekly.
- Community engagement: End of school year picnic with physical activities and games along with healthy lunches that the mentors and mentees create and share.

All-Out Ad Campaign *(Suggestion after CS3 or CS4)*

Students will work together to create a “Healthy Choices” marketing campaign for their school and/or community.

Pre-activity discussion questions:

- What are youth most concerned about in terms of health?
- What are the biggest health challenges that affect them?
- What are potential solutions?
- Have you seen or heard of solutions to these challenges that worked for others?
- What has worked for you to overcome health challenges?

Guidelines:

- Students brainstorm and discuss what the theme of the campaign will be.
- Decide where and how to advertise
- Decide how best reach peers
- Take a field trip to an advertising agency or have a guest speaker come to the students
- Produce a Public Service Announcement (PSA) at a local recording studio (Tiny House Studio)
- Create a “story” ad campaign (such as an Instagram post) with video and/or pictures.
- Have adults and students critique PSA before final product is released.

Suggested advertising media include:

- Local radio station slot (PSA)
- Videos or voice PSA during school announcements
- Posters
- Social media
- Closed-circuit TVs in schools (PSA running during passing times between classes)

Fitness Theatrics *(Suggestion after CS3 or CS4)*

Goal: To have the students provide an educational and creatively fun to look at living a healthy lifestyle by creating music, poem, dance or one-act play.

Planning and discussion questions:

- What kind of music, dance or a play would be appropriate for students?
- Students divide into groups to create one of the following; music, dance or a play
- Groups brainstorm ideas.
- Put ideas into a working form, music, chant, rhyme or song, dance or a one-act play.
- Students present ideas to the class.

Guidelines:

- Utilize a chosen set of words that suggest a healthy lifestyle or related topic.
- Use stomps and/or handclaps to start creating a chant or a rhyme.
- Students put the words together to form a poem/nursery rhyme/story/song.
- Students create a melody with the words.
- Students might create a dance to accompany the rhythm of the melody.
- Students create a one-act play based on healthy eating.
- Students create a video reciting the poem, singing or dancing to the song or acting out the play.
- Teachers/facilitators coordinate with the music department at their schools to have students work closely with music students to help by playing instruments.

Example of a rhyme:

Jump for joy, skip in the sun,

Metabolic Magic is loads of fun!

Eat lots of colors everyday

Keep your body in a healthy way!

Map Quest *(Suggestion after CS4)*

Students will work together to create a map of their local city, township or neighborhood. The map will include safe playgrounds, libraries, schools, parks, bike lanes, sidewalks or walking trails, and restaurants that include healthy selections in their menus.

Pre-Activity discussion questions:

- What sources can be used to identify parks, bike lanes, sidewalks and walking trails?
- How will safe playgrounds be determined?
- How will information regarding restaurants with healthy menus be gathered?
- What will the criteria be for determining healthy menus?
- What are ways we can create a map? (ie., digital, draw on a printed map, draw own map by hand or on the computer)

Guidelines:

- Students will meet to decide what type of map they want to create, whether paper and/or digital.
- Optional: Two teams can be established; one team for a paper map and one team for a digital map.
 - If students decide to create a paper map, they will need to discuss how to produce and distribute the map.
 - If a digital map is to be produced, students will need to research how to drop pins on the map and label the items.
- Students will discuss and share personal knowledge and experiences of parks, playgrounds, libraries, schools and restaurants in their location.
- Students will request to meet with a local alderperson, city council member or city planner to explain the purpose of the map they are creating and possible applications for the map.

Discuss their experience. What did you learn about your community? What are some of the strengths and challenges you found?

Closing the Loop *(Suggestion after CS4)*

Students will create a plan for a garden based on closed-loop or self-sustaining gardening practices. If the setting allows, students can present/teach this to a younger class and create an activity where the younger/older student pairs work together. If the school has a garden, include it in this project.

Discussion questions:

- What does sustainable mean?
- Why might this be useful in a garden?
- Have you seen examples of composting? (ie., natural composting such as the leaves decaying on the ground, a compost bin in a garden, or a city park with large compost piles)
- Have you seen examples of vegetable gardens? What were they like?
- What would you want to grow in your garden? Why?

Guidelines:

- Using problem based learning, students research what closed-loop gardening is, and what sustainable practices are included. This could include examples within the school's garden or a community garden if they have access to it.
- Students research what a garden needs to survive and thrive.
- Students can choose a topic related to sustainable gardening or split into groups and each take a topic (or create their own topic!)
 - The life cycle of a plant (including what it needs to thrive)
 - How to deal with "garden pests"
 - Companion planting (see "[The three sisters](#)" video)
 - Composting
 - How do the plants get water?
- Students brainstorm about what they want to create and how they might do it.
 - What items do I need to start the garden? To sustain it? How might I get them?
 - Who can participate? What jobs need to be done?
 - Where will it be? How much space?
 - What will we plant?
- Decide on the details and create a plan, including a map of the proposed garden
- If the school or community has a garden, how can the garden be a part of this project?

Community engagement:

Students research and reach out to professionals in the community such as the County's Parks Department or a City Botanical Garden who may have educational programs.

- Students gather resources from these sites

- Students organize an event where a speaker from one of these places comes to the school to present, or they go there for a presentation, on a field-trip.
- Students then create an activity based on this project where they would work with younger students as mentors or teachers.

Photo or Video Essay of Home, School and Work Environments

(After any case study, or if the group has only 1 day for a mini-intervention)

How does your school and community environments affect how easy or challenging it can be to create and maintain a healthy lifestyle?

Students will create photo essays illustrating elements in their home, school or community environment that make it harder or easier to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Students can display their photo essays to classmates and discuss their findings.

Guidelines:

- Students will discuss why and how their home, school and community environments affect their lifestyle
- Students will determine the format and length of their photo essays
- Students will choose one of the following: home, school or community environment
- If choosing the home environment, students will obtain a parent or guardian's permission to take and display photographs
- Content will include any elements of their environment that students find relevant to their health and lifestyle behavior
- Students will present their essays to their classmates and discuss the meaning and importance of each photograph

Meet the Expert *(After any case study)*

Goal: To have a health expert provide education to families and school community

Planning Discussion Questions

- What is the health issue we want to address? (ex. Mental health, nutrition, physical health)?
- Who are some local health experts who are representative of the school community?

Guidelines

- Reach out to local health expert and invite them for a community health evening
- Prepare questions you want to ask them
 - Gather questions from other students
- Take notes during the presentation
- Use the information to create an Ebook for the community
 - Research how to create an Ebook
 - Organize information from the health evening
 - Find graphics, or students create images to use in the Ebook
 - Include ways children and families can use the information they have learned