**Abstract**
A constructivist grounded theory approach was used to construct a model of how CSA membership affects families’ food and environmental behaviors and identities. After joining a CSA, families hit a “learning curve”, in which they must learn to adapt to the structure of getting a weekly bounty of fresh vegetables. As they navigated the CSA learning curve, families reported subtle and gradual changes in their environmental attitudes and beliefs and hence their environmental identities. Through participation in CSAs, families changed their shopping, cooking, and eating behaviors and became more environmentally conscious.

**Objective**
To understand how family participation in a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program affects families’ food and environmental behaviors and identities.

**Methods**
Semi-structured interviews of 36 families (51 adults and 14 children)
Constructivist grounded theory approach

**Conclusions**
 CSA participation led families to change their shopping, cooking, and eating behaviors
 CSA participation led to subtle changes to families’ environmental consciousness
 The CSA journey model can help CSAs support member families, especially new members
 This model can inform further research on the affect of CSAs on food and environmental identity

**Results**

**The CSA Journey**

“I say on the first year it transitioned from it being like this adventure to being something that felt like a part of my life to then the next year feeling even more kind of comfortable with it and now feeling like absolutely wanted to be part, picked a neighborhood that had a CSA and want to get even more of them. I think it's like I'm trying to kind of pace myself and not like get crazy.” (Eleanor)

Families become a member of a CSA and hit a bump in the road, represented by the learning curve in the figure. To overcome this obstacle, families have to incorporate changes in their shopping, cooking, and eating behaviors. Once they accomplish that, the CSA becomes integrated into their lives. In the process, changes in their food and environmental beliefs and attitudes occur. The “someday” curve represents their expressed desire to do more or be more in the future.

**Stages in the Journey**
Initial motivation for joining: Access to healthy fresh food, support local agriculture, trusted food source.
Changes in food behaviors: More cooking at home, learning to eat unfamiliar vegetables, menu planning around CSA share
“It's who we are”: Commitment to CSA farm
“Someday”: Desire to garden and compost, more scratch cooking such as pickling, bread baking, canning
Changes in food and environmental beliefs: Becoming “crunchy”, more in tune with seasons and seasonality, more aware of environmental impacts

**Contact Information:** Tomoko J. Iwaki - tjiwaki@gmail.com