**The Eat Smart in Parks Assessment Tool**

**Instructions**

*Introduction*

The assessment tool was developed in large part to assist Missouri’s Eat Smart in Parks program staff as they were out in the field, talking with parks and other partners about implementing the program. Quickly, the team saw a need for a consistent checklist or tool that would help gauge’s park’s readiness for the program and help provide baseline data that could be used later to assess change.

The tool borrows heavily from the Delridge Healthy Corner Store Assessment, as well as Penn State’s Nutrition Environment Measures (NEMS) and the ESIP team is indebted to many Nutrition Specialists who helped us revise the tool. As you go along, there may be sections that do not apply or are not useful. Feel free to amend and, as always, send feedback on the tool to [deblauwc@missouri.edu](mailto:deblauwc@missouri.edu).

Take this tool with you when you first go to a park and want to get into the details of what is available and what capacity parks have to serve healthy food and beverage options. Also, it is a good idea to bring:

* A clipboard to keep pages organized
* A pen
* A camera or smartphone that can take pictures
* Sunglasses or sunblock in case it’s sunny and you’re outside.

The assessment can take about an hour so make sure you have all your supplies and adequate time to get it done.

Let’s get started!

**Detailed Instructions**

1. Park name: The main park you are working with to incorporate ESIP guidelines.
2. Park director/staff: Include your main counterpart here or key staff members. This is mostly used to record who you talked with which can be helpful when you are trying to remember the names of staffers for two or more parks!
3. Park staff contact information: Contact information for your counterpart at the park. If in a hurry, ask for a business card and fill in later.
4. Assessment done by: This is your name or whoever is filling out the assessment forms.
5. Date: Record the date you have the meeting and do the assessment. This will be helpful for evaluation.
6. Time: Record the time of your assessment. You can enter in start and end times if you wish to be precise, but a general time is perfectly fine.
7. Location and type of food service operations in this park.
   1. This is where you record the number of food service operations a park has by line item. For instance, the park may have an outdoor pool with 2 vending machines. Not all parks will have all things.
8. Facility within the park that is being assessed. This question asks where you are doing the assessment physically. Some parks have a wide array of amenities, from pool to fields to fishing. The question here wants to know where you are doing the assessment with the concession stand.
9. When are food service operations open. Record the months and hours that the concession stand is typically open.
10. When are the food service operations most busy. Record the season, days of the week and approximate times. This question is largely the opinion of the park director or staffers.
11. Is there a playground nearby near the concession stand? If there are playground facilities near the concession stand, record yes. If the playground is across the park and far from the stand, record no.
12. Number of service windows available. Simply the total number of concession windows that the stand has to use.
13. Number of service windows typically open for service during operations hours. This is another question for staff and/or the park director. Some parks may have 3 or more windows but frequently don’t use them all. Record this information.
14. Customers. Who are the main customers at this food service operation. This question is an opinion question for staff and the park director but is worth observing yourself, if possible. Record their gender, age ranges, etc. This information helps you to understand who are the people going to the concession stand and better refine later menu development work, including taste tests and marketing.
15. When do patrons register for sports or activities at the park. How do they register. Record whether most activities are registered in person, online or some other method. Note the timing of when this typically happens. This information can help you develop announcements and help you reach these audiences.
16. Pricing/Sales. This is a long section that will need some time and input from park staff. Who sets menu or vending prices can be straightforward or not at all. Understanding the process can help inform how ESIP is implemented in this park.
17. Purchasing. Like pricing, this section is also about recording the details on where a park buys their food and beverages. Asking about contracts, from the length of the contract to the incentives kicked in, can be helpful to know. Find out who supplies the most food and beverages to the park.
18. Staffing. Also like pricing and purchasing, staffing questions probe for how the concession stand operates in real life when customers are at the window. Don’t forget to ask about any health department regulations which will be useful to know if or when ESIP taste tests are held.
19. Equipment. This section is an inventory of what’s available in the concession stand you’re assessing and what the overall conditions or observations are.
20. How much space is devoted to food and beverages. This section asks you to record the amount of space (counts) devoted to unhealthy and healthy food items. If you don’t have time to document this, take lots of photos inside and transcribe what you see from the photos later.
21. Advertising. Record what’s being promoted to park customers now. How many advertisements can people see outside the building, around the park, from the window or while seated. Ask the park director or staff how park concessions are currently promoted, from email blasts to signage in the park to coupons or Twitter discounts. Find out what limitations they may have on marketing and don’t forget to note whether the menus are posted online or other places than inside the park.
22. Menus. Fill in any comments related to the menus, from the total number of food pictures are on the menu to the positioning of the menu at kids’ eye levels. Don’t forget to take a picture of the menu or a copy/handout of the current menu. This information too can be used for a later follow-up assessment.
23. Pictures. *We can state this enough—pictures are very important!* Take a photo of the concession stand from the customers’ perspective. (Hopefully the stand is open and menu items are visible). The goal here is to document what he or she sees as they walk up to and order from the window. This is also a great piece of data to use for later evaluation (think: before and after photos). If you save the photos on a drive or shared Box folder, please indicate that as well.
24. Healthy Foods. Record the number of healthy items placed at eyelevel, called out with signage or shelf-talkers, or in high-traffic areas. In the comments section, note items or any other observations.
25. Healthy Drinks. Record the different types of healthy drinks available, including sizes, brands and cost.
26. Additional observations. Are there freely available drinking fountains nearby? Is the stand large or small? Are there long lines? Any observations that you have can go here.
27. How does this park define success. This is a question you can put to the park director from the beginning. How does he or she envision success? For this project in particular?
28. What does the director want to achieve in offering healthy concessions. Related to success, what are the goals or outcomes he or she wants to see by implementing ESIP.