

# Food Environment Glossary

**Accelerometer:** Instrument that captures motions by monitoring changes in acceleration.

**BMI-z score:** A value derived from the height and weight of an individual, often used to assess obesity risk. For assessing the height and weight of youth, a z score is used to facilitate comparison to a reference-standard accounting for child age and sex.

**Cohort design:** A type of longitudinal study design used to collect measures from a cohort over time. A cohort is a single unit such as a group of people, a family, or a community.

**Construct validity:** The extent to which a measurement tool produces constructs that are related to other outcomes and constructs in ways that are consistent with theoretical hypotheses.

**Consumer intercept survey:** A survey collected from consumers as they are exiting a retail space with a goal of collecting data on items purchased or their perceptions regarding some aspect of their shopping experience.

**Content validity:** The extent to which a measurement tool samples items from the full breadth of content desired.

**Criterion validity:** The extent to which a measurement tool produces data that agree with data from an external standard measurement tool or a more accurate instrument (the “gold standard” or criterion).

**Dyadic analysis:** An analytic approach used to measure the extent of the influence that members of a dyad have on each other.

**Face validity:** The extent to which the measurement tool appears to be assessing what it is supposed to assess as determined by other experts or stakeholders.

**Food Environment:** For the purpose of these learning modules, the food environment refers to the physical, social, and person-centered environments that play a role in what people choose to eat.

**Formative evaluation:** Data gathering, both qualitative and quantitative, that is done to help “form” the intervention. Formative assessment helps ensure that the intervention design and content meet the needs of the population it is designed to serve.

**Geographic Information System (GIS):** Software system used for integrating and analyzing spatial and geographic data.

**Mediator:** A mediator is a variable that is between the independent and dependent variable in a causal model and helps explain how change happens in the dependent variable.

**Obesogenic:** Characteristics of the environment that increase population risk of overweight and obesity.

**Observational scan:** An assessment tool used to quantitatively assess characteristics of the physical food environment present in stores, restaurants, homes, schools, or other community venues.

**Pre-post design:** A type of study design where a measure of interest is assessed before and after a timepoint of interest. Examples of a time point of interest include the beginning of an intervention or prior to an expected change in circumstance such as enactment of a new policy.

**Process evaluation:** A type of evaluation used to help answer important questions regarding the delivery of the intervention by interventionists and how the intervention was received by participants.

**Randomization:** Randomization in an experiment is when participants have an equal chance to be assigned to any treatment condition such as the Control or Intervention groups.

**Reliability:** The extent to which a measurement tool produces data that are consistent or stable over time.

**Social network analysis:** Analysis that investigates social structures through the use of networks and graph theory.

**Statistical power:** The likelihood that a study will detect an effect when there is an effect there to be detected. An insufficient sample size may threaten statistical power.