

Teens CAN

Comprehensive Food Literacy In Cooking, Agriculture, and Nutrition



The Challenge

**Two out of three U.S. adolescents (ages 12–19)
have poor diet quality**

Adolescence is a **pivotal stage** where independent eating habits form. This creates an **opportunity** to establish lifelong dietary patterns.

Yet, most nutrition programs target young children or adults—
leaving **adolescents overlooked**.

The Challenge

School-based **nutrition education** has been shown to be an effective way to **improve** adolescent diet quality.

With the **dissolution of SNAP-Ed funding**, many adolescents are losing access to one of the few large-scale, evidence-based nutrition education programs available.

Without nutrition education, adolescents risk missing the foundation for lifelong healthy eating.

The Challenge

The **cancellation of SNAP-Ed** has left many adolescents, especially in under-resourced communities, **without access** to nutrition education.

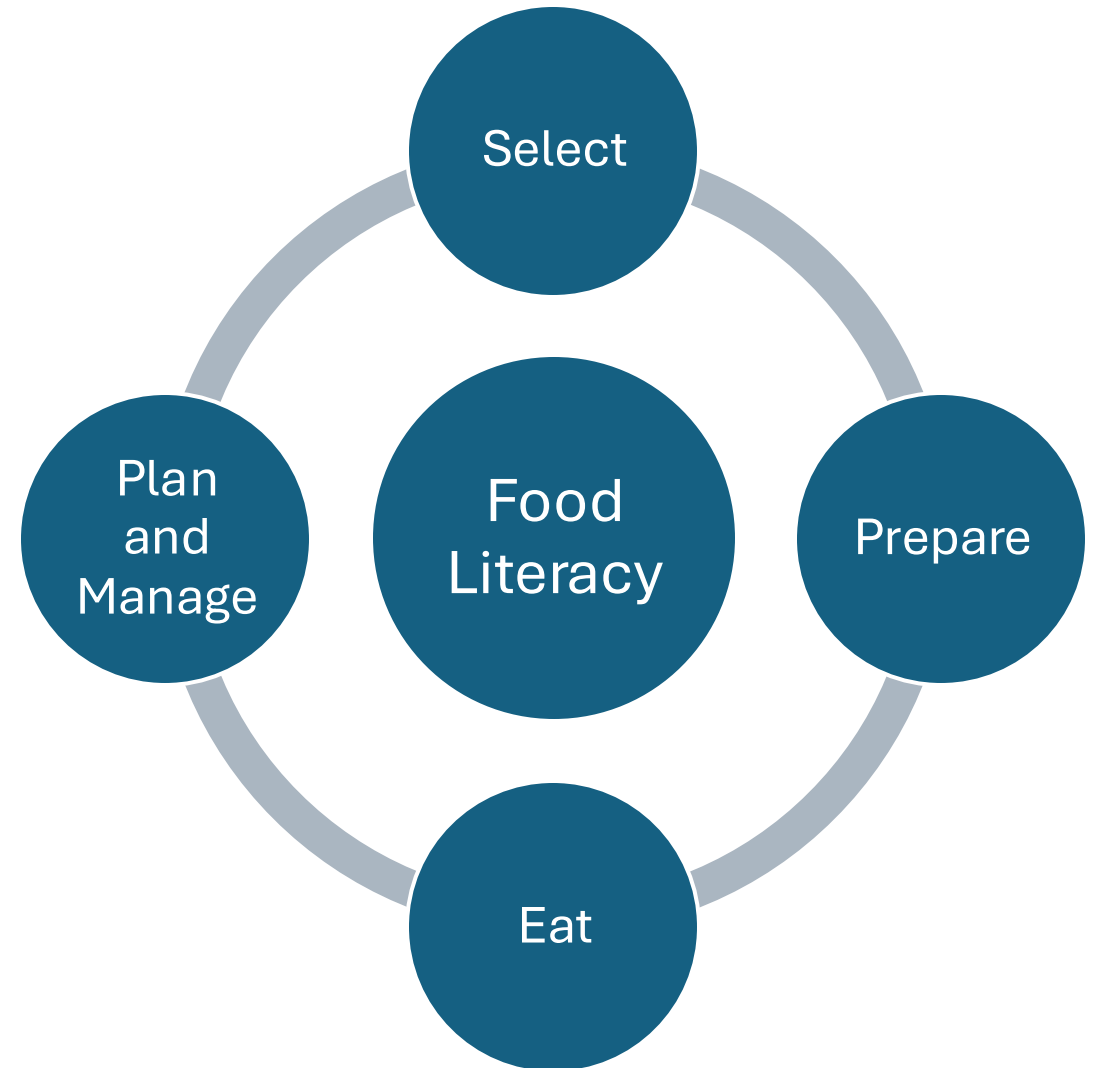
Without support, adolescents face **greater risk** of poor diet quality, long-term health disparities, and **missed opportunities** to gain essential life skills.

One Solution: Teens CAN

- Provides evidence-based, experiential nutrition education.
- Reaches underserved youth where other programs no longer exist.
- Low-cost, scalable, and designed to empower adolescents to make healthy food choices

Objectives

- Equip adolescents with **food literacy skills** that extend beyond cooking, including planning, selection, preparation, and eating
- Foster **critical thinking about food choices**, social and cultural influences, and food security
- Promote **lifelong healthy behaviors** through inquiry-based, learner-driven education
- Build **confidence and self-efficacy** in making informed food decisions that support long-term well-being



Our Tested Approach

Train

Two-day immersive training: undergraduates experienced Teens CAN as both learners and facilitators

Facilitate

Undergraduates delivered lessons to adolescents using a near-peer model with professional oversight

Impact

Fosters adolescent food literacy and builds transferable skills for undergraduate facilitators

Developed an **inquiry-based curriculum** grounded in the Food Literacy Framework

- **Target audience:** adolescents (a critical, underserved group in nutrition education)
- **Educators:** university students
- **Design:** interactive, hands-on lessons emphasizing exploration, problem-solving, and real-world application

Leveraging Student Educators

- **Career Development:** Undergraduate facilitators gain hands-on experience in teaching, leadership, and applied research—building transferable skills for future careers.
- **Cost-Effective:** Training and engaging students as educators lowers program costs while sustaining quality and scalability.
- **Peer Connection:** Near-peer facilitators create a relatable, engaging learning environment that increases adolescent participation and trust.
- **Mutual Benefit:** This model supports adolescent learning and well-being while simultaneously advancing undergraduate professional growth.

Curriculum

Teens CAN curriculum includes 12 lessons across three core areas: **C**ooking, **A**griculture, and **N**utrition. Each area has four lessons designed to build knowledge and skills step by step.



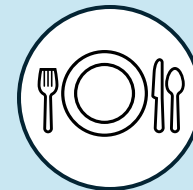
Cooking

- Food Safety
- Cooking equipment and techniques
- Seasonality & budgeting
- Recipe scaling and portion size



Agriculture

- Food supply chain
- Agricultural systems
- Agroecology & technology
- Food availability & access

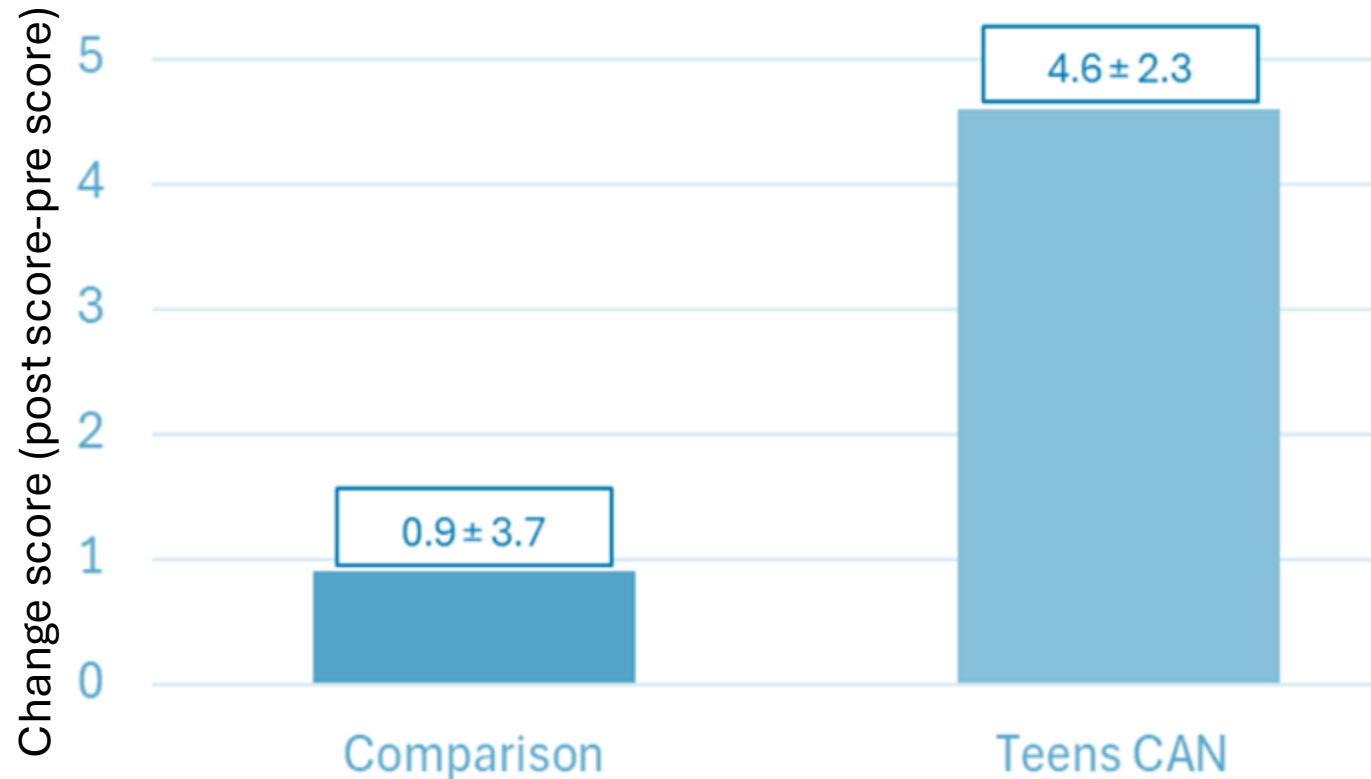


Nutrition

- MyPlate & food groups
- Macronutrients and micronutrients
- Nutrients of concern
- Nutrition in the media

Key Insights & Findings

Adolescents' nutrition knowledge significantly improved



When adolescents' nutrition knowledge improved, their eating habits improved too.

Adolescents ate **more** fruits and vegetables and consumed **less sugary drinks**

Impacts



Long-Term Impact for Adolescents

Early investment in nutrition education reduces future healthcare costs and chronic disease burden.



Building Future Leaders

Engaging undergraduate facilitators provides workforce training and leadership development, expanding program reach at minimal cost.



Bridging the Gap

A timely and affordable approach to fill the gap left by the dissolution of SNAP-Ed, ensuring adolescents continue to access evidence-based education.

Every \$1 invested in nutrition education saves \$10 in future healthcare costs
(USDA SNAP-Ed evaluation)

Contact Us

**What opportunities exist for us to partner
with your organization in implementing
Teens CAN?**

Access the Teens CAN Curriculum →

Questions or interested in partnering?

Set up a meeting today [HERE](#) or email us at
rachel@scherrnutritionscience.com

TEENS CAN

Comprehensive Food Literacy In
Cooking,
Agriculture, and
Nutrition

