General Guidelines for UCONN Café Lessons

• Each lesson includes an icebreaker, a physical activity, a snack, and a nutrition message. Total length of the lesson will be about 45 minutes.

• Focus on making all the activities fun and interactive—this is not a passive, lecture-style lesson.

• Make all activities doable by children aged 5-12 years. If activities are too complicated for the very young ones in the group, such as reading a recipe or completing a worksheet, plan to pair them up with an older child or tutor.

• The purpose of the ice-breaker is for the children, teachers and tutors to get to know each other, and for warm-up. Be sure to involve the tutors and ensure that your ice-breaker is different from the one used the previous weeks. And last, but not least, have fun with it!

• Each lesson should include a parent component, something that goes home to reinforce and communicate the nutrition message from the day of the lesson. It can be a letter to the parents, a refrigerator magnet, some art work, or any other creative ideas you have!

• We have money in our grant for teaching materials, so if you think of a great toy or other tool to reinforce your message ($1.00 or less/child), or see a handout on the web that appeals, we can probably purchase it if it’s ordered in time.

• Make the physical activities performable indoors in case of rain.

• Don’t forget to indicate in your lesson that children should wash their hands before snack.

• See snack guidelines handout for specific information on snacks.

• Each lesson should include a printed version of the snack recipe. Add clip art, photos, and play with the type font to make it visually appealing.

• Children are likely to remember three messages at most from the lesson; ask yourself what are the three most important ideas you want to convey about your topic and focus on repeating those.

• As much as is humanly possible, try to cluster your lesson components by theme. For example, if the lesson is on calcium-rich foods, you can do a bone-building activity like jumping rope, include a calcium-rich snack, and your ice-breaker could be for children to invent new kinds of outrageous ice cream flavors.

• Each lesson should include one extra activity for “back-up” in case your other activities don’t last long enough; label it that way in the lesson (handouts or word games are good for this purpose).