

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children



Provide Healthy Food and Activity Choices Every Day

As a child care provider, you help create a healthier generation by taking steps to prevent obesity and encouraging healthy habits that last a lifetime. Whether you work in a large child care center or provide child care in your home, you help children learn about healthy food choices and being physically active.

Studies show that about one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday¹ and over half of obese children become overweight at or before age 2.² Diseases and health issues that were once mainly seen in adults are now becoming more common in children and adolescents with excess body fat.³

There are ways to help children in your care develop healthy habits. The meals and snacks you serve should provide nutrients children need to be healthy, without too much sodium, solid fats, and added sugars. You can lower the risk of foodborne illness by making sure that the food is safe to eat, and the areas where food is prepared and served are clean. You provide opportunities for active play that include more movement and less time in front of a television or computer screen. The USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which serves millions of children across the United States,⁴ provides a great opportunity to give children the best start when it comes to healthy eating and physical activity.

Good nutrition and physical activity work together to promote healthy growth and development. While you may not have all the answers, helping young children learn to make good food and activity choices is one of the greatest lifelong gifts you can give them. The good news is that the tips in this handbook give you specific ways to support children and their families in the four important areas of providing healthy food, following food safety practices, encouraging active play, and limiting screen time.

The tip sheets in this handbook cover fruits, vegetables, dry beans and peas, meat and meat alternates, whole grains, milk and other dairy, sodium, fats and oils, added sugars, water, food safety, providing opportunities for active play, encouraging active play, written policies and practices that promote active play, and the importance of limiting screen time. The tip sheets include recommendations to improve the meals you serve in your child care program and, along with other online resources, can help you choose the best foods and activities for the children in your care.

Note: Throughout this handbook, the term *child care* includes early care and education and day care. The term *active play* means physical activity, which includes all types of physical movement.

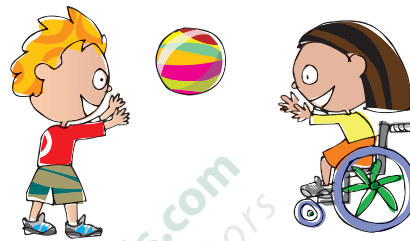
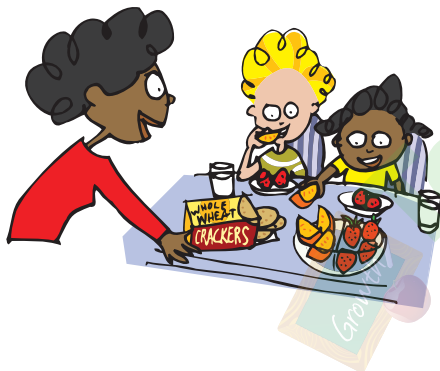
-
1. Ogden, C.L., Carroll M.D., Curtin LR, et al., (2010). Prevalence of high body mass index in U.S. children and adolescents, 2007-2008. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 303(3), 242-9.
 2. Harrington, J.W., Nguyen, V.Q., Paulson, J.F., et al., (2010). Identifying the “Tipping Point” Age for Overweight Pediatric Patients, *Clinical Pediatrics*, 49(7), 638-643.
 3. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.
 4. Child and Adult Care Food Program.

How to Use This Handbook

Tip Sheets

This handbook contains tip sheets on nutrition, active play, and screen time. These tip sheets can be used together or one at a time. They can be used as part of trainings for child care providers and staff, or as a handy resource when planning meals for children ages 2 to 6 years old. They offer practical information to help you plan and prepare meals, provide opportunities for active play, and encourage children to adopt healthy behaviors.

- ▶ **The nutrition tip sheets present strategies for purchasing, preparing, and offering meals** consistent with CACFP meal service requirements and recommendations from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Many of the nutrition tip sheets include ways to ensure foods are prepared and served safely to children. A separate tip sheet is also included in the handbook to provide general and practical tips on food safety.



- ▶ **The active play and screen time tip sheets present recommendations for young children, encouraging physical activity, reducing screen time,** and adopting written policies and practices on physical activity that are consistent with guidelines from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education, 3rd Edition*. These tip sheets offer strategies for adding more opportunities for active play to the child care program.

Each tip sheet focuses on a specific topic and includes ideas for improving the nutrition and wellness of children in child care. These tip sheets also include Web links for resources that provide more information and ideas. Take a look at each tip sheet's *How Can I Put This Information Into Practice* practical application section. Think about how you can apply the tips to your child care program. For example, review your child care menu and look for ways to apply the tips. Can you plan specific menu items that include dry beans and peas, or serve and talk about a different “fruit of the week”?

Each of the nutrition, physical activity, and screen time recommendations has an explanation of why it is important. These explanations can help you understand and adopt best practices in nutrition and wellness. You might want to share some of these explanations with families, perhaps on your menus or as you talk with them about their child's day. When families and providers model these healthy behaviors, children will be more accepting of the foods prepared and served, as well as the activities available for active play during child care.

Symbols Used in the Tip Sheets

Many of the nutrition tip sheets include a section on making sure foods are safe to eat. A caution symbol next to a food indicates that it may cause an allergic reaction or pose a choking hazard. A crediting symbol next to a food calls attention to information about crediting foods within the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal.



This symbol means the food may cause an allergic reaction in some children.



This symbol means the food may cause children under 4 years old to choke.



This symbol appears next to tips for crediting foods within CACFP meals and snacks.

Best Practices: CACFP Success Stories

This section shares the best practices and successful tips of nine CACFP child care programs from across the United States. They include stories from various parts of the country and diverse communities. These child care programs have tried new and exciting ways to improve the food that they serve children and the activities that they plan. Each story is unique, yet practical and applicable for many providers. Together, these stories provide inspiration for anyone who wants to create healthy environments for children and child care programs everywhere.

Appendices

Appendix A includes information about choking hazards for children under the age of 4 years. Child care providers can use these tips to reduce the risk of choking in their day care homes and centers.

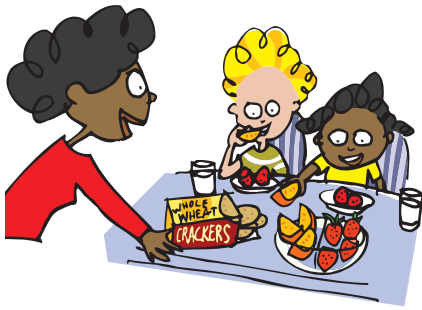
Appendix B includes information about common food allergies, as well as information on what child care providers should do if a child in their care has a food allergy.

Additional Resources

This section includes additional resources on active play, child care policies and practices, nutrition, food safety, choking hazards, food allergies, and screen time. These resources include tool kits, checklists, child care self-assessment tools, wellness policy resources, ideas for child care activities, nutrition education materials, gardening education resources, nutrition program information, food safety materials, and national guidelines and recommendations reports pertaining to wellness in child care.

Did you know offering fruit is a quick-and-easy way to make meals and snacks healthier and more colorful?

While most toddlers consume enough fruit, most children 4 years and older do not. You can help by offering different fruits on your menu. Offering a variety of fruits during the week can:



- **Teach healthy eating habits children will use for life.**
- **Add color, texture, and flavor to children's plates.**
- **Give children the vitamins and minerals they need to grow and play.**
- **Promote proper digestion, help children feel full, and maintain a healthy weight by providing dietary fiber.**

What types of fruits should I offer?

- ▶ **Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits are all great choices.** Introduce kids to the whole rainbow of fruit choices — each fruit has its own unique flavor and nutrients. Providing different choices each day helps children get the nutrition they need.
- ▶ **Limit fruit juice.** Serve only one ½-cup (4 oz) to ¾-cup (6 oz) serving of 100% juice, once per day. While 100% fruit juice can be part of a healthy diet, it does not contain the dietary fiber found in other forms of fruit.
- ▶ **Include good sources of potassium,** such as bananas, dried plums, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, nectarines, raspberries, and orange juice. Potassium can help children maintain a healthy blood pressure.

How can I serve fruits and juices with no added sugars?

It is easy for children to get too many added sugars from foods and beverages. The extra calories from these added sugars can make children feel full before they've had a chance to get the nutrients they need from other foods. Extra calories from added sugars also make it harder for children to maintain a healthy weight. Since fruits are naturally sweet, it can be easy to get children to eat them without adding sweeteners like sugar, corn syrup, and honey. Here are a few tips:



Watch out! There is usually very little fruit in chewy fruit snacks or "fruit-flavored" beverages (often called fruit drinks or fruit punch).



- ▶ **Serve fresh fruit more often than fruit-based desserts,** such as fruit pies, cobblers, and crisps.
- ▶ **Purchase fruit canned in water or 100% fruit juice instead of syrup.** Offer unsweetened applesauce and try sprinkling ground cinnamon on top.

- ▶ **Use frozen fruit** that does not contain added sugars.
- ▶ **Choose 100% fruit juice** instead of fruit-flavored drinks or soda, including cola, lemon lime, root beer, or orange soda.



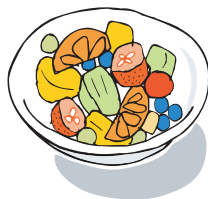
- ▶ **Offer raisins or other unsweetened dried fruit** instead of chewy fruit snacks or strips, fruit drops, candy, or sweets.* Since it is easy to eat a lot of dried fruit in a short time, it is best to serve unsweetened dried fruit in a ¼-cup serving. Eating ¼ cup of dried fruit is like eating ½ cup of fresh fruit.



* **Hard fruit chunks, chewy fruit snacks, and certain types of candy pose choking hazards. (See Appendix A on page 77 for more information.)**

How can I encourage kids to eat fruits?

It may take time for new foods to be accepted. Kids don't always eat new foods right away. Here are some ways to get kids excited about fruits:



- ▶ **Make food fun and be sure fruits are easy to eat.** Create a rainbow salad with a variety of colors of fruits. Add crushed pineapple, mandarin oranges, or fresh apples to salad mix or coleslaw. Peel or slice fresh oranges.
- ▶ **Have a Fruit Tasting Day.** Encourage each child's family to bring one unique fruit for the group to taste. How about kiwifruit, black grapes, blackberries, pomelo, or lychees?
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about fruits and vegetables when they help prepare them. Young children can help rinse fruits and make "faces" out of pieces of fruits. Pick kitchen tasks that match children's abilities: mash bananas, peel some fruits, or mix ingredients for a fruit salad.
- ▶ **Explore the "Grow It, Try it, Like It!" educational kit.** Growing fruits, like strawberries, in a garden or container can help increase children's willingness to taste them.
- ▶ **Eat fruits and kids will too!** They learn from watching you.



Connect With Parents and the Community

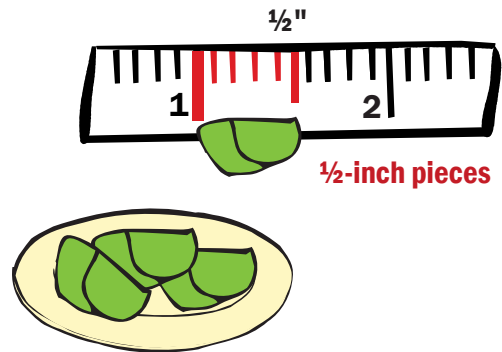
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on juice.
- ▶ **Participate in Farm to Child Care activities.** Have farmers deliver fresh, seasonal produce to your child care program, or take the children on a field trip to a local "pick your own" farm.

How can I keep fruit safe?



For children younger than 4 years old:

- **Cut raw fruit in small pieces no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") to prevent choking.**
- **Slice grapes and other round foods in half, and then cut into smaller pieces.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



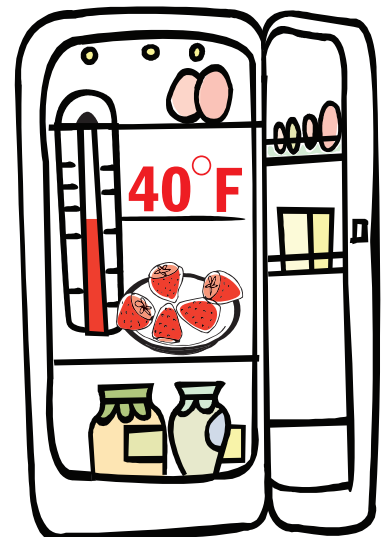
Clean



- ▶ **Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to rinse it first.** That's because it is easy to transfer dirt and bacteria from the peel or rind to the inside of fruit when you are cutting.
- ▶ **Rinse all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking.** Do not use soap or detergent. Scrub firm fruits, such as melons, with a clean produce brush. Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- ▶ **Before opening a can of fruit, wash and dry the top of the can.** Under clean, running water, rub the top of the can briskly with a clean cloth or paper towel to remove dirt and germs from the surface. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after washing.

Prepare and Store Safely

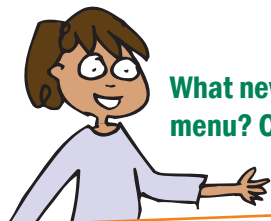
- ▶ **Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh fruits** before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten or has mold on it should be thrown away.
- ▶ **Keep fruits separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood** while shopping, preparing, or storing them.
- ▶ **Store perishable fresh fruits, like strawberries, in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 °F or below.** Refrigerate all produce that is purchased precut or peeled to maintain both quality and safety. If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated, ask the produce manager at your supermarket.



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the fruits on your child care menu.



What new fruits listed below will you try on your menu? Circle what you plan to try next month.

Apples	Honeydew	Plums
Apricots	Kiwi fruit	Raisins
Bananas	Mangoes	Raspberries
Blackberries	Nectarines	Strawberries
Blueberries	Oranges	Tangerines
Cantaloupe	Peaches	Watermelon
Cherries	Pears	100% fruit juice
Grapefruit	Papaya	
Grapes	Pineapple	

How will you offer these fruits next month? As part of a:

- Fruit Salad**
- Green Leafy Salad** (add shredded apples, canned pineapple bits, or sliced strawberries to spinach or leaf lettuce)
- Sandwich** (add thinly sliced apples to a turkey sandwich)
- Fruity Kangaroo Pocket** (raisins, veggies, and fillings in a whole wheat pita pocket)
- Snack**
- Ants on a Log** (celery sticks with a thin layer of peanut butter and topped with raisins)
- Unsweetened Applesauce** topped with cinnamon and raisins
- Fruit and Yogurt Parfait** (fruit and low-fat yogurt topped with whole-grain cereal)
- Dessert**

What other ways will you try to promote fruit?

Put a check mark next to actions you will try next month. Next month, I will:

- Promote a different “fruit of the week” every week.**

Next month, I will promote:

- Purchase and serve fruit in season to save money.** For example, berries in the summer, apples in the fall, and oranges in the winter.

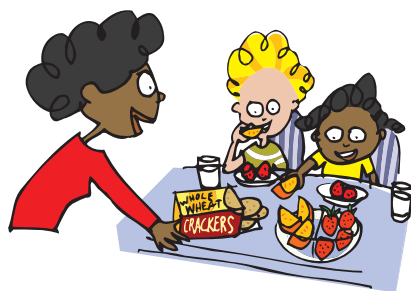
- Keep three different fruits available to serve as quick snacks.** For example, bananas, peaches canned in 100% juice, and raisins.



CACFP Crediting Tip:

Make sure you offer the full portion of fruit, depending on the meal and the age of the child.

Brightly colored vegetables can be the “super stars” in every meal and snack! Most children 2 years and older do not eat enough vegetables or a variety of vegetables. You can help by offering a variety of vegetables during the week. Serving vegetables at meals and snacks can:



- Give children the vitamins and minerals they need to grow and play.
- Help children grow at a healthy weight.
- Provide dietary fiber to help children feel full and make their “potty time” easier.
- Create healthy eating habits children will keep for life.
- Add color, crunch, and flavor to children’s plates.

What types of vegetables should I offer?

- ▶ **Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables are all great choices.** Each vegetable contains different amounts of nutrients and fiber, so vary the vegetables you serve. Providing different choices each day helps children get the nutrition they need.
- ▶ **Brighten children’s plates often with dark-green, red, and orange vegetables.**
- ▶ **Incorporate a variety of dry beans and peas into the meal.** Offer white bean dips or mashed black bean burritos.

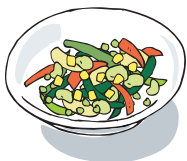


CACFP Crediting Tips:

- Because of their high nutrient content, cooked, mature (dry) beans and peas may be considered both as a vegetable and meat alternate. However, they cannot be credited as both a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal. (See the **Dry Beans and Peas** as well as the **Meat and Meat Alternate** tip sheets on pages 15 and 19 for more information.)
- Some beans and peas, such as lima beans, green peas, snap peas, and green (string) beans, are fresh, immature beans and peas that can be served as “vegetables.” They are not “dry beans and peas” in CACFP, and cannot be served as a meat alternate.

How can I serve a variety of vegetables low in sodium and solid fats?

Since vegetables are naturally low in sodium (salt) and solid fats, prepare and serve vegetables without adding too much salt or solid fats like butter, stick margarine, cream sauces, and regular, full-fat cheese. Here’s how:



- ▶ **Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes** instead of salt, butter, or stick margarine to season vegetable dishes.
- ▶ **Offer fresh vegetables more often** instead of breaded and fried vegetables, including fried white potatoes.

- ▶ **Purchase canned vegetables and beans labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium.”** If these are not available, reduce sodium by draining and rinsing canned foods before preparing. Choose fat-free refried beans, or reduced-sugar and reduced-sodium versions of baked beans.
- ▶ **Use frozen vegetables** that do not contain added solid fats, sugars, or sodium.
- ▶ **Go light on the salad dressings, sauces, and dips.**



How can I encourage kids to eat vegetables?

It may take time for new foods to be accepted. Kids don't always eat new foods right away. Here are some ways to get kids excited about vegetables:

- ▶ **Add color and texture.** Create a rainbow salad, coleslaw, or stir-fry with a variety of colors of vegetables. Use dark leafy greens, such as romaine lettuce or spinach, and add red peppers, shredded carrots, and red cabbage. Add canned pineapple chunks packed in 100% fruit juice to the salad for some more color.
- ▶ **Make food fun.** Serve fresh vegetable sticks (zucchini, yellow squash, celery, red pepper) with “Snow Princess Dip” (low-fat ranch dressing), hummus (puréed chickpeas, olive oil, and lemon juice), or “Alligator Eyelash Dip” (plain, low-fat yogurt mixed with dill or other herbs). Keep cut-up vegetables on hand for a quick appetizer to serve and occupy children while you are getting meals ready.



Eat vegetables and kids will too. They learn from watching you.

- ▶ **Cook together.** Provide healthy ingredients and let kids help with preparation, based on their age and skills. Kids may try foods they avoided in the past if they helped to prepare them. Children can help rinse vegetables, mash beans, mix ingredients, or tear leafy greens.
- ▶ **Have a fun Vegetable Tasting Day.** Encourage each child’s family to bring one unique vegetable for the group to taste. How about purple cauliflower, asparagus, spaghetti squash, tomatillos, or kohlrabi?

Connect With Parents and the Community

- ▶ **Explore the "Grow It, Try It, Like It!" education kit.** Growing vegetables, like spinach or crookneck squash, in a garden or container can help increase children’s willingness to taste them. Arrange a field trip to a local farm or community garden to expose kids to more vegetables.
- ▶ **Participate in Farm to Child Care activities.** Arrange to have farmers bring fresh, seasonal produce deliveries for your child care program.
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on trying new foods together.

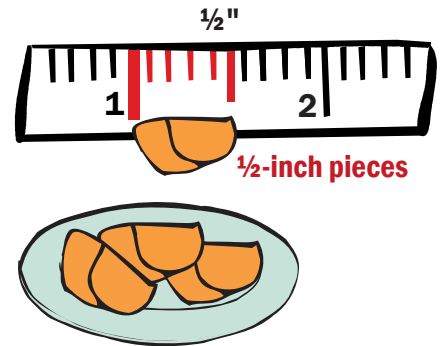


How can I keep vegetables safe?



For children younger than 4 years old:

- **Cut raw vegetables in small pieces no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") to prevent choking.**
- **Shred carrots and other hard vegetables.**
- **Slice cherry or grape tomatoes and other round foods in half, and then cut into smaller pieces.**
- **Offer cooked or soft vegetables to younger children to prevent choking.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



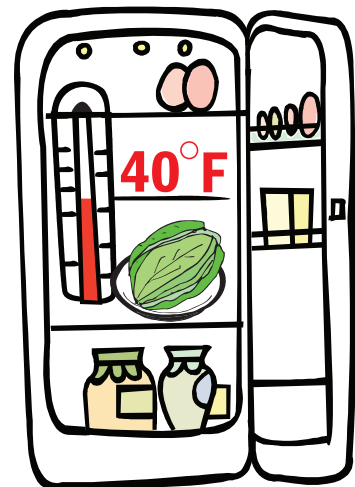
Clean



- ▶ **Rinse all produce thoroughly under running water before eating, cutting, or cooking.** Do not use soap or detergent. Scrub firm vegetables, such as cucumbers, with a clean produce brush. Dry produce with a clean cloth towel or paper towel to further reduce bacteria that may be present.
- ▶ **Even if you plan to peel the produce before eating, it is still important to rinse it first.** That's because it is easy to transfer dirt and bacteria from the outside to the inside of the vegetable when you are cutting.
- ▶ **Before opening a can of vegetables or beans, wash and dry the top of the can.** Under clean, running water, rub the top of the can briskly with a clean cloth or paper towel to remove dirt and germs from the surface. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after washing.

Prepare and Store Safely

- ▶ **Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fresh vegetables** before preparing or eating. Produce that looks rotten or has mold on it should be thrown away.
- ▶ **Store perishable fresh vegetables (like lettuce, herbs, and mushrooms) in a clean refrigerator at a temperature of 40 °F or below.** Refrigerate all produce that is purchased precut or peeled to maintain both quality and safety. If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated, ask the produce manager at your supermarket.
- ▶ **Keep vegetables separate from raw meat, poultry, and seafood** while shopping, preparing, or storing them.



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the menu items to which you can add more vegetables.

What other ways will you try to promote vegetables?

Put a check mark next to actions you will try next month. Next month, I will:

- Promote a different “vegetable of the week” every week.

Next month, I will promote:

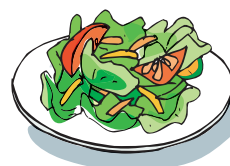
- Purchase and serve vegetables in season to save money. For example, asparagus in the spring, green peppers in the summer, sweet potatoes and Brussels sprouts in the fall, and cabbage and acorn squash in the winter.



CACFP Crediting Tip: Make sure you offer the full portion of vegetables depending on the meal and the age of the child.

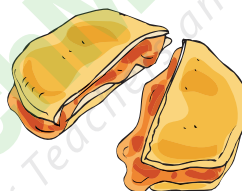
How will you offer vegetables next month? As part of a:

- Salad



- Sandwich

- Veggie Roll-Up (veggies wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla with low-fat ranch dressing)



- Veggie Burrito or Quesadilla

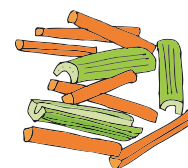
- Stir-Fry

- Pasta Dish or Lasagna Meal

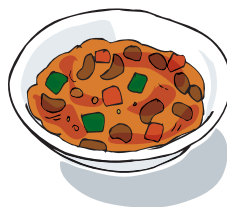
- Pasta Salad

- Snack

- Veggie Sticks With Dip Snack



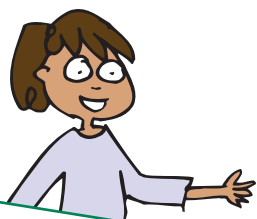
- Veggie Bake (vegetables roasted in the oven)



- Soup, Chili, or Stew

- Pizza

- Egg Dish



What vegetables listed below will you try on your menu?
Go for variety and color from each of these vegetable groups!
Circle what you plan to try next month.

Dark-Green Vegetable

Bok choy
Broccoli
Collard greens
Dark-green leafy lettuce
Kale
Mesclun
Mustard greens
Romaine lettuce
Spinach
Turnip greens
Watercress

Red and Orange Vegetables

Acorn squash
Butternut squash
Carrots
Hubbard squash
Pumpkin
Red peppers
Sweet potatoes
Tomatoes
Tomato juice (low-sodium)

Other Vegetables

Artichokes
Asparagus
Avocado
Bean sprouts
Beets
Brussels sprouts
Cabbage
Cauliflower
Celery
Crookneck squash
Cucumbers
Eggplant
Green beans
Green peppers
Iceberg (head) lettuce
Mushrooms
Okra
Onions
Parsnips
Turnips
Wax beans
Zucchini

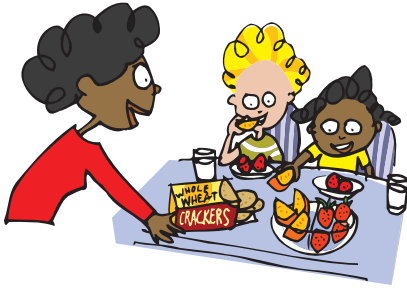
Starchy Vegetables

Cassava
Corn
Fresh cowpeas or field peas
Green bananas
Green peas
Green lima beans
Plantains
Potatoes
Taro
Water chestnuts

Dry Beans and Peas

Black beans
Black-eyed peas
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
Kidney beans
Lentils
Navy beans
Pinto beans
Soy beans
Split peas
White beans

Dry beans and peas are unique foods. They are nutritious, inexpensive, and creditable as either a vegetable or a meat alternate in the CACFP meal pattern. They are great sources of protein, iron, zinc, folate, and fiber. Most children 2 years and older do not consume enough vegetables, including dry beans and peas. You can help by offering beans and peas on your menu. Offering dry beans and peas as part of a meal or snacks can:



- **Help children feel full longer and maintain a healthy weight.**
- **Promote proper digestion and make children's "potty time" easier by providing dietary fiber.**
- **Add shape, texture, and flavor to children's plates.**

What types of dry beans and peas should I offer?

- ▶ **Cooked, canned, or frozen dry beans and peas are all great choices.**
- ▶ **Mix things up by providing different types of beans and peas each week to help children get the nutrition they need, as well as taste new foods.**



CACFP Crediting Tips:

- **Because of their high nutrient content, cooked, mature (dry) beans and peas may be considered both as a vegetable and meat alternate. However, they cannot be credited as both a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal. (See the Vegetable as well as the Meat and Meat Alternate tip sheets on pages 9 and 19 for more information.)**
- **Some beans and peas, such as lima beans, green peas, snap peas, and green (string) beans, are fresh, immature beans and peas that can be served as "vegetables." They are not "dry beans and peas" in CACFP, and cannot be served as a meat alternate.**

How can I reduce sodium and solid fats when serving dry beans and peas?

Since dry or frozen beans and peas are naturally low in sodium (salt) and solid fats, prepare and serve beans and peas without adding too much salt or solid fats like butter, stick margarine, cream sauces, and regular, full-fat cheese. Here's how:

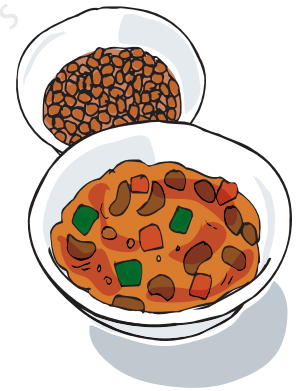
- ▶ **Choose the easiest form: use canned, precooked beans.** They will simplify recipes and reduce cooking times. Purchase canned beans labeled "no salt added" or "low sodium." If these are not available, rinse and drain the canned beans to reduce the sodium content.
- ▶ **Pour the bag of dry beans into a bowl of water on the kitchen counter.** Soak dry beans overnight without adding any salt, and discard the soaking water and cook the next day.



- ▶ **Choose fat-free refried beans, or reduced-sugar and reduced-sodium versions of baked beans.**
- ▶ **Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of salt, butter, or stick margarine to season bean dishes.** This will lower solid fat, sodium, and calories in the dishes while adding flavor. Garlic, celery, onion, and carrots complement the flavors of dry beans and peas.

▶ **Add beans to their favorite foods.** Add beans and peas to pastas, tacos, casseroles, stews, and side dishes. Make “Mexican Pizza” by topping whole-wheat pita bread with refried beans, tomato salsa, spinach, and shredded low-fat cheese.

▶ **Make food fun.** Add kidney and pinto beans in chili and serve it in a baked sweet potato “chili boat.” Let children mash beans in a plastic baggie, and then make a “Smashed Bean Burrito” (using a whole-grain tortilla, spinach, and their favorite veggies). Sing a song while working with beans during a cooking demonstration or while mixing recipe ingredients. (Example song lyrics: “Mash, Mash, Mash the beans; Mash, Mash, Mash the beans.”)



- ▶ **Have a bean guessing game or taste-test.** Let children sample dishes that use dry beans or peas as main ingredients, and have children Name That Bean! Some ideas include lentil soup, bean dip, three-bean salad, or bean burgers.
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about beans and peas when they help prepare them. Pick kitchen tasks that match children’s abilities. Children can help wash and dry the tops of canned beans, mash beans, pour water into a bowl of dry beans to soak overnight, or mix ingredients for a bean salad.

Support the Message

- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on teaching good food habits.
- ▶ **Enjoy beans and peas and kids will too.** They learn from watching you.



How can I keep dry beans and peas safe?



- **Larger beans can pose choking hazards, especially when not cooked thoroughly. Offer thoroughly cooked, mashed, or puréed beans and peas to infants and toddlers to prevent choking.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



Clean

- ▶ **Before soaking and cooking,** sort through dry beans or peas and throw away dirt, small rocks, or beans that are broken, discolored, or shriveled.
- ▶ **Before opening a can of beans, wash and dry the top of the can.** Under clean, running water, rub the top of the can briskly with a clean cloth or paper towel to remove dirt and germs from the surface. Dry with a clean cloth towel or paper towel after washing.
- ▶ **See the Food Safety tip sheet on page 55 for more information.**

Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the menu items that feature dry beans and peas on your child care menu.



What new dry beans and peas listed below will you try on your menu?
Go for variety each week! Circle what you plan to try next month.

Black beans	Navy beans
Black-eyed peas	Pinto beans
Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)	Soy beans
Kidney beans	Split peas
Lentils	White beans

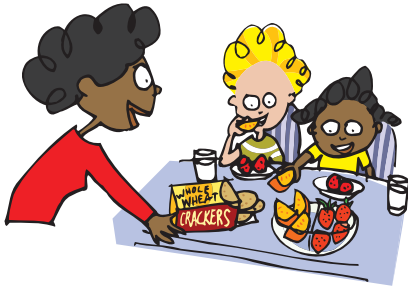


CACFP Crediting Tip:
To credit as a vegetable or a meat alternate, make sure you include the full portion of beans and peas, depending on the meal and the age of the child.

How will you offer these dry beans and peas next month? As part of a:

- Salad
- Sandwich
- Veggie Bean Burrito, Taco, or Quesadilla
- Kangaroo Pocket (veggies and mashed beans in a whole-wheat pita pocket)
- Mexican Pizza (using refried beans and veggies)
- Rice and Bean Dish
- Veggie Roll-Up (mashed beans wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla with veggies and low-fat ranch dressing)
- Sweet Potato Chili Boat
- Pasta Dish or Lasagna Meal
- Spaghetti Sauce
- Bean and Pasta Salad
- Soup or Stew (examples include lentil, split pea, or bean and macaroni soups)
- Snack
- Bean Dip or Hummus (puréed chickpeas served with veggie sticks)
- Stir-Fry
- Casserole
- Main Dish
- Meatless Meal
- One Pot Meal (with whole grains, veggies, and beans in a slow cooker)

Children should eat a variety of meat and meat alternates each week. These foods include fish, shellfish, dry beans and peas, nuts, and seeds, as well as lean meats, poultry, and eggs. Most children 2 years and older do not consume enough fish, shellfish, and dry beans and peas. You can help by offering different meat and meat alternates on your menu. Include a variety of meat and meat alternates at meals and snacks to:



- **Give children the protein, B vitamins, and minerals (like iron, zinc, and magnesium) they need to grow, play, and learn.**
- **Protect children’s hearts, brains, and nervous systems with heart-healthy oils from fish and seafood.**
- **Help children feel full for longer with protein.**

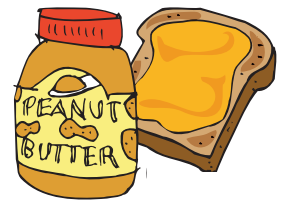
What types of meat and meat alternates should I offer?

Providing different choices each day helps children get the nutrition they need and introduces them to new foods.

- ▶ **Fish and seafood (fresh, frozen, or canned) are good choices for meal time.** Try salmon, tuna, trout, and tilapia prepared in different ways: baked, grilled, or in sandwiches or tacos.
- ▶ **Poultry, like chicken or turkey,** can be served grilled, roasted, or in pastas or burritos.
- ▶ **Look for lean cuts of meat, including beef, pork, and lamb.** Try round steaks and roasts (round eye, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts. The leanest pork choices include pork loin, tenderloin, or center loin.
- ▶ **Choose the leanest ground meats possible** (including beef, pork, chicken, and turkey), preferably meats labeled “90% lean” or higher. The higher the % number, the lower the amount of solid fat in the meat.



- ▶ **Offer unsalted, chopped, or finely ground nuts and seeds (including almonds, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds),** and peanut and sunflower seed butters spread thinly.



- ▶ **Prepare and serve eggs in different ways.** Try hard-boiled egg slices, scrambled eggs, or deviled eggs (prepared with low-fat mayo or mustard). Make sure the egg whites and yolks are cooked thoroughly to avoid foodborne illness.

- ▶ **Cooked, canned, or frozen dry beans and peas are all great options.** Vary the choices for dry beans and peas.



- ▶ **Yogurt and cheese can be credited as a meat alternate.** Offer yogurt labeled fat-free or low-fat (1%). When selecting cheese, choose low-fat or reduced-fat versions. Cheese must *not* include the words “processed cheese product” on the label.

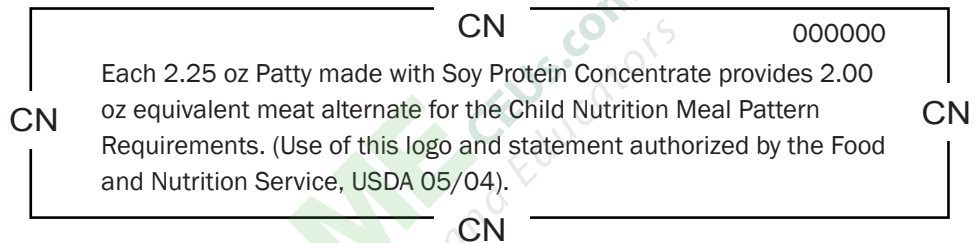


CACFP Crediting Tip:
Both yogurt and cheese must be “commercially prepared,” such as those you would find in your local grocery store. Yogurt and cheese **cannot** be substituted for the fluid milk meal pattern requirement.

- ▶ **Serve processed soy products, such as meatless “chicken” nuggets or soy burgers that are creditable.** To credit soy products as a meat alternate in CACFP, they must have a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or a company-certified product formulation statement. (Use only creditable products; check with your State agency or sponsoring organization for additional guidance.)

Example of a CN Label of an entrée item made from Alternate Protein Products (APP) or soy, which credits as a meat alternate because it is a good source of protein.

Item Made from APP Patty made with Soy Protein Concentrate



- **Large chunks of meat and cheese, as well as string cheese, larger beans, nuts and seeds, and nut and seed butters pose choking hazards.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



- **Some children in your care may be allergic to fish, shellfish, soy, milk, wheat, eggs, nuts, and seeds.**

Actively supervise children when serving these foods. Handle food allergies on a case-by-case basis, have a medical statement on file, and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.



CACFP Crediting Tip:

- **Mature (dry) beans and peas may be considered both as a vegetable and meat alternate. However, they cannot be credited as both a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal.**
- **See the Vegetable as well as the Dry Beans and Peas tip sheets on pages 9 and 15 for more information.**

- **See Appendix B on page 81 for more information on food allergies.**

NOTE:

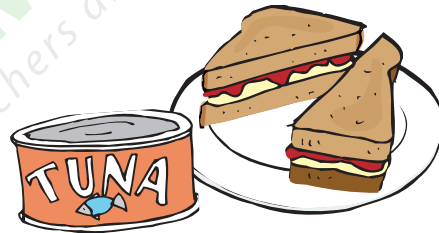
Milk Substitutions: Offer lactose-reduced or lactose-free yogurt and cheese, or other approved substitutes for children who are lactose-intolerant and can't consume cow's milk.

How can I serve a variety of meat and meat alternates low in sodium and solid fats?

Be sure to start with lean choices for meat and meat alternates. Use recipes without adding too much sodium (salt) or solid fats like butter, stick margarine, cream sauces, gravy, and regular, full-fat cheese (see the Sodium as well as the Fats and Oils tip sheets on pages 37 and 41 for more information).

Here's how:

- ▶ **Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of salt, butter, or stick margarine to season dishes.** This will lower solid fat, sodium, and calories in the dishes while adding flavor.
- ▶ **Trim away visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.** Remove skin from chicken and turkey to reduce solid fat.
- ▶ **Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil fish, meat, or poultry instead of frying.** These cooking methods do not add extra fat and calories. Keep in mind that breading adds extra calories, and frying causes food to soak up more fat during cooking.
- ▶ **Limit serving highly processed poultry, fish, or meat (like hotdogs, chicken nuggets, and fish sticks) to once weekly.** Even “reduced-fat” meats and cold cuts, like sausage, bologna, and salami, may be high in solid fat, sodium, and calories. Use canned tuna or salmon (packed in water) for sandwiches in place of deli meats, which are often higher in sodium.

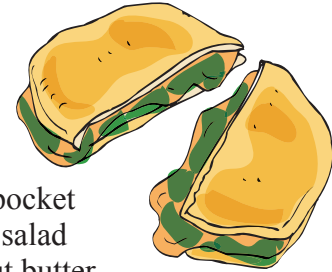


- ▶ **Purchase canned beans, fish, and meat labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium.”** If these are not available, reduce sodium by draining and rinsing canned foods before preparing. Choose fat-free refried beans or reduced-sugar and reduced-sodium versions of baked beans.
- ▶ **Pour the bag of dry beans or peas into a bowl of water on the kitchen counter.** Soak dry beans or peas overnight without adding any salt, and discard the soaking water and cook the next day.
- ▶ **See *Choose MyPlate* for additional ideas on lean choices for meat and meat alternates.**

How can I help encourage kids to eat meat and meat alternates?

Here are some ways to get kids excited about meat and meat alternates:

Be Creative When Offering Meals and Snacks



- ▶ **Make food fun.** Serve “Shark Pockets” (stuff half a whole-wheat pita pocket with canned light tuna, spinach, shredded carrots, and a little low-fat salad dressing). Try “Peanut Butter Roll-Ups” (spread a thin layer of peanut butter on a small whole-grain tortilla, top with grated carrots, and roll it).
- ▶ **Give the food items creative names.** Make a lean “Mighty Monster Meatloaf” by using whole-grain bread or cracker crumbs and lean ground meat. Try “Crunchy Cereal Chicken or Fish,” using rolled oats or a crushed, unsweetened whole-grain cereal as breading for baked chicken or fish.

Let Children Participate in Putting Together Meals and Snacks

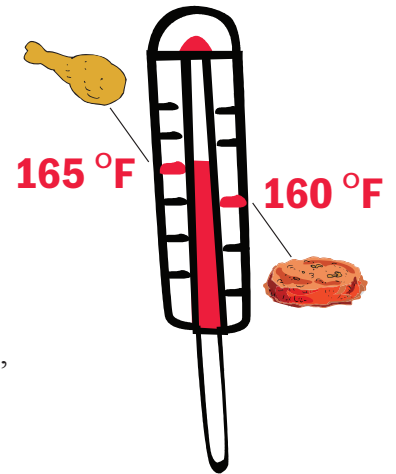


- ▶ **Put kids in charge.** Have children make a potato fixin’s bar by choosing their own toppings for half a baked potato. Arrange separate bowls and serving utensils for refried beans, black-eyed peas, chopped chicken tenders, shredded low-fat cheese, sliced cherry tomatoes, thinly chopped spinach, and grated carrots for children to build their own baked potato.
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about foods when they help prepare them. Children can mash beans, wash and dry the tops of canned foods, spread peanut butter on crackers, or mix ingredients together for a chicken salad.
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on easy weekend lunch ideas. Encourage them to let children help set the table or choose which ingredients to use.

How can I keep meat and meat alternates safe? *

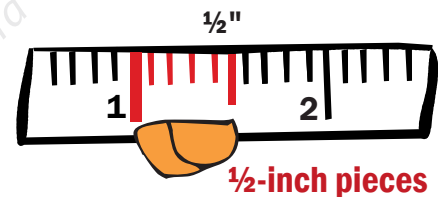
Cook Foods to the Proper Internal Temperature

- ▶ **Do not rinse raw fish, seafood, meat, and poultry.** Bacteria in these raw juices can spread to other foods, utensils, sinks, and other kitchen surfaces. Cooking foods thoroughly will kill harmful bacteria.
- ▶ **Use a food thermometer to check temperatures to determine when a meat, fish, poultry, or egg dish is fully cooked.** Do not judge whether a food is cooked thoroughly by its color or texture. Cook ground beef, pork, veal, or lamb to 160 °F; egg dishes to 160 °F; and poultry, casseroles, or leftovers to 165 °F. See this chart for more detail on minimum internal temperatures and how long to hold different foods at that temperature: .



CHOKING!

- **For preschoolers, cut meat, fish, and poultry into small pieces no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ ") to prevent choking.**
- **If serving hot dogs, sausages, and other round foods, slice them in strips or half-moon shapes.**
- **Serve thoroughly cooked, mashed, or puréed beans and peas to infants and toddlers.**



Keep Foods Out of the Temperature "Danger Zone"

- ▶ **Keep perishable foods out of the "danger zone" of 40 °F to 140 °F** by keeping food in the refrigerator before cooking or serving and returning leftovers to the refrigerator immediately.
- ▶ **Never thaw foods on the kitchen counter or at room temperature.** Defrost foods on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight. Another option is to place food that is either packaged or contained within an air-tight bag or container under cold, running tap water until fully thawed. Only a thin stream of running water is needed. For a quick thaw, use the defrost option on a microwave oven, but only if you are going to cook the meat immediately after it is thawed

CHOKING!

ALLERGY!

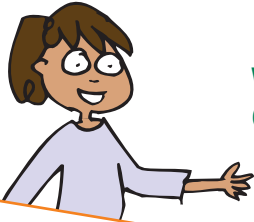
*The food safety guidelines contained in this tip sheet are based on recommendations of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Providers should check with their local health department or sponsoring organization for the specific food safety requirements in the communities they serve.

Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the menu items that feature meat and meat alternates on your child care menu.

Put a star (*) next to your menu choices that are lean, or made or served without too much salt or solid fats. Refer to tips from this tip sheet to identify lean choices for meat and meat alternates. See the Sodium as well as the Fats and Oils tip sheets on pages 37 and 41 for more information on reading the Nutrition Facts label and ingredient list on food packages.



What new lean meat and meat alternates listed below will you try on your menu? Go for variety each week! Circle what you plan to try next month.

Meats

Lean cuts or ground (90% lean or higher):

- Beef
- Ham
- Lamb
- Pork
- Veal

Game Meats:

- Bison
- Rabbit
- Venison

Lean luncheon or deli meats (labeled as 'Lean' or 'Extra Lean')

Poultry:

- Chicken
- Duck
- Goose
- Turkey
- Ground chicken and turkey

Eggs

- Chicken eggs
- Duck eggs

Yogurt (with added vitamin D)

- Fat-Free
- Low-Fat (made with 1% milk)

Cheese (fat-free or low-fat, made with 1% milk)

Hard natural cheeses:

- Cheddar
- Mozzarella
- Swiss
- Parmesan

Soft cheeses:

- Ricotta
- Cottage cheese

Processed cheeses:

- American

Dry Beans and Peas

- Black beans
- Black-eyed peas
- Garbanzo beans (chickpeas)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Navy beans
- Pinto beans
- Soy beans
- Split peas
- White beans

Processed soy products of meat alternates with a CN Label or a company-certified product formulation statement:

- Soy burgers
- Soy patties

Nuts and Seeds

- Almonds
- Cashews
- Hazelnuts (filberts)
- Mixed nuts
- Peanuts
- Peanut butter
- Pecans
- Pistachios
- Pumpkin seeds
- Sesame seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Walnuts

Seafood

Finfish, such as:

Catfish
Cod
Flounder
Haddock
Halibut
Herring
Mackerel
Pollock
Salmon
Sea bass
Snapper
Swordfish
Trout
Tuna

Shellfish, such as:

Clams
Crab
Crawfish
Lobster
Mussels
Octopus
Oysters
Scallops
Squid (calamari)
Shrimp

Canned fish in water, such as:

Anchovies
Clams
Tuna
Sardines
Salmon

How will you offer these meat and meat alternates next month? As part of a:

- Salad
- Sandwich
- Bean Burrito or Quesadilla 
- Kangaroo Pocket (veggies and chicken or bean fillings in a whole-wheat pita pocket)
- Pizza
- Rice and Bean Dish
- Turkey Veggie Roll-Up (fillings wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla with veggies and low-fat ranch dressing)
- Soup, Chili, or Stew 
- Hot Pasta or Lasagna Meal
- Egg Dish
- Bean or Pasta Salad
- Fish Taco
- Snack
- Bean Dip (serve veggie sticks with mashed bean dip or puréed chickpeas)
- Stir-Fry
- Casserole 
- Main Dish
- Meatless Meal (featuring beans or peas)
- One Pot Meal (with whole grains, veggies, and beans or meat in a slow cooker)



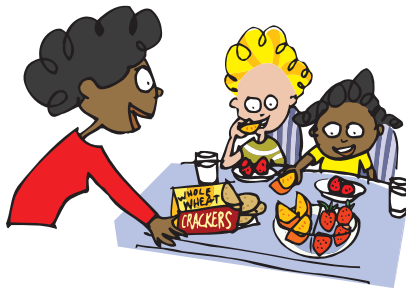
CACFP Crediting Tip:

Include the full portion of meat or meat alternate, depending on the meal and the age of the child.

Reminder: Make sure these menu choices are low in salt and solid fats.

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples of grain-rich products. Grains are divided into two groups: **whole grains** and **refined grains**. Whenever possible, whole-grain versions of these grain products should be offered. Most children 2 years and older do not consume enough whole grains or other foods rich in dietary fiber. You can help by providing children with a variety of whole grains during the week. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommends making at least half your grains *whole* grains.

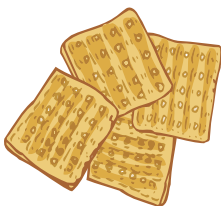
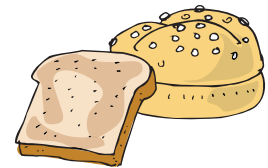
Increase the amount of *whole* grains in children’s diets by purchasing, preparing, and serving foods that contain a whole grain as the first ingredient in the ingredient list. Including whole-grain foods in meals and as snacks can:



- Give children the B vitamins and minerals they need for energy to play and learn.
- Promote proper digestion and make children’s “potty time” easier by providing dietary fiber.
- Help them feel full longer and maintain a healthy weight.
- Add texture and flavor to their plate.

What types of grains should I offer?

Instead Of:	Choose Whole Grains:
White rice	Brown rice, wild rice, quinoa
White flour	Whole-wheat flour
White bread or wheat bread	100% Whole-grain bread
Noodles, pasta, spaghetti, macaroni	Whole-wheat pasta or whole-grain noodles
Flour tortillas	Whole-grain tortillas and whole-corn tortillas that do not have “lime” in the ingredient list
Crackers	Whole-grain crackers
Degermed cornmeal	Whole-grain cornmeal



It can be difficult to know if you are choosing whole grains by reading statements on the packages alone. Some claims may sound good, but do not always mean that the product is a whole grain. Here are some tips in selecting whole-grain foods:

Read the Label

Ingredients:

Whole wheat flour,
water, sugar, soybean
oil, whey (milk), eggs,
vanilla, natural and
artificial flavoring,
salt, leavening.

- ▶ **Take a look at the ingredient list.** Choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient first on the list, or second after water—that means there is more of it than the other ingredients.

Look for “whole wheat,” “brown rice,” “oatmeal,” “bulgur,” “buckwheat,” “whole corn,” “whole-grain cornmeal,” “whole oats,” “whole rye,” or “wild rice.”

For foods made of multiple grains, make sure the whole-grain ingredients appear near the beginning of the ingredient list.

- ▶ **Use the Nutrition Facts label to check the fiber content of whole-grain foods.** Choose those higher in dietary fiber. Good sources of fiber contain 10% to 19% of the Daily Value; excellent sources contain 20% or more.

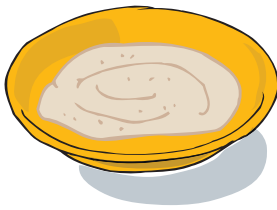
Consider Offering These Whole Grains

- ▶ **Vary the choices for whole grains.** Rolled oats, oatmeal, brown rice, wild rice, buckwheat, quinoa, wheat berries, and millet are naturally whole-grain foods. Providing different choices each day helps children get the nutrition they need and introduces them to new foods.
- ▶ **100% whole-grain foods,** including “100% whole-grain” breads, breakfast cereals, pasta, and whole-corn tortillas, are also good choices.
- ▶ **Serve whole-grain versions of cereal, bread, tortillas, or pancakes at breakfast.** Top them with unsweetened applesauce or fresh or frozen fruit instead of sugar, syrup, jam, jelly, or honey.



Limit Added Sugars and Solid Fats When Offering Whole-Grain Foods

- ▶ **Check the ingredient list of whole-grain-rich products for added sugars.** Look for sugar, honey, and ingredients ending in “-ose”. If present, make sure they are *not* one of the first three ingredients on the ingredient list. For a naturally sweet taste, try topping whole-grain foods with fresh, frozen, or canned fruit slices (canned in 100% fruit juice or water).
- ▶ **Be aware of solid fats in grain foods and toppings by reading the ingredient list.** Instead of butter, shortening, lard, and oils with the word “hydrogenated” in the ingredient list, choose those made from vegetable oils that are *not* hydrogenated. (See the Fats and Oils tip sheet on page 41 for more information.)
- ▶ **Choose toppings wisely for toast, hot cereals, pasta, noodles, and rice.** Instead of adding butter, stick margarine, lard, bacon, cream sauces, and regular, full-fat cheese, use vegetable oils, low-fat cheeses, marinara sauce, or steamed vegetables as toppings.



TIP:

When serving oatmeal, use old-fashioned rolled oats. They do not contain as much sodium (salt), compared to instant oatmeal.

TIP:

The color of a grain or bread product is not an indication that it is a *whole-grain* food. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Foods labeled as "multi-grain," "stone-ground," "100% wheat," "cracked wheat," "seven-grain," or "bran" are usually *not* whole-grain products, and might not contain *any* whole grain.



- **Keep in mind that popcorn, chips, hard pretzels, and rice cakes pose choking hazards.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



- **Some children in your care may be allergic to wheat, soy, nuts, and seeds.**

Actively supervise children when serving meals and snacks. Handle food allergies on a case-by-case basis, have a medical statement on file, and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.

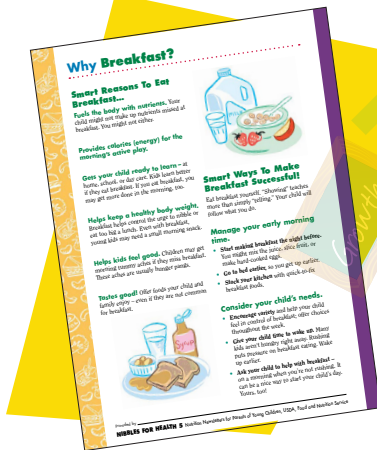
How can I encourage children to eat more whole grains?

If children are not used to eating whole grains often, introduce them gradually in combination with their favorite foods. Here are some ways to get children excited about whole grains:



- ▶ **Mix it up.** Try mixing whole- and non-whole-grain foods in your recipes and meals. Then, gradually increase the amount of whole grains each time you make them. For example, mix regular and whole-grain pasta or combine brown rice with white rice in a recipe or as a side dish. Or, start with ½ white and ½ whole-wheat-bread sandwiches, and eventually make both sides whole wheat.
- ▶ **Have a whole-grain taste test.** Have children taste-test whole-grain and lower fat, sugar, and sodium versions of their favorite snacks, such as crackers, granola bars, soft pretzels, bagels, and dry cereals. Or, let children sample dishes that use whole grains as main ingredients, and have children Name That Grain!
- ▶ **Try some fun whole-grain activities and games.** Make art out of whole grains, and have older children identify foods made from whole grains.

Support the Message



- ▶ **Send the message home.** Breakfast is a good time to include whole grains, even on weekends and busy mornings. Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on breakfast tips and ideas.
- ▶ **Enjoy whole grains and children will too.** They learn from watching you.

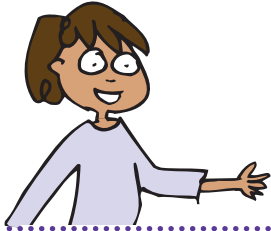


Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Circle the whole grains and whole-grain-rich foods on your child care menu.

Be sure to check the ingredient list. Whole-grain-rich foods are any bread or grain products that have a “whole” grain listed as the **first** grain ingredient in the ingredient list. Examples are *whole* wheat, *whole* oat, and *whole* corn.



What new whole grains or whole-grain-rich foods listed below will you try on your menu? Circle what you plan to try next month.

Amaranth
Brown rice
Buckwheat
Bulgur (cracked wheat)
Millet
Oatmeal
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals:
 Whole-grain cereal flakes
 Muesli
Rolled oats
Quinoa
Sorghum
Triticale

Whole-grain barley
Whole-grain cornmeal
Whole-corn tortillas that do not have “lime” in the ingredient list
Whole rye
Whole-wheat or whole-grain bread, pita, sandwich buns, and rolls
Whole-grain crackers
Whole-wheat pasta
Whole-grain noodles
Whole-grain tortillas
Wild rice

Other ideas: _____

How will you offer these whole grains or whole-grain-rich foods next month? As part of a:

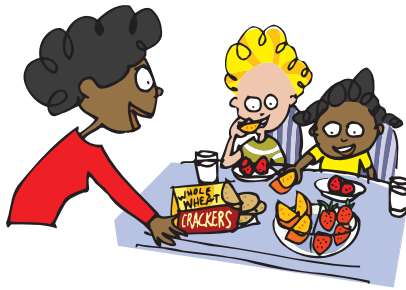
- Sandwich** (on whole-grain bread, pita, sandwich bun, or roll)
- Corn Bread** (made with whole-grain cornmeal)
- Kangaroo Pocket** (veggies and fillings in a whole-grain pita pocket)
- Veggie Roll-Up** (veggies wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla with low-fat ranch dressing)
- Burrito or Quesadilla** (using a whole-grain or whole-corn tortilla)
- Stir-Fry** (with brown rice)
- Hot Pasta Meal** (using whole-grain noodles)
- Pasta Salad** (using whole-wheat pasta)
- Brown Rice Salad**
- Casserole** (with wild rice)
- Soup, Chili, or Stew** (with whole-wheat macaroni or whole-grain barley)
- Snack**
- Side Dish**
- Breakfast** (featuring oatmeal or ready-to-eat breakfast cereals: whole-grain cereal flakes or muesli)
- Cheese and Cracker Snack** (with whole-grain crackers)
- Meatless Meal** (featuring beans and brown rice)
- One Pot Meal** (with whole grains, veggies, and beans or meat in a slow cooker)



CACFP Crediting Tip:

Include the full portion of grain/bread, depending on the meal and the age of the child.

Children who consume dairy products such as milk, milk substitutes, yogurt, and cheese get many important nutrients and have healthier diets than those who don't. However, many children ages 2 to 3 years, and most children 4 years and older, do not consume enough milk and dairy products. You can help by offering fat-free and low-fat milk during the day to:



- Provide children with nutrients such as protein, calcium, vitamin D, and potassium.
- Help build strong bones, teeth, and muscles in growing children.
- Increase the chance that children will drink milk when they are older.

NOTE: “Milk” refers to pasteurized fluid types such as unflavored or flavored whole milk, low-fat milk, fat-free (skim) milk, or cultured buttermilk that meet State and local standards for such milk. All milk should contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the Food and Drug Administration and must be consistent with State and local standards for such milk.



CACFP Crediting Tip:
Yogurt and cheese credit as a meat alternate, and not as a part of the fluid milk requirement of the CACFP meal pattern. See the Meat and Meat Alternate tip sheet on page 19 for more information.



Fat-Free = Skim Milk
Low-Fat = 1% Fat Milk
Reduced-Fat = 2% Fat Milk
Full Fat = Whole Milk

CACFP Crediting Tip:
Remember, cream cheese, whipped cream, and butter are not part of the milk component and are not creditable in CACFP. They are high in solid fat and have little or no calcium.

What types of milk should I offer children over 2 years old?

Fat-free and low-fat (1%) milk options have the same amount of calcium and other important nutrients as whole and reduced-fat (2%) milks, but much less fat. Starting at age 2, children should drink only:

- ▶ **Fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, or**
- ▶ **Fat-free, or low-fat, lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk.**

Whole and reduced-fat milks (2%) contain high amounts of saturated fat and *may not*, under USDA’s CACFP requirements, be served to children over 2 years of age. While dietary fats are needed for children’s growth and development, children 2 years and older generally consume enough fats in their diet without consuming fat from milk.

How can I serve a variety of fat-free and low-fat milk and dairy products?

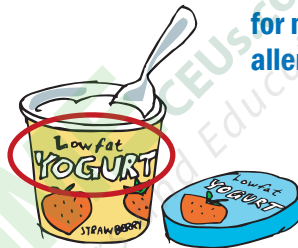
- ▶ **Offer unflavored, fat-free, and low-fat milks most often.** They have less added sugar and fewer calories than flavored, whole, or reduced-fat milk. Extra calories may contribute to weight gain. Extra sugar increases the risk for cavities and allows kids to develop a taste for flavored milk. (See the Added Sugars tip sheet on page 47 for more information.)
- ▶ **Offer fat-free and low-fat yogurt and cheese during meals and snacks.** Keep in mind they **do not** count towards the milk requirement for the CACFP meal pattern. They may count as a meat alternate.
- ▶ **Offer lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk or other approved fluid milk substitutes for children who are lactose-intolerant and can't consume cow's milk.** Handle milk substitutions on a case-by-case basis and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.



- **Some children in your care may be allergic to milk, soy, nuts and seeds.**

Actively supervise children when serving milk and milk substitutes. Handle food allergies on a case-by-case basis, have a medical statement on file, and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.

- **See Appendix B on page 81 for more information on food allergies.**



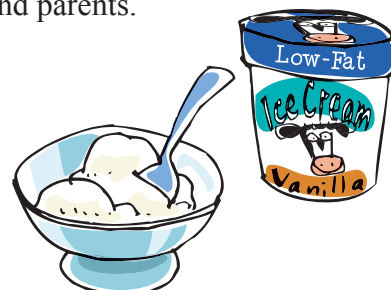
How can I encourage children to choose fat-free and low-fat milk?



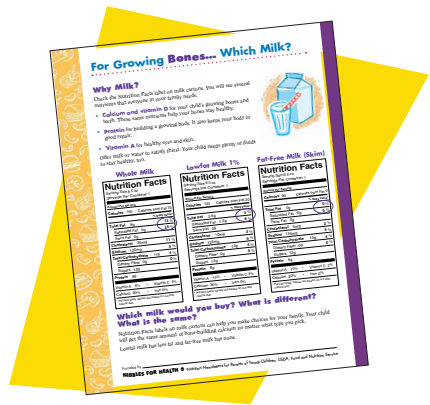
- ▶ **Make food fun.** Make up a song that is associated with drinking milk, and sing it when milk is being served.
- ▶ **Do a milk taste test.** Let kids sample low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk and pick their favorite. Low-fat milk and fat-free milk have less calories and saturated fat than reduced-fat (2%) milk and whole milk but do not reduce calcium or other important nutrients.
- ▶ **Create your own Milk Mustache Event!** Take pictures of children drinking low-fat milk and post them on a bulletin board. Blend together low-fat milk with frozen yogurt or low-fat ice cream for the Milk Mustache activity. For more fun, include adults and parents.

*Enjoy milk often.
The children in your care are looking at the choices you make.*

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk as your beverage of choice during meal and snack times.

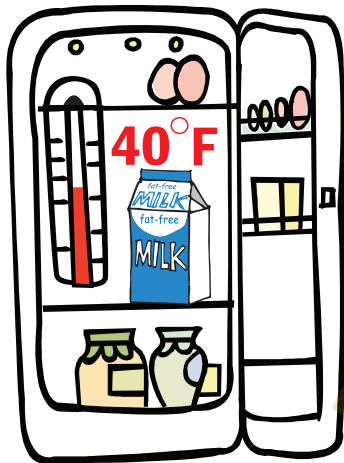


Connect With Parents



- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on milk and growing children's bones.
- ▶ **Share information with parents whose children cannot consume cow's milk.** Even if children have lactose intolerance, they may still enjoy milk and other dairy products and get the nourishment that milk provides.

How can I keep milk and other dairy products safe?



- ▶ **Keep milk COLD!** It tastes better and is safer for kids to drink.
- ▶ **Store milk and other dairy products** in a refrigerator below 40 °F.



- **String cheese and large chunks of cheese pose choking hazards.**

Activities

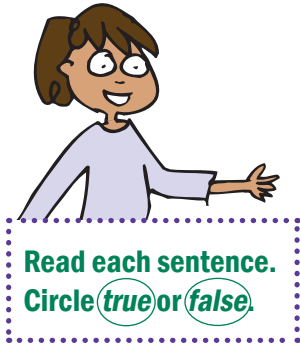
How can I put this information into practice?

Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. What fat-free or low-fat milk or milk substitutes are you using?

- ▶ **Make sure you are serving the appropriate types of milk for each child, based on his or her age.** Review the *What type of milk should I offer?* section on this tip sheet.

- What type(s) of milk should be served to **children under age 2**?
-

- What type(s) of milk should be served to **children 2 years and older**?
-



- Yogurt and cheese credit as a meat alternate in CACFP and not as part of the fluid milk requirement.

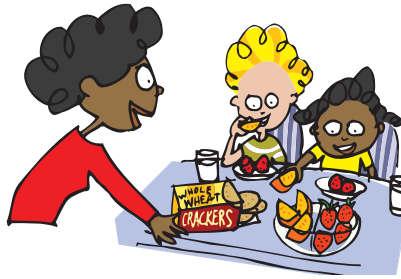
True **False**

- Cream cheese, whipped cream, and butter are not part of the milk component and are not creditable in the CACFP.

True **False**

- ▶ **Write down one or two creative ways you can highlight the importance of milk.** Do this at least one day during each week next month.
-
-
-
-
-
-

When children regularly taste salty foods, they learn to prefer these salty flavors more and more. Serving foods lower in sodium can help children learn to like and enjoy foods with a less salty taste. You can help by providing foods with less sodium to the children in your care. It is important to remember that:



- **Most sodium comes from processed and ready-to-eat foods, which usually come in cans, jars, packages, and boxes.**
- **Eating foods containing too much sodium may raise blood pressure.**
- **In contrast, foods high in potassium may help lower blood pressure.**
- **Offering children the least processed foods available is an important way to help them reduce sodium intake and stay healthy. Examples include: fresh or frozen spinach instead of canned spinach, and fresh chicken instead of chicken nuggets.**

Nearly everyone benefits from eating foods with less sodium. On average, blood pressure goes up with sodium intake. African-American children of all ages, as well as children with a family history of high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease, are most affected by sodium and potassium intake. Use these tips to lower sodium in foods you serve.

What low-sodium foods should I offer?

When buying foods, choose no salt added, low-sodium, or reduced-sodium versions, and prepare foods without adding salt. Choose foods such as:

- ▶ **Raw or cooked, fresh or frozen vegetables** that are prepared without added sodium or salt.
- ▶ **Canned or packaged foods** labeled as “reduced sodium,” “low sodium,” or “no salt added.”
- ▶ **Fresh beef, pork, poultry, and seafood,** rather than those with salt added.
- ▶ **Nuts and seeds that are unsalted** (including almonds, mixed nuts, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, peanut butter, or sunflower seed butter).
- ▶ **Other fresh foods** and fewer processed foods.



How can I serve a variety of foods that are lower in sodium?

- ▶ **Pay attention to condiments.**
- ▶ **Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes** instead of salt, soy sauce, catsup, pickles, olives, salad dressings, butter, stick margarine, gravy, or cream sauce to season vegetables and other dishes.
- ▶ **Choose low-sodium soy sauce and catsup.**
- ▶ **Use only a sprinkling of flavoring packets** instead of the entire packet.
- ▶ **Remove salt from recipes whenever possible.** Fresh or dried herbs, spices, lemon or orange zest, or 100% fruit juices jazz up the flavors in foods without adding salt.
- ▶ **Drain and rinse canned, precooked beans or vegetables** to remove even more sodium.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250 Calories from Fat 110

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g 18%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 30mg 10%

Sodium 140 mg 5%

Total Carbohydrate 31g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Sugars 6g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4% Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20% Iron 4%

Be Mindful of the Foods You Choose for CACFP

- ▶ **Check the Nutrition Facts labels and ingredient list to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium.** Foods that are low in sodium have less than 140 mg or 5% Daily Value (DV). Choose the foods with lower numbers, and with “salt” listed further down the ingredient list.
- ▶ **Think fresh.** Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium, compared to processed foods.

- ▶ **Limit highly processed, breaded meat, poultry, or fish to only one time per week.** These include processed foods like frozen pizza, chicken nuggets, hot dogs, sausage, bacon, processed cheese sauces, and cold cuts.
- ▶ **Choose less-processed foods.** They are typically lower in sodium, compared to more-processed foods. Use old-fashioned rolled oats instead of instant oatmeal, and baked fish instead of fried fish sticks.



- **Hot dogs, sausages, nuts, seeds, and nut and seed butters may pose choking hazards.**

How can I encourage kids to eat foods low in sodium?

Sometimes it takes a little time for kids to get used to different or new flavors. Let those taste buds change! Cut back on salt little by little, and children’s taste for salt will change over time. Here are some ways to help kids eat less sodium:

- ▶ **Conduct an herb and spice taste-test!** Prepare children’s favorite vegetables, beans, brown rice, or whole-grain breads or noodles with fresh or dried herbs, no-salt spice mixes, or lemon or orange zest. Have children taste and vote for their favorite no-salt additions.
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about foods when they help prepare them. Point out when you modify recipes by using no-salt-added or lower sodium versions of ingredients. Children can help drain and rinse canned beans to remove some sodium, or help sprinkle dried herbs into a pasta salad instead of salt.

Support the Message

- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on Nutrition Facts labels. This resource can help parents choose foods with the lowest amount of sodium per serving.
- ▶ **Enjoy a variety of foods with less sodium.** See *Choose MyPlate* for more ideas.



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

- ▶ **Serve foods with little or no sodium.**
- ▶ **Use the Nutrition Facts Label to compare sodium in foods**—and choose the foods with lower numbers.

The Nutrition Facts label provides the percent (%) Daily Value for the nutrients listed (except *trans* fat, sugars, and protein).

The % Daily Value can be used to determine whether a serving of food contributes high or low amounts of a particular nutrient and provides information on how a serving of food fits into a total daily diet.



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 ounce (228g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 162	Calories from Fat 117
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 14g	21%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 96mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 6g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 8%	Iron 6%

Get LESS

5 % or less
is low

20 % or more
is high

Get MORE

5 % or less
is low

20 % or more
is high

Look at the Nutrition Facts label above to answer these questions.

- ▶ **What is the serving size for this food?**

- ▶ **What is the % Daily Value of sodium in this food?**

- ▶ **Does this food contribute a high or low amount of sodium?**

- ▶ **How do you know if this food contributes a high or low amount of sodium?**



Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Compare the Nutrition Facts labels for the menu items that include sodium. Which options are more healthy and less healthy? Whenever possible, choose foods that contain 5% or less sodium.

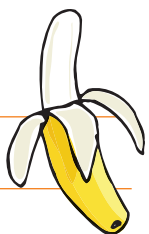
- ▶ Circle the high-sodium items on the menu.
- ▶ Find low-sodium options to replace those items that are high in sodium for the next month's menu. What are some foods that can be served instead of the circled menu items?

- ▶ Write down two to three ways to lower sodium in the menu next month. Think about food choices that are lower in sodium, what to look for when food shopping, or different ways to cook or prepare foods with less salt. (Refer to the tips on this tip sheet for easy ways to lower sodium.)

- ▶ What fresh foods can you use in place of canned or processed foods to reduce sodium in your menu?

- ▶ Potassium can help children maintain a healthy blood pressure. Think about ways to include at least one potassium-rich food on the menu every day next month. Ideas include sweet potatoes, spinach, beet greens, tomato products (paste, sauce, and juice), beans (white, lima, kidney), lentils, bananas, cantaloupe, honeydew melon, raisins, and kiwifruit.

Write down some potassium-rich foods you will offer next month:



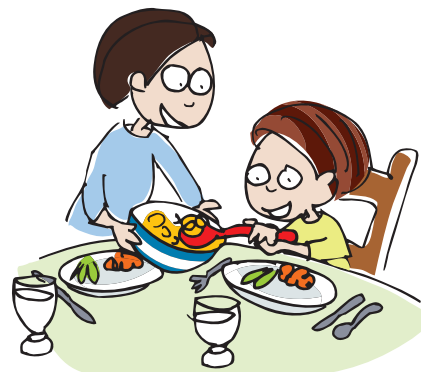
Americans consume too many foods that are high in solid fats. Children can fill up on the extra calories from solid fats and not get the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy. These extra calories from solid fats also make it harder for children to grow at a healthy weight. You can help by offering children fewer foods that are high in solid fats or replacing solid fats with healthy oils.



- **Solid Fats are high in saturated or *trans* fats**, such as butter (milk fat), beef fat, chicken fat, pork fat (lard, bacon), stick margarine, and shortening. They are also solid at room temperature. The fat in milk is considered solid fat, even though it is suspended in the milk. Saturated fat and *trans* fats increase blood cholesterol levels. Solid fats from animal sources contain cholesterol.
- **Oils are liquid at room temperature.** They are from many different plants and fish. Compared to solid fats, oils are a healthier option. Oils are a good source of healthy unsaturated fats and are generally cholesterol-free.

Oils:	
Canola oil	
Corn oil	
Cottonseed oil	
Olive oil	
Safflower oil	
Sunflower oil	
Some foods naturally high in oils:	
Nuts	Some fish
Olives	Avocados
Foods that are mainly oil include:	
Oil-based salad dressings	
Low-fat mayonnaise	
Soft (tub) margarine with no <i>trans</i> fats	

Solid Fats:
Beef, pork, and chicken fat
Butter, cream, and milk fat
Coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils
Hydrogenated oil
Partially hydrogenated oil
Shortening
Stick margarine



What types of foods lower in solid fats should I offer?

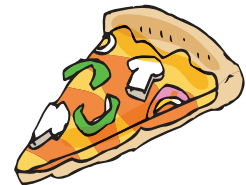
The top sources of solid fats in the diets of children and adolescents 2 to 18 years old include pizza, whole milk, regular cheese, cookies, cakes, pies, and fatty meats. Whole and reduced-fat (2%) milk provide the majority of solid fats for younger children. Offer foods that have little to no solid fats. Here are some substitutions of foods to choose for children 2 years and older:

Instead Of:	Choose:
Reduced-fat (2%) and whole milk	Fat-free and low-fat (1% or less) milk (both have the same amounts of calcium and other nutrients as whole and reduced-fat milk, without the extra fat) 
Regular, full-fat cheese and foods containing cheese (such as pizza)	Part-skim mozzarella or other low-fat cheeses, and foods containing fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheeses
Butter, stick margarine, or shortening for cooking	Vegetable oils, such as canola, olive, safflower, or corn oil; or soft (tub) margarines with zero trans fats made from liquid vegetable oil 
Fried chicken or fried fish	Grilled, baked, broiled, or roasted chicken or fish
French fries or fried white potatoes	Baked or boiled potatoes or sweet potatoes 
Tortilla chips or corn chips	Baked chips or whole-grain crackers 
Breaded meat products (such as chicken nuggets or fish sticks) or other highly processed meat items (such as sausage, bacon, or hot dogs)	Baked chicken breasts or codfish filets to make fajitas or tacos; baked frozen flounder or cod filets with lemon and herbs or tomato salsa
Regular ground beef and cuts of meat with marbling or visible fat	Lean cuts of meat (loin and round), chicken breast, fish, and ground turkey and beef (labeled "90% lean" or higher); beans and peas without added solid fat
Doughnuts, pies, cookies, or cakes	Fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned in water or 100% juice), or foods that are low in fat such as graham crackers, angel food cake, and plain animal crackers
Ice cream, frozen yogurt, or full-fat yogurt	Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt, frozen fruits, or frozen 100% fruit bars 

How can I prepare a variety of foods with less solid fats?

When it comes to heart health, the types and amounts of fat we eat make a big difference. Help protect children's hearts by serving foods containing healthy oils rather than solid fats. You can tell if it's a solid fat if it holds its shape at room temperature, like butter. Use these tips to prepare foods with less or no solid fats:

- ▶ **Lower the fat content in recipes** by using only fat-free or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese when cooking and baking.
- ▶ **Switch from solid fats to oils** when preparing food (*see chart on the first page of this tip sheet*).
- ▶ **Limit serving foods that list "shortening" or "partially hydrogenated vegetable oil"** on the ingredient list.
- ▶ **Trim away all of the visible fat from meat and poultry** before cooking. Remove the skin from chicken and turkey to reduce the amount of solid fats.
- ▶ **Add flavor to foods with lemon or herbs** instead of butter, stick margarine, gravy, or cream sauce.
- ▶ **Top pizza with vegetables** instead of pepperoni, sausage, or bacon.



Be Mindful of the Foods You Choose for CACFP



- ▶ **Offer fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt** to children 2 years of age and older.
- ▶ **Choose the leanest ground meats possible** (including beef, pork, chicken, and turkey), preferably meats labeled "90% lean" or higher. The higher the % number, the lower the amount of solid fat in the meat.
- ▶ **Offer processed foods like fried fish sticks, chicken nuggets, hotdogs, and fried white potatoes as occasional choices** (once weekly), not everyday choices.
- ▶ **Make fruit the choice for dessert.** Cakes, cookies, and pies are often made with solid fats. When making baked desserts, replace some of the butter with applesauce or yogurt.



- **Hot dogs, sausages, chips, string cheese, and large chunks of meat may pose choking hazards.**



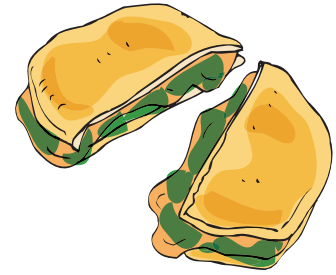
- **Some children in your care may be allergic to fish, seafood, soy, milk, wheat, eggs, nuts, and seeds.**

Actively supervise children when serving these foods. Handle food allergies on a case-by-case basis, have a medical statement on file, and contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.

How can I encourage kids to eat foods with less solid fat?

Here are some ways to help kids eat less solid fat:

- ▶ **Make food fun.** Serve “Kangaroo Pockets” (stuff half a whole-grain pita pocket with sliced chicken, romaine lettuce, shredded carrots, and a little salad dressing). Try “Crunchy Baked Chicken” (oven-baked chicken tenders coated in crushed whole-grain cereal or breadcrumbs).



- ▶ **Cook together!** Children learn about foods when they help prepare them. Instead of baking pizza topped with regular cheese and fatty meats, have kids make their own mini pizzas by topping whole-grain English muffins or pitas with low-fat or part-skim cheeses and their favorite vegetables.



Support the Message



- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on fats and oils in foods for children.
- ▶ **Enjoy a variety of foods with less solid fats.** See *Choose MyPlate* for more ideas:

Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

- ▶ **Serve foods with little or no saturated or *trans* fat.**
- ▶ **Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare saturated fat and *trans* fat in foods**—and choose the foods with lower numbers.

The Nutrition Facts label provides the percent (%) Daily Value for the nutrients listed (except *trans* fat, sugars, and protein).

The % Daily Value can be used to determine whether a serving of food contributes high or low amounts of a particular nutrient and provides information on how a serving of food fits into a total daily diet.



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 ounce (228g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 162	Calories from Fat 117
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 14g	21%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 96mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 6g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 8%	Iron 6%

Get LESS

5 % or less is low

20 % or more is high

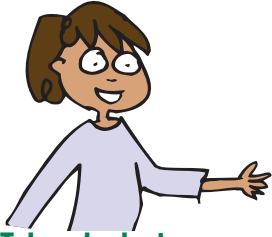
Get MORE

5 % or less is low

20 % or more is high

Look at the Nutrition Facts label above to answer these questions.

- ▶ **What is the serving size for this food?** _____
- ▶ **What is the % Daily Value of saturated fat in this food?** _____
- ▶ **Does this food contribute a high or low amount of saturated fat?** _____
- ▶ **How many grams of *trans* fat in this food?** _____
- ▶ **Does this food contribute a high or low amount of *trans* fat?** _____
- ▶ **How do you know if this food contributes a high or low amount of saturated fat and *trans* fat?** _____



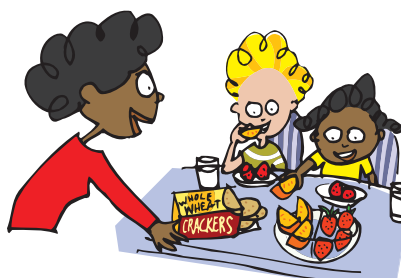
Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels for the menu items that include saturated fat and *trans* fat. Which options are higher and which are lower in solid fats? Whenever possible, choose foods that contain 5% or less saturated fat.

- ▶ **Circle items high in saturated fat and *trans* fat on the menu.** Use the *Fats and Oils Substitution Chart* and *Examples of Solid Fats and Oils Chart* from this tip sheet.
- ▶ **Look at the meat and meat alternate items on the menu. Circle the items that are high in solid fats** (for example: fried chicken, fish sticks, hotdogs, and regular, full-fat cheese).
- ▶ **Find menu items low in saturated fat and *trans* fat. What are some foods that can be served instead of the circled menu items next month?**

- ▶ **Write down two to three ways to lower the saturated fat and *trans* fat in next month's menu.** Think about food choices that are lower in solid fats, what to look for when food shopping, or different ways to cook or prepare foods with less solid fats. (Refer to the tips on this tip sheet for easy ways to lower solid fats.)

Example: *Steam broccoli instead of cooking broccoli in butter.*

Sugars are found naturally in fruits, milk, yogurt, and cheese. However, the majority of sugars in typical American diets are “added sugars.” You can help children stay healthier as they grow by providing them with foods and beverages with fewer added sugars. It is important to remember that:



- **The extra calories in added sugars can make children feel full before they’ve had a chance to get the nutrients they need from other foods.**
- **The extra calories from added sugars also make it harder for children to grow at a healthy weight.**
- **Added sugars are often called “empty calories” because they add calories to the diet without offering any nutrients.**
- **Sugar also increases the risk for dental cavities.**

What can I do to limit foods and beverages with added sugars?

Be aware of sources of added sugars. Sodas, fruit drinks, cakes, pies, cookies, dairy desserts, and candy are the major sources of added sugars for children and adolescents 2 to 18 years old. For younger children, sugar-sweetened beverages and cold cereals are the top sources. Offer foods that have no added sugars. Here are some substitutions of foods to choose for **children 2 years and older**:

Instead Of:	Choose:
Flavored milk	Unflavored fat-free or low-fat milk (1% fat or less)
Sweetened yogurt	Fat-free or low-fat plain yogurt topped with fruit
Ice cream or frozen yogurt	Frozen fruits that don’t contain added sugars, or frozen 100% fruit bars
Sweetened breakfast cereals	Cereals with little or no added sugar, whole-grain cereals, or oatmeal with fruit
Cookies	Whole-grain crackers, graham crackers, or plain animal crackers
Canned fruit in syrup, or sweetened applesauce	Fruit canned in water or 100% fruit juice; unsweetened applesauce
Doughnuts, pies, or cakes for desserts	Fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned in water or 100% juice), fruit salads, or baked fruits (like baked apples or pears)
Jam or jelly	100% fruit spread
Soda, fruit-flavored drinks, fruit cocktails, or fruit punch	Water, skim or low-fat milk, or 100% juice (no more than one ½ cup or ¾ cup serving of 100% juice a day)



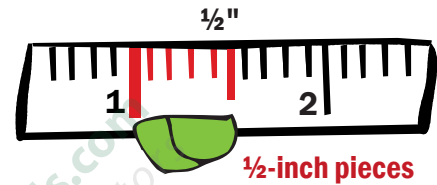
Code Words for Added Sugars

- ▶ **Added sugars** are sugars added to foods during processing, preparation, or at the table.
- ▶ **Look at the ingredient list on the back of a package.** Do you see high fructose corn syrup, white sugar, brown sugar, honey, molasses, corn syrup, corn syrup solids, raw sugar, malt syrup, maple syrup, pancake syrup, or ingredients ending in “-ose” (such as maltose or fructose)? All of these are added sugars.
- ▶ **Choose foods that do not list added sugars** among the first three ingredients in the ingredient list.



For children younger than 4 years old:

- **Cut raw fruit in small pieces no larger than one-half inch (½”) to prevent choking.**
- **Slice grapes and other round foods in half.**
- **Hard fruit chunks, chewy fruit snacks, and certain types of candy pose choking hazards.**
- **See Appendix A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**



How can I serve fewer foods with added sugars?

Children are born preferring sweet flavors. When children regularly taste sugar and sweet flavors, they learn to prefer these sweet flavors more and more. Adding less or no sugar and choosing foods and beverages lower in “added sugars” can help children learn to like foods that are not as sweet. Here are some tips:

- ▶ **Serve fresh fruit more often** instead of fruit-based desserts, such as fruit pies, cobblers, and crisps.
- ▶ **Offer raisins** instead of chewy fruit snacks, candy, or sweets.



There is usually very little fruit in chewy fruit snacks or “fruit-flavored” beverages (often called fruit drinks or fruit punch).

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 6g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 20%	Iron 4%

- ▶ **Purchase whole-grain breads and cereals with few or no added sugars.** Low-sugar cereals should have no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving, according to the Nutrition Facts label. Top cereal or oatmeal with fruit to sweeten the taste.
- ▶ **Offer fresh foods and less-processed foods.**
- ▶ **Choose not to offer sweets as rewards.** By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are “better” than other foods. Reward the children in your care with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them nonfood items, like stickers, to make them feel special.



How can I encourage kids to eat a balanced variety of foods without added sugar?

Some kids may need time to adjust to a less sweet flavor. Introduce less-sweetened versions of the same foods that were previously sweetened. Here are some ways to help kids eat less added sugars:

- ▶ **Make food fun!** Serve a festive drink with no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving of fruit juice, once per day, and add an orange, lemon, or lime wedge as a garnish. During the rest of the day, offer most fruit whole or cut up, to get more fiber.
- ▶ **Cook together.** Children learn about foods when they help prepare them. Instead of sweetened yogurt, have kids make their own “fruit and yogurt parfait” by topping nonfat plain yogurt with whole-grain cereal and fresh or frozen berries, banana slices, fruit canned in 100% juice, or their favorite fruit.



Support the Message



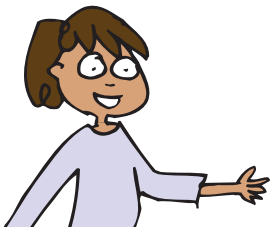
▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on juice.

▶ **Eat a variety of foods with less added sugars, and kids will too.** They learn from watching you. See *Choose MyPlate* for more ideas.

Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

- ▶ **Compare ingredient lists for food products you serve on the child care menu.** Sometimes foods and beverages contain “hidden sugars,” or added sugars that you may not know about.
- ▶ **Look for added sugars on ingredient lists**
Which products have added sugars as the first three ingredients in the list?



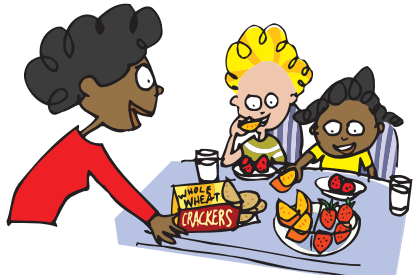
Take a look at your current weekly or cycle menu.

- ▶ **Circle items that contain added sugars on the menu.**
- ▶ **Circle the menu items to which you typically add additional sugar** (for example: pancake syrup to waffles, or brown sugar to oatmeal).
- ▶ **Find menu items low in added sugars. What are some foods that can be served instead of the circled menu items next month?** Review this tip sheet and the *Added Sugars Substitution Chart*

- ▶ **Write down two to three ways that you can serve items without added sugars in next month's menu.** Think about food choices that are lower in added sugars, what to look for when food shopping, or different ways to prepare foods without adding additional sugar.

When children are thirsty between meals and snacks, water is the best beverage choice.

The amount of water needed will vary among young children, and increase on hot summer days, during physical activity, and on dry winter days. You can help by making safe drinking water **freely accessible*** to children throughout the day. Drinking water can:



- **Keep children hydrated and healthy.**
- **Help build and maintain strong teeth, if water includes fluoride.**
- **Help rinse food from teeth, and reduce acid in the mouth, both of which contribute to dental cavities.**
- **Help children develop a habit of drinking water that they will keep for life.**

How and When Should Water be Made Available?

- ▶ **CACFP standards require providers to make water freely accessible* throughout the day.** Water must be available to drink upon children's request, but does not have to be available for them to self-serve. While drinking water must be made available to children during meal times, it is not part of the reimbursable meal and may *not* be served instead of fluid milk.
- ▶ **Children who drink too much liquid right before a meal may feel too full to eat.** Providers should keep this in mind when deciding how much water to offer a child right before meals.
- ▶ **Replace other high-calorie, sweetened beverages** that are served outside of meal times with plain, unflavored, noncarbonated water.
- ▶ **Serve fluoridated tap water.** Many community tap water supplies contain fluoride. Most bottled water is not fluoridated. Bottled water is not necessarily safer than regular tap water, and it's more expensive.



* **"Freely accessible"** can mean allowing children to access water from a water fountain whenever they are thirsty.

Or, providers can make clean, small pitchers of water and single-use paper cups available in the classrooms and on the playgrounds, or make paper cups available next to the kitchen sink.

Allow children to serve themselves water when they are thirsty, or provide water to a child when he or she requests it.

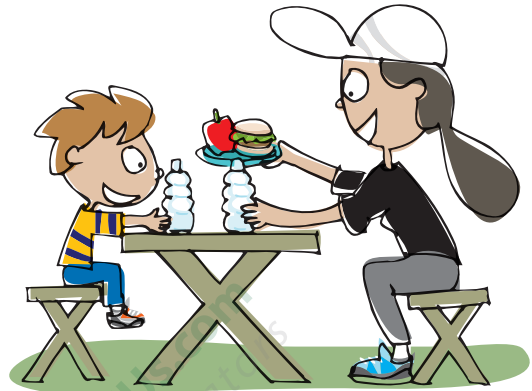
Water is an excellent beverage choice at snack time, along with your two other reimbursable meal components.

How can I offer more water and fewer sweetened drinks?

Most children 2 years and older drink beverages with too much added sugar. These extra calories from added sugars make it harder for children to keep a healthy weight.

Water is calorie-free, so drinking water during the day can reduce the total number of calories consumed. Water also satisfies thirst and keeps children well-hydrated. Try these simple tips:

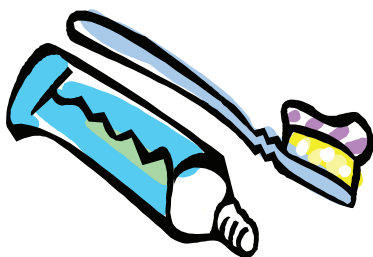
- ▶ **Serve plain, unflavored, noncarbonated water** instead of fruit-flavored drinks, soda, fruit nectars, sports drinks, or other sweetened drinks.
- ▶ **Be sure to have water available** when children are playing outdoors or doing other physical activity.
- ▶ **Let water be the only choice** when children are thirsty outside of meal and snack times.



How can I help encourage kids to drink water instead of sweetened drinks?

When children taste sugar and sweet flavors often, they learn to prefer these sweet flavors more and more. Offering beverages without added sugars can help children learn to like foods and beverages that are not as sweet. Here are some ways to get kids excited about drinking water:

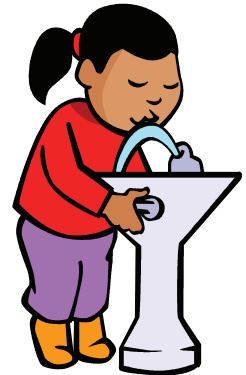
- ▶ **Prepare pitchers of water together.** Children learn about drinking water when they help. Young children can help bring paper cups to the table, and children 4 years and older can pour water into pitchers.
- ▶ **Drink water and kids will too.** They learn from watching you.



- ▶ **Encourage good dental hygiene.** Explain that when sugar is in contact with teeth, it can contribute to cavities. To reduce sugar in the mouth and lower cavity risk, have children drink fluoridated water and floss and brush teeth with fluoride toothpaste. If children do not brush their teeth after eating, they should be offered water to drink to help rinse food from their mouth.
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on keeping their child's healthy smile.

How can I keep drinking water safe?

- ▶ **Keep drinking fountains clean, sanitized, and maintained** to provide adequate drainage. Teach children to drink water from a cup and to drink from a fountain without putting their mouths to the spout.
- ▶ **Provide single-use paper cups by the kitchen sink or a water pitcher** for children to use when they feel thirsty.
- ▶ **Purchasing water for children may be considered a reasonable and allowable cost for CACFP programs** only if safe drinking water is not available in the facility.
- ▶ **Ice cubes pose a choking hazard to children under 4 years old.** (See Appendix A for more information.)



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

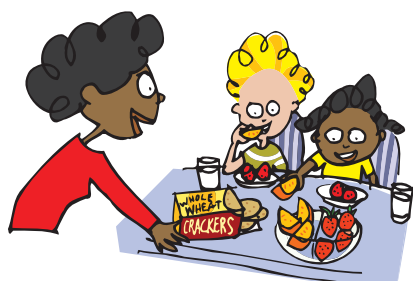
Locate safe water sources inside and outside the child care facility or home. They are located:

How will you make water available throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors?

Make sure that water is freely accessible to children, with clean cups to drink from when appropriate. Put a check mark next to the ideas you will try next month.

- Small pitchers of water**
- Kitchen sink faucet**
- Water fountain**
- Water jugs on the playground**
- Other ideas:**

Help keep kids healthy by keeping foods safe. Young children are especially at risk for having foodborne illnesses because their bodies and immune systems are still developing. You can help prevent foodborne illness in the children you care for by following these four simple steps to food safety.*



- **CLEAN:** Wash hands, utensils, and cutting boards with warm water and soap before and after contact with raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- **SEPARATE:** Keep raw meat and poultry apart from foods that won't be cooked.
- **COOK:** Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes foodborne illness.
- **CHILL:** Use appropriate thermometers (food, oven, refrigerator) to ensure that hot food stays hot, cold food stays cold, and that perishable foods do not remain in the “danger zone” (40 °F to 140 °F).

CLEAN

Everything that touches food should be clean—starting with your hands.

Make Handwashing a Habit

- ▶ **Wash your hands with warm water and soap**, scrubbing all parts of the hands for at least 20 seconds before and after preparing, serving, handling, and eating food. When handling food, wash your hands when you switch between tasks, like after handling raw meat and before handling fresh produce or other ready-to-eat foods.
- ▶ **Also wash your hands after going to the bathroom**, changing diapers, coughing, sneezing, touching animals, handling garbage, or tending to someone who is sick or injured. Dry hands with a clean paper towel, and use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open doors.
- ▶ **Assist children with washing their hands before meals** as well as before and after helping with food preparation.



* *The food safety guidelines contained in this tip sheet are based on recommendations of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). Providers should check with their local health department or sponsoring organization for the specific food safety requirements in the communities they serve.*

Keep It Clean

- ▶ **Always start preparing food with clean cutting boards, pots, pans, utensils, and counter tops.**
- ▶ **Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot soapy water** after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next. This is especially important before and after preparing raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- ▶ **Use clean towels or paper towels to wipe kitchen surfaces, counter tops, sinks, and tables.** Dirty towels and sponges often collect and spread bacteria, instead of removing them. **TIP: To kill germs, put damp sponges in the microwave for 1 minute on full power or through a full wash-dry cycle in the dishwasher.**
- ▶ **After washing and drying, you may choose to sanitize the food preparation surfaces** with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Spray surfaces or immerse cutting boards and utensils with the bleach solution, and let surfaces air dry.
- ▶ **Do not allow books, backpacks, or other items** to be placed on tables or counters where food will be prepared or served.

Clean and Prepare

- ▶ **Rinse all fresh fruits and vegetables just before peeling, eating, cutting, or cooking.** Under running water, rub produce briskly with your hands and scrub firm-skinned fruits and vegetables with a clean produce brush to remove dirt and germs. Some vegetables like lettuce, celery, and broccoli should be broken apart before rinsing to remove dirt between the different layers.
- ▶ **Before opening cans of food, wash the top of the can under clean running water.** Then, dry the can with a clean cloth or paper towel.
- ▶ **Do not rinse raw fish, seafood, meat, and poultry.** Bacteria in these raw juices can splash and spread to other foods and surfaces. Cooking foods thoroughly will kill harmful bacteria.

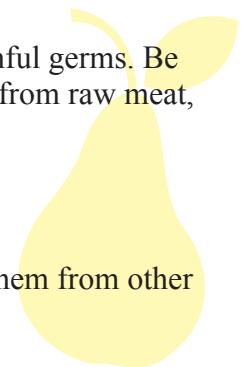


SEPARATE

Separate foods that are ready to eat from those that are raw or that might contain harmful germs. Be sure to separate foods at each step of food handling. Keep fruits and vegetables away from raw meat, poultry, and seafood while buying, storing, or preparing them.

Purchase and Store

- ▶ **Place raw seafood, meat, and poultry in plastic bags when food shopping.** Separate them from other foods in your grocery cart and bags.
- ▶ **Store raw seafood, meat, and poultry on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator,** so juices don't drip onto other foods.



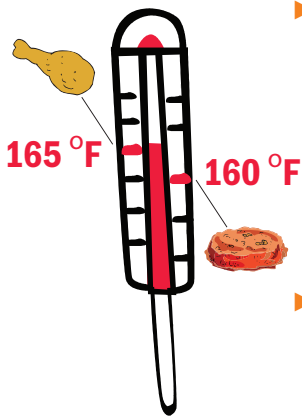
Prepare and Serve

- ▶ **Use one clean cutting board for fresh produce or ready-to-eat food items and a separate one for raw seafood, meat, and poultry.** Label the cutting boards or use different colored cutting boards so there is no confusion.
- ▶ **Always use a clean plate to serve and eat food.** Never place cooked food on a dirty plate or cutting board that held raw meat, poultry, seafood, or eggs.



COOK

- ▶ **Never thaw foods on the kitchen counter or at room temperature.** Defrost foods on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight. Another option is to place food that is either packaged or contained within an air-tight bag or container under cold, running tap water until fully thawed. Only a thin stream of running water is needed. For a quick thaw, use the defrost option on a microwave oven, but only if you are going to cook the meat immediately after it is thawed.



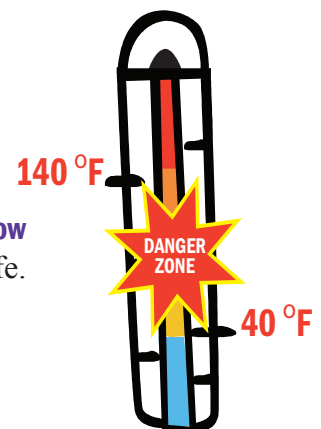
- ▶ **Use a food thermometer to check temperatures to determine when a meat, fish, poultry, or egg dish is fully cooked.** Do not judge whether a food is cooked thoroughly by its color or texture. Cook ground beef, pork, veal, or lamb to 160 °F; egg dishes to 160 °F; and poultry, casseroles, or leftovers to 165 °F. See this chart for more detail on minimum internal temperatures and how long to hold different food at that temperature:
- ▶ **Use a clean food thermometer to measure the internal temperature.** Insert it far enough into the food to get a good reading. Place it in the thickest part of the meat, without touching the bone.

- ▶ **Cover food, and stir, rotate, and/or flip food periodically to help foods cook evenly in a microwave oven.** Doing so will prevent the food from having “cold spots,” which can hold bacteria. Always follow cooking instructions on food packages, and use microwave-safe cookware.

CHILL

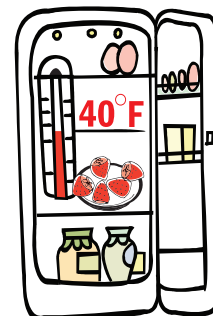
Be Careful in the "Danger Zone"

- ▶ **The “danger zone” is the temperature range 40 °F to 140 °F where bacteria grow most rapidly.** Pay close attention to *time and temperature* to keep foods safe.
- ▶ **Keep hot foods hot (140 °F or above) and cold foods cold (40 °F or below)** in order to minimize the amount of time foods spend in the danger zone.



Handle Foods Carefully

- ▶ **Keep the refrigerator at 40 °F or below.** Keep the freezer at 0 °F or below. Use thermometers designed for each location and check the temperatures regularly, according to your local health department's recommendations or policies.
- ▶ **Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than a total of 2 hours.** If the temperature is over 90 °F where the food is out of the refrigerator (such as at a picnic or field trip), food should not be left out more than 1 hour.
- ▶ **Chill perishable foods promptly (these include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers).** Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers as soon as possible but no longer than 2 hours after purchase, preparation, or serving.
- ▶ **Divide large amounts of cooked leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.** Divide large cuts of meat or roasts into smaller pieces before refrigerating.
- ▶ **Reheat *all* leftovers to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F,** and discard perishable food left out more than 2 hours (or 1 hour during warm weather if the outdoor temperature is above 90 °F).



Common Food Safety Questions for Child Care Programs

Q: What should I do if I did not take the meat or poultry out of the freezer before cooking?

A: For a quick thaw, defrost food on a plate in the microwave oven. Another option is to place food that is either packaged or contained within an air-tight bag or container under cold, running tap water until fully thawed. Only a thin stream of running water is needed. Cook immediately after thawing.

Q: How long can I keep leftovers before freezing or discarding?

A: Check with your sponsoring organization or local health department for recommendations or policies. Even if food does not look or smell bad, discard or freeze leftover foods within 3-4 days.

Q: I packed lunches for a field trip. How do I keep them safe when traveling?

A: Prepare cooked foods such as meats for sandwiches or pasta for salads the day before, so they have time to chill.

- Freeze sandwiches (remove lettuce and tomato) to keep them cold longer.
- Immediately before leaving, use a cooler to pack food right from the refrigerator. Add enough ice or gel packs to keep food cold, and discard food once the cooling source thaws. Single-serving boxed juice drinks could be partially frozen as a cold source for food, but might not defrost by lunchtime.
- Consider packing beverages in a different cooler—the beverage cooler may be opened more often, so keeping drinks and food separate ensures the food stays cooler longer.
- Tip: In the summer, eat foods shortly after they are prepared.



Q: How do I select safe food and keep it safe from the grocery store to my child care program?

A: There are many ways you can choose safe foods and keep them safe until you return to your child care program.

- In the store, select cold foods last.
- Do not buy foods that are past the “sell by,” “use by,” or any other expiration dates.
- Place meat, poultry, and seafood in plastic bags.
- Separate foods in your shopping cart.



- Keep a cooler in your car to transport perishable foods, and go straight to your child care program.
- Always refrigerate perishable foods within 2 hours, except if the temperature outside is 90 °F or more, which reduces this time to within 1 hour.

Q: What should I do if I suspect a child in my care has a foodborne illness?

A: Follow your State agency or sponsoring organization’s standard policies and procedures for getting medical care for children who become sick for any reason, and follow any State or local policies on preparing for and reporting a suspected foodborne illness.

- It is important to preserve up to 3 days of samples of all food served to children, as well as the packaging the food came in. This way, it can be determined if food caused the illness and which food it was. Also be sure to note what the symptoms were and when they began.



Activities

How can I put this information into practice?

Read the following story. Think about whether the four steps to food safety were followed.

Ms. Maria began preparing lunch for the children at ABC Daycare after washing her hands and putting on a hairnet. There is chicken frying in the pan, and some more raw chicken on the cutting board. She is happy the raw chicken defrosted fully overnight after she left the package on the kitchen counter. Ms. Maria decided to make fruit salad. She moved the raw chicken onto a plate and used the same cutting board to slice a honeydew melon in half. She cut it into bite-sized pieces and placed the pieces in a bowl on the counter. She put the other half of the melon on a plate before putting it in the refrigerator. She noticed the refrigerator thermometer read 46 °F.

By this time, the chicken in the pan were nicely browned. Ms. Maria cut a piece of chicken and saw that the inside was no longer pink. “Looks done to me,” she said, and placed the cooked chicken pieces on a tray. With her bare hands, she took the rest of the raw chicken from the plate, rinsed the chicken quickly in the sink, and put the chicken pieces in the warm pan. Then, she walked back to the refrigerator and took out a bag of red grapes. She ate a few grapes, and then put a few handfuls of grapes into the bowl

with the melon. Ms. Maria took a can of peaches from the shelf, used a can opener to open the can, and put the peaches into the bowl of fruit. As she put the can opener back in the drawer, she said, “What a colorful fruit salad!”

Ms. Anna came into the kitchen after playing with the children outside. She put on an apron and stirred the mashed potatoes in the bowl. She pulled the spoon out of the bowl and tasted the mashed potatoes. She said, “This tastes good,” and put the spoon back into the bowl. She called the children in for lunch and served up the chicken, mashed potatoes, and fruit salad, along with a slice of wheat bread and a cup of milk.

After lunch, Ms. Maria wiped down the counters and tables with a damp sponge and wiped her hands on her apron. She used the same sponge to wash the cutting board with cold water. Then, she started to put away the leftovers before she went to the grocery store. Ms. Anna came into the kitchen as she was leaving for the day at 5:30 p.m. and found the fruit salad still sitting on the counter. She put the bowl in the refrigerator to use the next day. She didn’t want to waste any food!

► **Underline the food safety mistakes in the story above.**

► **Write down the correct action steps for each of the mistakes you found.** What could Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna have done differently to be more food safe? (Use another piece of paper if needed.)

① Ms. Maria should defrost the chicken on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight,
or use another food-safe method of thawing frozen foods.

② _____

③ _____

④ _____

----- Activity Answer Key -----

Answer Key to the Food Safety Tip Sheet Activity

This answer key is for the activity found on the Food Safety tip sheet on page 55. The food safety mistakes are underlined below.

Ms. Maria began preparing lunch for the children at ABC Daycare after washing her hands and putting on a hairnet. There is chicken frying in the pan, and some more raw chicken on the cutting board. She is happy the (1) raw chicken defrosted fully overnight after she left the package on the kitchen counter. Ms. Maria decided to make fruit salad. She moved the raw chicken onto a plate and (2, 3, 4) used the same cutting board to slice a honeydew melon in half. She cut it into bite-sized pieces and placed the pieces in a bowl on the counter. She (5) put the other half of the melon on a plate before putting it in the refrigerator. She noticed the (6) refrigerator thermometer read 46 °F.

By this time, the chicken in the pan were nicely browned. Ms. Maria (7) cut a piece of chicken and saw that the inside was no longer pink. “Looks done to me,” she said, and placed the cooked chicken pieces on a tray. (8) With her bare hands, she took the rest of the raw chicken from the plate, (9) rinsed the chicken quickly in the sink, and put the chicken pieces in the warm pan. Then, she walked back to the refrigerator and took out a bag of red grapes. (10, 11) She ate a few grapes, and then put a few handfuls of grapes into the bowl with the melon. Ms. Maria (12, 13) took a can of peaches from the shelf, used a can opener to open the can, and put the peaches into the bowl of fruit. As she (14) put the can opener back in the drawer, she said, “What a colorful fruit salad!”

Ms. Anna came into the kitchen after playing with the children outside. (15) She put on an apron and stirred the mashed potatoes in the bowl. She pulled the spoon out of the bowl and tasted the mashed potatoes. She said, “This tastes good,” and (16, 17) put the spoon back into the bowl. She (18, 19) called the children in for lunch and served up the chicken, mashed potatoes, and fruit salad, along with a slice of wheat bread and a cup of milk.

After lunch, Ms. Maria (20) wiped down the counters and tables with a damp sponge and (21) wiped her hands on her apron. She (22) used the same sponge to (23) wash the cutting board with cold water. Then, she started to put away the leftovers before she went to the grocery store. Ms. Anna came into the kitchen as she was leaving for the day at (24) 5:30 p.m. and found the fruit salad still sitting on the counter. She put the bowl in the refrigerator to use the next day. She didn’t want to waste any food!

The correct action step for each mistake is written below. Review the appropriate section of the Food Safety tip sheet on pages 55-59 for more detail on the answer.

- 1** Ms. Maria should defrost the chicken on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator overnight, or use another food-safe method of thawing frozen foods. **(Chill)**
- 2** Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna should always prepare food with clean cutting boards, utensils, plates, trays, and counter tops. **(Clean)**
- 3** Ms. Maria should use separate cutting boards and knives when handling raw chicken and fruits. Use one clean cutting board and knife for the raw chicken, and a separate cutting board and knife to cut the melon. **(Separate)**
- 4** Ms. Maria should rinse the honeydew melon before cutting it. **(Clean)**
- 5** The cut half of the honeydew melon should be covered before placing it in the refrigerator. **(Chill)**
- 6** The refrigerator temperature should be below 41° F. **(Chill)**
- 7** Ms. Maria should properly insert a clean food thermometer into the chicken to check that the internal temperature has reached 165 °F. **(Cook)**
- 8** Ms. Maria should wash her hands when switching between tasks, like after handling raw chicken and before touching the bag of grapes. **(Clean)**
- 9** Ms. Maria should put the chicken directly in the pan to cook it to the proper internal temperature. **(Clean)**
- 10** Ms. Maria should wash her hands after eating the grapes and before preparing the fruit salad. **(Clean)**
- 11** Ms. Maria should wash the grapes. **(Clean)**
- 12** Ms. Maria should wash and dry the top of the can of peaches before opening it. **(Clean)**
- 13** See answer for **#2**.
- 14** Ms. Maria should wash the can opener after using it. **(Clean)**
- 15** Ms. Anna should wash her hands after playing with the children, before coming into the kitchen to prepare food, and before serving food to the children. It is recommended that Ms. Anna wear a hair restraint (like a hat or hairnet) to keep her hair from falling into food, equipment, and utensils. **(Clean)**
- 16** Ms. Anna should use a separate, clean spoon to taste the mashed potatoes. The same spoon that is being used to mix the mashed potatoes should not be used for tasting. **(Clean and Separate)**
- 17** See answer for **#2**.
- 18** Ms. Maria and Ms. Anna should assist children with washing their hands before they sit down for lunch. **(Clean)**
- 19** See answer for **#15**.
- 20** The same sponge used to wipe countertops should not be used to wash the cutting board or dishes. Instead of using a sponge, Ms. Maria could use clean towels or single-use paper towels to wipe the counters and tables. If using a sponge to clean, sanitize it between uses to kill germs. Sponges should be sanitized often. **(Clean)**
- 21** Ms. Maria should wash her hands instead of wiping them on her apron. **(Clean)**
- 22** See answer for **#20**.
- 23** The cutting board should be washed in hot, soapy water, instead of in cold water. **(Clean)**
- 24** Ms. Anna should throw away the fruit salad. The fruit salad should have been put in the refrigerator promptly after lunch, or within 2 hours of preparation. **(Chill)**

Circle any food safety mistakes that you may have missed above. Not sure why it was a mistake? Go back to the section of the food safety tip referenced at the end of the mistake.

Active play and movement are important for every child’s growth, health, development, and learning.

Although they may seem to be active and energetic, most children do not get the amount of physical activity they need. Research shows that young children in child care still spend a lot of their time sitting or lying down. Children should not be seated or still for more than 15 minutes at a time, except during meals or naps.

Children need a healthy balance of high-energy active play like running and climbing, as well as passive play like sitting in the sand box. Children spend many hours each day in your child care program, so providing the recommended amount of active play is important in helping children establish healthy habits.



How much time should be planned for active play every day?

Every child care program should promote children’s active play every day. Time planned for outdoor play and physical activity depends on the age group and weather conditions. Vary activities between **structured play** (led by the adult caregiver) and **free play** (not led by an adult).

- ▶ **Toddlers (12 months to 3 years old)** Provide 60 to 90 minutes per day for moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- ▶ **Preschoolers (3 to 6 years old)** Provide 90 to 120 minutes per day for moderate to vigorous physical activity.



Moderate and **vigorous** physical activity will make children breathe harder and make their hearts beat faster than when they are not active.

Moderate Physical Activity

- Walking
- Playing on outdoor play equipment, moving about, swinging, or climbing
- Playing hopscotch, 4-square, or kickball

Vigorous Physical Activity

- Running, jogging, skipping, race-walking, walking quickly up a hill
- Running games
- Jumping rope, doing jumping jacks, jumping games

Active play time does not have to occur in a single session. Short bursts of activity work well for young children.

Plan these activities throughout the course of the day in 10- to 20-minute intervals. For example: 15 minutes of dancing after naptime and 20 minutes of free play on the playground before lunch.



What types of active play opportunities should I offer?

Children can enjoy skipping, climbing, dancing, and jumping. Daily active play, along with a healthy diet, is important for growing at a healthy weight. Active play helps children develop a variety of large muscle skills. All children should participate in:

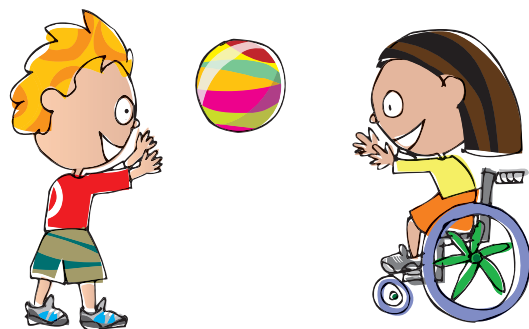
- ▶ **Outdoor play two to three times each day**, depending on the weather.
- ▶ **Noncompetitive activities and games led by adults** that encourage movement two or more times during the day.
- ▶ **Noncompetitive activities that help children develop and practice movement skills** that involve large muscle groups and whole body movement.



How can I help children be physically active every day?

- ▶ **Be a good role model.** Participate with children in activities and show them that you enjoy active play every day.
- ▶ **Be weather-ready.** When weather is too severe for outdoor play, dance to music indoors and tell or read stories that children act out physically.
- ▶ **Create opportunities for safe active play indoors and outdoors.** Use toys and equipment that are the right size for the age of the children. This might include bean bags, push toys, building blocks, tricycles, and bicycles. Children may be playing with certain toys for the first time. Show children how to play with these toys safely.
- ▶ **Use space wisely.** Many games and activities meant for outdoors and large spaces can be changed for use in limited, indoor spaces. For example, use colored masking tape to create pathways for children to follow as they jump or walk.
- ▶ **Keep children moving.** Encourage all children to participate by playing games that do not have them sitting still for a long period of time or “out” of the game early.
- ▶ **Help everyone be active.** Plan activities that allow all children the opportunity to play, including those with special needs.

Note: Strollers, high chairs, harnesses, and leashes limit children’s ability to move. Infants and children need physical activity for development of muscles and movement skills, so moving around and exploring their environment without physical restraints are critical.



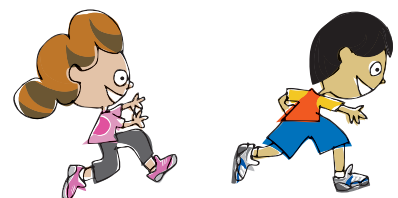
Activities

How can I add more active play in my child care program?

Think about your weekly activity schedule. Add more active play to every day! Which of these activity ideas will you try with the 2- to 6-year-old children in your care? Put a check mark next to the ones that you will try next week.

- Allow kids to roll, pass, or kick balls to each other.** Play catch with a soft or bouncy ball.
- Create an obstacle course.** Children love to tumble over pillows, crawl through open boxes, and jump into hula hoops.
- Set up relay races or jumping games.** Dance to music or sing songs about what they are learning (for example: body parts, fruits and vegetables, or colors). Play tag, chasing games, “red light, green light,” or “musical frogs” (similar to musical chairs but with “lily pads” or pillows on the floor). Try **noncompetitive games** where **all** children play, instead of games where children **wait** to play or must be picked to participate.
- Play Octopus Tag by drawing two lines at least 20 feet apart.** When the “octopus” in the middle says “hungry!”, the other children (the “fish”) should try to cross to the other side while the octopus tries to tag them. When a fish is tagged, he becomes the octopus’s arm and has to hold hands with the octopus, working with him to try to tag the other fish. The last fish left wins!
- Add fun to games by using pool noodles, beach balls, and hula hoops.** Try *Noodle Limbo*, *Cooperation Carry*, or *Musical Hoops*. Visit www.headstartbodystart.org for ideas.
- Set up a hula hoop game.** With all children standing in a single file line, give the first child in the line one hula hoop to hold over his or her head. Children will pull the hula hoop down over their bodies to the floor, step out of it, and give the hoop to the next person in line.
- Act out different animals** – hop like a rabbit, jump like a kangaroo, or waddle like a duck!
- Teach children math, science, and language concepts** through games involving movement. For example, children can learn to count by tossing bean bags into a bowl.
- Plan a “movement parade.”** March around the room or outside, while calling out different movements children can do: hop, skip, leap, twirl, twist, jump, stomp, and more.
- Provide two or more 5- to 10-minute periods of adult-led active play** or games that promote physical activity every day. Try “follow-the-leader” or walk in your neighborhood or park. Play musical movement games, such as “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes,” “Hokey Pokey,” and “If You’re Happy and You Know It.”
- See the *Let's Move Child Care Web site* <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/content/hkhf/home/activities.html> for more activity ideas.**

List some other ideas you have for active play.



Active play is physical activity. Engaging in active play with children is good role-modeling, and a great way to relieve stress.

Children learn behaviors from adults. Encouraging children to be physically active each day can help them develop a positive attitude toward movement, dance, sports, and other physical activity. Playing actively with children in your care can help them develop healthy habits.



Why is it important to encourage active play?

By moving more and sitting less, children learn to live in a healthful way. When children participate in active play, they develop their large muscles. Large muscle development is important for movements such as walking, balancing, sitting up straight, kicking, jumping, lifting, reaching, and throwing a ball. Large muscle development also supports the development of small muscles, which helps with skills such as holding small objects and turning pages in a book.

Active play also develops children's confidence in their ability to be physically active. You should encourage active play every day because:

- ▶ **Active play** helps children build their bones.
- ▶ **Habits are learned early in life**, so being active while in child care can create lifelong physical activity habits.
- ▶ **Children may spend a lot of time at home in front of televisions** and computers instead of playing actively. Give them good habits while they are in your care!



What should I do to encourage active play?

To promote children's active play, **you** can:

- ▶ **Participate with children** during active play time.
- ▶ **Plan and encourage physical activities** that are appropriate and safe.
- ▶ **Lead activities two or more times per day** that promote children's physical movement.
- ▶ **Encourage movement** by getting children actively moving often.
- ▶ **Wear clothing and footwear that permits easy and safe movement**, and let families know to dress children in appropriate clothing and footwear. (See the *Promote Active Play Through Written Policies and Practices* tip sheet on page 69 for more information.)
- ▶ **Limit "screen time,"** such as TV and DVD viewing, video games, recreational computer use, and other electronic devices.

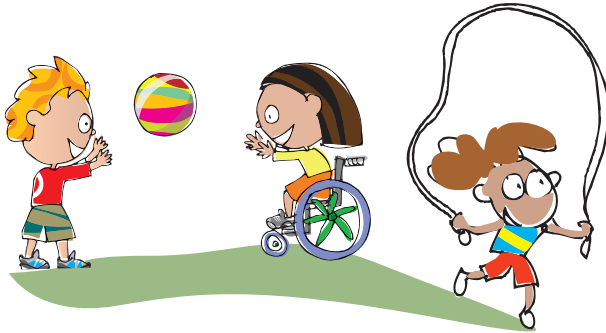
Activities

What are some specific ways I can encourage active play every day in my child care program?

Use every opportunity to show the children that you believe physical activity is important.

Which of these ideas will you try next week? Mark your choices.

- Encourage active play by offering children a variety of options** such as hula hoops, balls, and jump ropes and letting them choose what they want to do.



- Make a chart for tracking physical activity with children's and child care providers' names.** Have children place a sticker or a stamp by their name every time they participate in active play. Send ideas home to families so they can continue to encourage active play at home.

- Let families know that physical activity is an important part of the day** when children are in your care. Add physical activity messages to newsletters, posters, and posted schedules.
http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_36.pdf

- Display posters and pictures of children and adults being physically active.** Read books that promote physical activity as part of the story.

- Request that families dress children in clothing, shoes, and outerwear** that allow movement and play outside, or bring clothes to change into for playing outdoors.

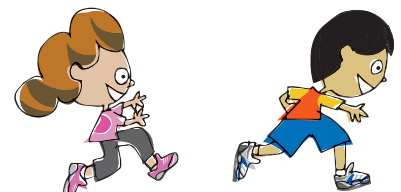
- Make activity cards and use them for a game** by having children select a card and then demonstrate the activity. Activity cards are easy to make – use index cards or square sheets of paper. On one side of the card, paste a picture of a physical activity movement. The child who chooses the card will show everyone else how to do the movement.

- See the *Provide Opportunities for Active Play* tip sheet**

- Include physical activity in your special events and family events.** Lead children and their families in playing *Octopus Tag* or *Musical Hoops*. Add fun by using pool noodles, beach balls, and hula hoops.

List other ideas to show children that physical activity is fun:

- Be a good role model.** Participate with children in activities and show them through your actions that active play is an important and fun part of the day. Make positive comments about physical activity.



A written policy is a statement you write about the importance you give to something in your child care program. You can use such a statement in your program handbook, descriptions, or advertisements, and in the materials you give to parents to tell how important active play (physical activity) and movement are, and how these will be a big part of the day the children spend with you.



Why are written policies that promote physical activity important?

- ▶ **Policy statements can help child care providers and families** understand why daily physical activity is so important for children's health, development, and weight.
- ▶ **Policies describing outdoor physical activity can encourage outdoor play** in most weather conditions. This can help families understand the need to make sure their children are dressed appropriately for the weather each day.
- ▶ **When new staff start working at the child care program,** written policies will help them learn about responsibilities and expectations at the program.

What types of physical activity policies and practices should I have?

The best child care programs have written policies that include the benefits of physical activity and ways for children to participate in fun active play. When writing or revising policies, include the:

- ▶ **Benefits:** The benefits of physical activity and outdoor play should be listed. (See the *Let's Move! Child Care* Web site for more information <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/content/hkhf/home/activities.html>.)
- ▶ **Duration:** Children should spend 60 to 120 minutes each day outdoors depending on their age and weather conditions. Policies should promote movement over the course of the day through two or more structured activities or games that are led by a caregiver. Policies should also describe what will be done to ensure active play on days with more extreme weather (examples: very hot, very cold, or thunderstorms).
- ▶ **Water availability:** Make sure drinking water is freely available, both indoors and outdoors, throughout the day. (See the *Make Water Available* tip sheet on page 51 for more information.)
- ▶ **Setting:** Covered areas for shade and shelter should be available outdoors.
- ▶ **Clothing and Footwear:** Clothing should permit easy movement that enables children to participate fully in active play. Footwear should provide support for running and climbing.

- ▶ **Sunscreen:** Children should be protected from the sun by using shade, sun-protective clothing, and “broad-spectrum” sunscreen with UVB-ray and UVA-ray protection of SPF 15 or higher, with permission from parents or guardians.
- ▶ **Safety procedures:** Activity areas should be clear of sharp objects, trash, or other objects that could cause injury. Proper safety equipment should be used for the age of the children, for example, soft balls and bats should be used instead of hard balls and bats with younger children.

What is an example of a written policy on physical activity?

There are many tools to help you write a physical activity policy for your child care program and communicate its importance to staff and families. One way to begin is with an assessment of the child care center or home.

Children attending ABC Child Care shall play outdoors daily when weather and air quality conditions do not pose a significant health risk. Time planned for outdoor play and physical activity depends on the age group and weather conditions. Activities shall include structured play (led by the adult caregiver) and free play (not led by an adult).

- **Toddlers (12 months to 3 years old)** shall participate in 60 to 90 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. **Preschoolers (3 to 6 years old)** shall participate in 90 to 120 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- **Children shall be dressed appropriately for the weather**, including wearing appropriate seasonal clothing and footwear, so they can participate fully, move freely, and play safely.
- **Child care providers will inform parents, caregivers, and families** that children need to be dressed appropriately for the current weather conditions to play outdoors.

Children should wear clothing appropriate for the current weather:

- **Snow:** heavy coat, waterproof boots, hat, and mittens.
- **Rain:** raincoat and waterproof boots.
- **Different temperatures during the day:** layers of clothing.

Footwear should provide support for running and climbing. Examples of **appropriate** footwear include sneakers, gym shoes, and other shoes with rubber soles that enclose the feet and will not come off easily. **Examples of inappropriate clothing and footwear include:**

- **Footwear that can come off while running**, or that does not provide support for climbing (examples: flip-flops, beach sandals, and clogs).
- **Clothing that can catch on playground equipment** (examples: clothes with drawstrings or loops).
- **Clothing that does not protect children** from the current weather conditions.

Activities

How can I implement policies and practices that promote physical activity?

Think about how you communicate with staff and families to make sure everyone understands and implements the policies and expectations. If possible, include written policy statements on physical activity in child care program or staff policy handbooks. Share these policies with families through a newsletter or take-home flyer. Here are some these ideas to ensure that these policies are understood and implemented.

How can you make everyone aware of the policies? Mark your choices.

- Post the written policies** in a location where everyone can read and be aware of them.
- When new families are registering their children in your child care program**, talk about the existing physical activity policies so they know what to expect. Encourage families to support active play at home.
- Other ideas:** _____

How can you encourage participation in training or education sessions? Mark your choices.

- Provide mini-education programs to parents** so they understand the reasons for the policies for physical activity and outdoor play. Use examples of existing physical activity best practices, such as those items listed in the 'Healthy Checklist' on the *Let's Move! Child Care* Web site. <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/welcome.html>
- Have staff participate in training sessions on physical activity at least twice a year.** Staff training should be provided by a qualified child care trainer with expertise in physical activity for young children.
- Other ideas:** _____

How can you implement these policies every day? Mark your choices.

- Encourage all children to try new activities and celebrate with children when they participate at any skill level.** Focus on self-challenge, and find a new goal for each child according to his or her skill level. For example, say, "You did three hops on one foot. Now can you do four?"
- Schedule active play before mealtimes.** This way, kids will feel hungry for their meal and will behave better, making for a more pleasant mealtime experience for everyone.
- Other ideas:** _____

Young children who spend a lot of time watching TV or playing video and computer games are less likely to be physically active in later childhood.

They are also likely to eat foods that are less healthy, such as soft drinks and fried foods as well as more snacks, and may be more likely to become overweight. In many child care settings, children spend 1 to 3 hours watching TV each day.



How much total screen time* should children be allowed every day, both at child care and at home?

- ▶ **No screen time (TV/video/DVD)** for children under the age of 2.
- ▶ **No more than 1 to 2 hours per day** of high-quality programming for children over the age of 2.

*** Screen time includes TV and DVD viewing, video games, recreational computer use, and other electronic devices.**

How much screen time should children be allowed while in child care?

Children under the age of 2	No screen time, including TV/video/DVD viewing or computer use.
Children over 2 years old	Only 30 minutes total of screen time per week.
	No more than 15-minute increments of computer use.
All Ages	No screen time during meals or snack time.

Special Notes:

- Parents and families should be informed if screen media are used in child care programs.
- Screen time should only be for educational or physical activity programs.
- All screen time should not have any commercials or advertising.

Why do we need to limit screen time use?

Screen time can take away from activities that help brain development and social skills, such as talking, playing, singing, and reading.

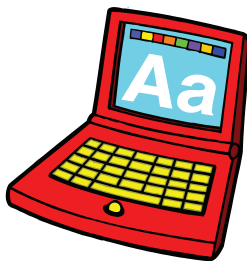
▶ It is important to limit TV and DVD time because:

- Having the TV on can disturb children's sleep and play, even if it is on in the background.
- TV and some DVDs include advertisements for unhealthy foods. Young children cannot tell the difference between programs and advertisements.

▶ It is important to limit video game* playing because:

- The more time children spend playing video games, the more likely they are to have difficulty concentrating in school.
- Many video games contain violence.
- We know from research that, at least for boys, the more time they spend playing video games and watching TV, the less active they are.
- Even video games requiring children to be active while playing the game (called exergames) should be limited. Children might not reach a high level of physical activity when playing these games.

* Video games include those played using a video game console and a TV, a hand-held device such as a cell phone, or a computer.



▶ It is important to limit recreational computer use, even for educational games, because:

- Many Web sites promote less healthy foods.
- Many Web sites include on-screen computer or video games.
- Computer games can impair children's sleep at night, possibly causing them to spend less time in deep sleep. Sleep is important for children's health and development.

Activities

How can I put this information into practice in my child care program?

Replace screen time with creative activities children can do on their own while you are accomplishing other tasks.

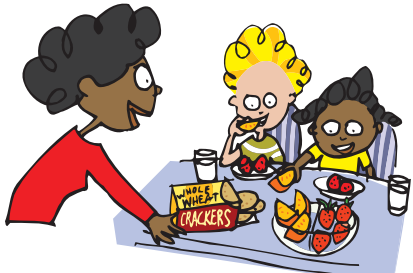
Which of these fun ideas will you try next week? Mark your choices.

- Play music:** Have children make up their own dances. Add wide ribbons and beach balls for more movement.
- Provide toys for children to stack:** For infants and toddlers, provide nesting cups or building blocks.
- Organize puzzle time:** Have easy puzzles children can do alone or in pairs.
- Draw, color, create a sculpture, or use play dough:** Choose a topic of the day and have children draw or create the first thing that comes to mind when they hear the topic. Do easy craft projects, such as coloring or making greeting cards for upcoming holidays or birthdays.
- Other ideas:** _____

Practice good role modeling. Participate in activities with them. Limit cell phone and computer use when children are busy with other activities.

Which of these creative activity ideas will you try with children next week? Mark your choices.

- Conduct a “pretend play” activity:** Cut out shapes in a variety of colors. Have children make a pretend place that each shape represents. Travel from place to place by putting the shapes in various spots both indoors and outdoors.
- Read:** Read books and point to pictures. Have children make up their own stories.
- Encourage extra outdoor play:** Set up a safe obstacle course for children to balance, climb, jump, and hop.
- Act out stories or skits:** Hand out a variety of costume pieces. Have children dress up and act out a play or story.
- Involve children in part of the meal and snack preparation,** as well as clean-up time.
- Encourage children to be active:** Do not allow hand-held video games during active play times.
- See the *Active Play* tip sheets** _____
- Other ideas:** _____



Children under 4 years of age are at the greatest risk of choking.

Almost 90 percent of children who die from choking are **under the age of 4**. Young children are still learning how to chew properly, and they often swallow things whole. Young children also like to put things in their mouths, but their small airways can become easily blocked. Nearly any food can cause choking in children. It is important to make sure that food is served in the appropriate sizes, shapes, and textures to reduce the risk of choking. Always supervise children during eating time.

What type of foods pose choking risks?

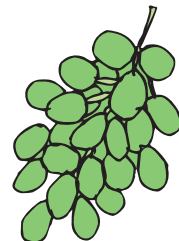
Some foods are easy for young children to choke on when swallowing because they are the same size and shape as a child's airway. For example, peanuts may block the lower airway. A chunk of hot dog or a whole grape may completely block the upper airway. Avoid serving foods that are as wide around as a nickel, which is about the size of a young child's throat. Foods likely to cause choking come in many shapes, sizes, and textures.

Child care providers should not offer to **children under 4 years of age** foods that pose the highest risk for choking. These include foods that are round, tube-shaped, small, hard, thick and sticky, smooth, slippery, or easily molded to stick to the airway. Prevent choking by avoiding these foods or by changing their shape, size, and texture before offering them to children during meals and snacks.

What are some common foods that may cause choking and should not be fed to young children under age 4?

► Firm, smooth, or slippery foods that slide down the throat before chewing, such as:

- whole grapes, cherries, berries, melon balls, or cherry and grape tomatoes
- whole pieces of canned fruit
- hot dog-shaped foods, including sausages, meat sticks, cheese sticks, or toddler hot dogs (even when cut into round slices)

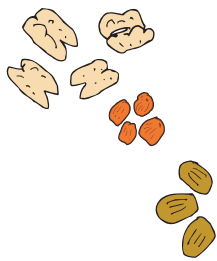
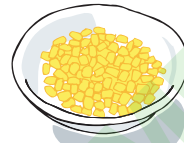
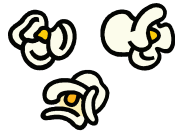


- peanuts and nuts
- whole beans
- hard or round candy, jelly beans



▶ **Small, dry, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole, such as:**

- popcorn
- hard pretzels
- potato and corn chips, or other similar snack foods
- small pieces of raw vegetable (like raw carrot rounds, baby carrots, string beans, or celery), or other raw or partially-cooked hard vegetables
- apples or other hard pieces of raw fruit, especially those with hard pits or seeds
- cooked or raw whole kernel corn
- raw green peas
- peanuts, nuts, and seeds (like sunflower or pumpkin seeds)



- plain wheat germ
- whole-grain kernels (like rice, wheat berries)
- crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels

▶ **Sticky or tough foods that do not break apart easily and are hard to remove from the airway, such as:**

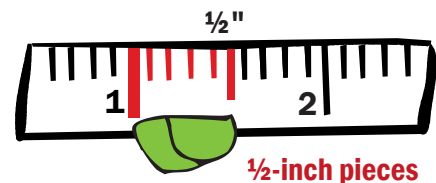
- chunks or spoonfuls of peanut butter or nut and seed butters
- large, hard pieces of uncooked dried fruits or vegetables
- tough meat or large chunks of meat
- large chunks of cheese, especially string cheese
- fish with bones
- marshmallows
- chewing gum
- chewy fruit snacks
- caramels, gum drops, and gummy candies, or other gooey or sticky candy



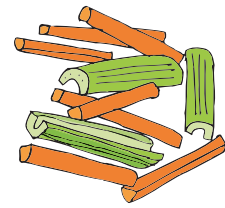
How can I serve table foods so they are easy for young children to chew?

You can help reduce the risks of choking on some foods by changing their shape, size, or texture, and by serving certain foods in small, manageable bites. Offer 2- to 4-year-olds the same variety of foods as the rest of the children in your care, but prepared in forms that are easy for them to chew and swallow. Use these simple tips to make these foods safe options for 2- to 4-year-old children.

- ▶ **Cook foods until soft enough** to pierce easily with a fork.
- ▶ **Cut soft food into thin slices or small pieces** —no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ "). Cut soft, round foods, like hot dogs or string cheese, into short strips rather than round pieces.
- ▶ **Remove all bones** from fish, chicken, and meat before cooking.



- ▶ **Grind up meat**, chicken, and other tough foods.
- ▶ **Cook food such as carrots** and celery until slightly soft. Then, cut into sticks.
- ▶ **Mash or purée food** until it is soft.
- ▶ **Remove seeds** and hard pits from fruit.
- ▶ **Cut grapes, cherries, berries, or melon balls in half lengthwise**, and then cut into smaller pieces.



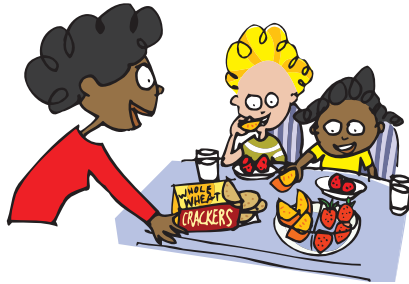
- ▶ **Grate or thinly slice** cheeses.
- ▶ **Chop peanuts, nuts, and seeds finely** or grind before adding to prepared food.
- ▶ **Spread peanut butter, nut butter, or seed butter thinly** on crackers. Or, mix with applesauce and cinnamon and spread thinly on bread. Use only creamy, not chunky, peanut, nut, and seed butters.
- ▶ **Avoid serving foods** that are as wide around as a nickel.

How can I minimize choking risk and make sure children are eating safely?

- ▶ **Make sure children are seated upright when eating** and not distracted. Keep mealtimes calm by avoiding too much excitement or distractions. Eating should take place in a quiet area away from noise and distractions, such as TV, loud music, and activities.
- ▶ **Sit with children and always actively supervise them while they are eating.** Monitor the size of food served and that children are eating properly (for example, not stuffing their mouths full). A choking child might not make any noise, so adults must keep their eyes on children who are eating.
- ▶ **Encourage children to eat slowly** and to chew completely before swallowing. Teach children to eat one bite at a time, and chew and swallow food before talking or laughing.
- ▶ **Make sure child care menu items reflect the development abilities** of the ages of children served. For example, for **children under 4 years of age**, serve shredded carrots and chopped tomatoes instead of baby carrots and cherry tomatoes. Also, serve mashed sweet potatoes instead of chunks of sweet potatoes.
- ▶ **Avoid eating “on the run”** in the car or moving vehicle. The driver cannot help a choking child and may be the only adult in the vehicle.
- ▶ **Make sure that children do not eat during high activity levels.** Eating while walking, running, or other active playing may increase a child’s risk of choking.
- ▶ **Monitor activities and games.** Avoid children’s games that involve catching a food item in the mouth or stuffing large amounts of food into the mouth.



Some children in your care may have food allergies, so it is important to be aware of the ingredients in all foods before serving. Watch children carefully when serving foods that may cause an allergic reaction.



Food allergy symptoms usually develop within a few minutes to two hours after eating the offending food. Food allergies can even occur the first time a food is eaten. No medication can be taken to prevent food allergies. The only way to prevent an allergic reaction is to strictly avoid the food that can cause a reaction. Medications, such as epinephrine, that are prescribed by a doctor are used to control symptoms of an allergic reaction after they occur. Emergency treatment

is critical for someone having a severe allergic reaction, called anaphylaxis. If untreated, anaphylaxis can cause coma or death. A written care plan, signed by the child's doctor, should be in place so child care providers know what steps to follow if there is an allergic reaction.

What is a food allergy?

A food allergy is a reaction of the body's immune system to a protein in a food called an allergen. * The reaction can be a serious, life-threatening condition and should be diagnosed by a licensed physician or board-certified allergist. Symptoms of a food allergic reaction may include hives, itchy watery eyes, swelling of lips and throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, difficulty breathing, or loss of consciousness.

*** A food allergen is a substance in food that may cause an allergic reaction in some people.**

What are some foods that cause allergic reactions?

There are eight most common foods that cause an allergic reaction. These foods are called "the top eight allergens" and should be listed on food labels. These foods include:

- ▶ **Cow's Milk** – includes anything made from cow's milk, such as yogurt, cheese, butter, or milk-based formulas. Goat's milk should also be avoided if someone is allergic to cow's milk.
- ▶ **Eggs** – includes whites, yolks, and powdered eggs.



- ▶ **Peanuts** – includes peanut flour and hydrolyzed protein. Check with the child's doctor or review the signed medical statement and care plan on file if peanut oil also needs to be avoided.
- ▶ **Tree nuts** – includes, but is not limited to, walnuts, almonds, hazelnuts, cashews, pistachios, and Brazil nuts. Check with the child's doctor or review the signed medical statement and care plan on file if coconuts or coconut oil also need to be avoided.



- ▶ **Fish** – such as salmon, tuna, and halibut.
- ▶ **Shellfish** – such as crab, lobster, shrimp, clams, mussels, oysters, scallops, and squid.
- ▶ **Soy** – includes soybeans, soy protein, and soy flour. Check with the child’s doctor or review the signed medical statement and care plan on file if soybean oil also needs to be avoided.
- ▶ **Wheat** – includes anything made from wheat, such as bread, pasta, cereal, and crackers. Wheat is sometimes found in ice cream, spaghetti sauce, or hot dogs. Wheat can also be found in modeling clay.

Many of the foods that have the top eight food allergens are good sources of vitamins and minerals, and should be served only to children without allergies to those foods.

There are other foods that can cause an allergic reaction. These foods may include sesame seeds, gelatin, sunflower seeds, beef, chicken, corn, fresh apples, carrots, tomatoes, or bananas.

Is it food allergy or food intolerance?

Other food reactions or sensitivities to foods are known as **food intolerances**. Food allergy is sometimes confused with food intolerance. To find out the difference, a licensed physician or board-certified allergist will go through a list of possible causes for any symptoms. Food intolerances are often temporary and rarely life-threatening.

- ▶ **The most common food intolerance is lactose intolerance**—a reaction that involves the digestive system. If a child who is lactose intolerant drinks milk or eats food made from milk, he or she may experience gas, bloating, and uncomfortable stomach pain.

- ▶ **Gluten intolerance, also known as Celiac disease or “celiac sprue,”** is another food intolerance that may involve the digestive system.



Gluten is a part of wheat, barley, and rye. If a gluten-intolerant child eats foods containing gluten, he or she may experience bloating and gas, diarrhea, constipation, headaches, itchy skin rash, and even mouth sores.

What should I do if a child has a food allergy or food intolerance?

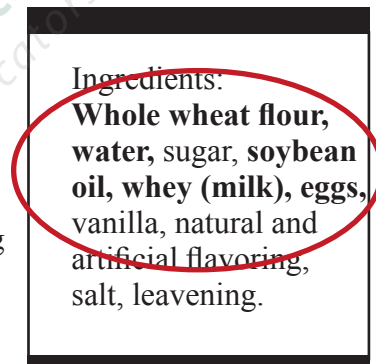
Children could have their first allergic reaction while in your care, so child care staff must be prepared to react quickly and effectively. Food allergy training is recommended for all child care staff, even if a program has no enrolled children with known food allergies.

- ▶ **Arrange for training to be conducted by a child care health consultant,** a health care provider, or other qualified child care trainer with expertise in young children’s health and food allergies. Include information about preventing exposure to specific food allergens, recognizing the symptoms of allergic reactions, and responding to allergic reactions.
- ▶ **Handle food allergies and food intolerances on a case-by-case basis.** If a child has either, be sure to have a medical statement or care plan on file stating the specific food allergy or food intolerance and the specific food or foods that should be avoided and provided instead. The steps to take in case of an allergic reaction should also be included. This medical statement must be signed by a licensed physician or recognized medical authority. Contact your State agency or sponsoring organization if additional guidance is needed.

- ▶ **Talk to the child’s parents or guardians about the child’s food allergies or food intolerances.** Learn about the child’s care plan, as well as what the child knows about what he or she can and cannot eat. The child may not be able to tell the child care provider when he or she is having an allergic reaction to food, so it is important to know the possible symptoms of a reaction.
- ▶ **Know where emergency medications, such as epinephrine,** are stored and how they should be used in case a child has an allergic reaction in your child care program. More than one person should be trained on how to use epinephrine.
- ▶ **Be aware of what is in foods before serving.** Read all food ingredient lists, labels, and check food allergen content statements on packages. Products that contain any of the top eight allergens may have those allergens listed in bold in the ingredient list or may have the allergens listed immediately following the ingredient list.

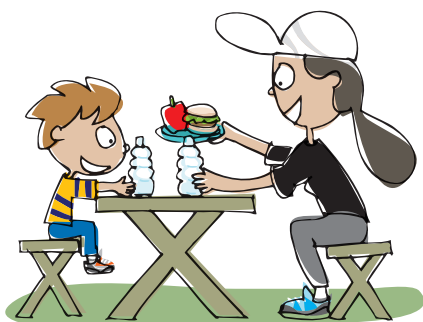
- If a food product contains any of the top eight allergens, it might also have a “Contains” statement on the label. For example, “May contain wheat, milk, and soy ingredients.”

Contains Wheat, Milk, Eggs, and Soy



- Pay attention to labels that also include a statement about being produced on the “same equipment as” or “made in the same facility as” products that contain the specific allergen the child is allergic to—those food products should also be avoided. For example, “Made on the same equipment as products containing peanuts.”
- It is important to know that food companies are not required to have either of these statements on their label. They may list a food allergen only in the ingredient list and it might not be in bold type, so be sure to read the list carefully. Some food companies may list other allergens than the top eight.

- ▶ **Always actively supervise children while they are eating.** Discourage food sharing among children. Pay particular attention during special events such as picnics, field trips, or parties.



- ▶ **Follow the regular menu whenever possible.** If children in your care have food allergies or food intolerances, provide menus to parents and caregivers. Make sure the menu highlights foods that may cause a reaction in their child.

How can a child tell the care provider that they are having an allergic reaction?

- ▶ **A child may try to tell the care provider in their own words if he or she is having an allergic reaction.** If you hear phrases such as these, the child may be trying to describe that he or she is having an allergic reaction.

- “This food is too spicy”
- “My tongue is hot”
- “My tongue feels like there is hair on it”
- “There’s a frog in my throat”
- “My lips feel tight”
- “My mouth feels funny”
- “My mouth itches”
- “It feels like something is stuck in my throat”
- “It feels like there are bugs in my ear”
- “It feels like there is a bump in the back of my throat”

- ▶ **A child may not always be able to tell the care provider in words if he or she is having an allergic reaction.** If you see the child doing some of these behaviors, he or she may be having an allergic reaction.

- If a child is pulling or scratching at his or her tongue, he or she may be having an allergic reaction.
- Some children’s voices may become hoarse or squeaky if they are having an allergic reaction.
- The child’s words may become slurred if their mouth is beginning to swell from an allergic reaction.

How do I reduce the risk of children in my care with either food allergies or food intolerances from having a reaction to food?

Everyone involved in planning, preparing, and serving food should be extremely aware of food allergy risks and be prepared. Staff training, proper documentation, clear communication with families, and careful planning for the possibility of an emergency will ensure a safe environment for children with food allergies. Here are some more steps to take to reduce the risk of children having a reaction to food:

Clean

- ▶ **Child care staff should wash their hands *before and after* preparing and serving foods** for the food-allergic child. Soap should be used, not antibacterial gel sanitizers.



- ▶ **Wipe down counters and tables** with common household cleaners *before and after* meals and snacks.
- ▶ **Be sure to mop up spills properly** to prevent spreading the allergen to other surfaces.
- ▶ **Make sure all children wash their hands *before and after* they eat** so they do not spread food allergens to other areas. The children's faces may need to be wiped clean as well.

Avoid Cross-Contamination

- ▶ **Organize kitchen space** to keep foods for food-allergic children separate from other foods. For example, label pantry and refrigerator shelves that hold foods that are “safe” for the child. Then, inform all staff of the way the kitchen is organized or post information in the program's pantry.
- ▶ **To prevent spreading food allergens from one surface or utensil to another**, prepare foods for the allergic child first.
- ▶ **Be careful to use separate utensils** when preparing and serving food to the food-allergic child.



Sandbox Playcare Childcare Home

Garden City, Kansas
Debbie Tomlin, Owner

Best Practice

My greatest accomplishment in my childcare home related to meal service is feeding the kids nutritious meals and have them actually *like* the meals they are eating.

Offering a healthy meal seems to give the kids more energy (although on some days they don't need the extra energy). They also seem to play better, have less of an "attitude," and get along better with their peers because their tummies are full of the right foods. They don't ask for snacks all day long when they get a balanced meal and a good snack.

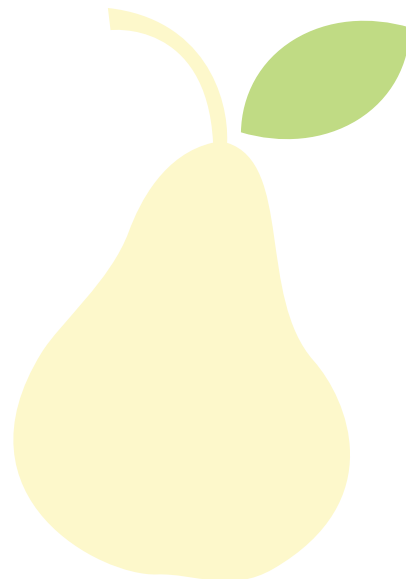


Singing a song
makes trying new
foods easy!

TIP

Don't be afraid to enroll in CACFP. The Federal Government pays you for feeding the kids and they teach you how to eat healthy, not just for you, but for your family also.

State reviewers are also very nice and friendly to you and the kids. My kids love to see them come, so they can tell someone new about their day. At trainings, State reviewers give us ideas on games to play with the kids that keep them moving and songs to sing. I make up some songs just to get the kids to try new foods. We can't expect the kids to try something new if we, as providers, don't try.



Bristol Preschool Child Care Center, Inc.

Bristol, Connecticut
Shirley Anderson

Best Practice

We created a “children’s vegetable garden” at our center.

Teachers plant the seeds with the children and children are responsible for watering and weeding the gardens. During the summer, children actually collected the vegetables, brought them to the kitchen for the cook to prepare, and ate them with their lunch. City children were especially excited with this process, and I believe it encouraged them to eat the vegetables they grew.



Gardening activities
help make mealtime
more meaningful!

TIP

Continue to offer “different foods” and if possible engage children in the process – whether it is growing the vegetables or purchasing them.

If you engage them and encourage them, they will try something new. We also took a closer look at our menus and found ways to have less processed foods offered, which increased whole-grain consumption. We also increase our “outside times” in the morning and afternoon – offering one hour in the morning and at least another hour in the afternoon with “planned” outdoor games versus free play.



Bundle of Joy

Fort Worth, Texas
Lucile McKnight

Best Practice

In my child care home, we offer activities throughout the day that teach the children about foods that are good for the body.

During some of the activities, the children sing along with the tape. They learn how the food we like to eat builds their bodies and makes them strong.

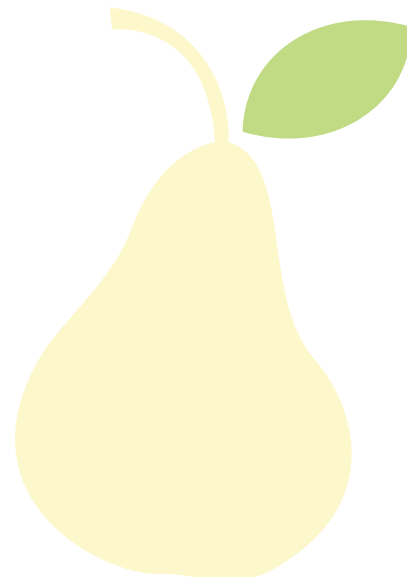


Build fun, healthy activities around the food you serve!

TIP

Find ways to incorporate healthy activities into your homes or center daily before any meal time.

This allows the children to think about the food being served. For example, you can tell them about all the wonderful colors of our veggies. Most of all, tell your children how great foods make our heart healthy and strong.



Youth and Family Outreach

Portland, Maine
Camelia Babson-Haley, Director

Best Practice

In the last year, we have completely transformed the way in which we manage our food program. We have successfully transformed our food production to be completely from scratch.

All of the foods used in the kitchen are whole foods (primarily fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean fresh protein). We have successfully begun to involve the children in understanding where their food comes from by installing four raised garden beds. The children started seedlings in their classrooms, transplanted them to the beds, cared for them during the growing season, and then harvested them for their lunches as the vegetables were ready.

Additionally, we have begun sourcing approximately 50 percent of our food locally. We have fresh bread, English muffins, and rolls delivered weekly from a local bakery that are made specific to our children's dietary needs and are less expensive than a loaf of whole-wheat bread at a local grocery store. We have fresh produce delivered from a local farm, and our wheat flour, rye flour, and dry beans are purchased from another local venue.

Tap into local food providers for fresh food options!

TIP

This can be done on a budget. We have only increased our total cost by about \$20 per week.

By making three lunches a week vegetarian and preparing meals using seasonal produce, we have learned we can still provide variety and high-quality nutritious meals on a budget.



Little Star's Family Daycare and Preschool

Pittsburg, California
Irma Rivera

Best Practice

My greatest accomplishment is that I am now giving the children brown rice and whole-grain pasta.

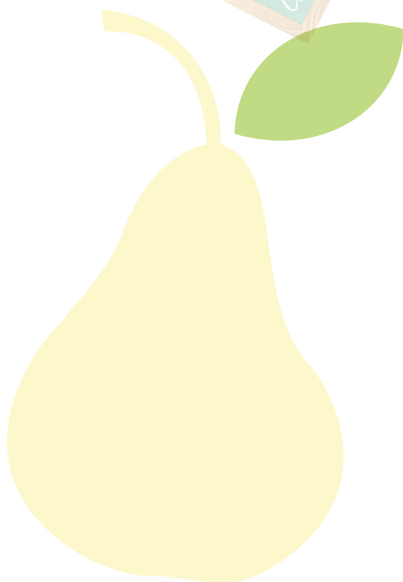
The children love it. They eat whole fruits and veggies. This all came about after I started a new menu with the children, but first I began to eat the new foods. As the children watched me eating these new foods, the children would ask me what I was eating. I would share with them and I would ask them questions like: "Do you like the taste? What does it feel like in your mouth? Would you like to eat this for lunch?" By the end of the week, I had them so excited about trying these new foods that they couldn't wait for Monday to roll around! I never tried offering new foods before because I was afraid that they wouldn't like it. Now that they are eating better, I have never had a problem with them not liking what is offered, and now they go home telling their parents that they want them to cook like "Titi" (me).

Use games to get children excited about eating and trying new foods.

TIP

Make everything a game. The children will always have fun with it.

The better the children eat, the better you will eat, and the more physical activity they do, the more you will do. It is a win-win situation. You will feel better, and the children will have more fun with you.



Elizabeth's Child Care

Georgetown, Kentucky
Elizabeth Maggard, Owner

Best Practice

I enrolled in the Federal Food Program to promote healthy nutrition within my program, and I am participating in the Healthier Kentucky Challenge which recognizes excellence in nutrition and physical activity.

We have 30+ minutes of structured physical activity each day. I have set up an obstacle course for the children to run each day. I add new challenges each week. I also make up songs about the fruits and vegetables of the day to get the children up and moving. Plus, it gets them excited to try that fruit or vegetable at meal time. Sometimes we also play a game of "hide the fruit." We hide oranges and apples around the playground, and have the children help find them. After the game, we rinse the fruit thoroughly, and everyone sits down for a healthy snack.



Encourage movement and excitement for healthy eating by playing "hide the fruit"!

TIP

There are many valuable ways to gain information about healthier foods and physical activity.

The Internet has all kinds of information for some great ideas. Your local health department may have health and nutrition nurses, who will come into your program and offer their help. Your local child care food coordinator, doctors' offices, pediatric offices, dentists' offices, and grocery store can also be of assistance. You can also contact your local Child Care Council for pamphlets or brochures, and trainings on healthy foods and physical activity.

Just remember, a healthy lifestyle begins with a proper diet. Healthy eating is important for the proper formation of bones, teeth, muscles, and a healthy heart. Diet can affect growth and development in small children. Childhood obesity is a problem and, by promoting a healthy diet, children can maintain a healthy weight and stay healthy as they grow into young adults.



Cumberland County YMCA

Portland, Maine
(sites at Brown, Dyer, Skillin, and Small)
Kerry Salvo

Best Practice

When I began at the YMCA in fall 2009, we had just received a grant to integrate the CATCH Kids Club into our after school programs. I attended a train-the-trainer for CATCH and since then, all staff have been trained to use it.

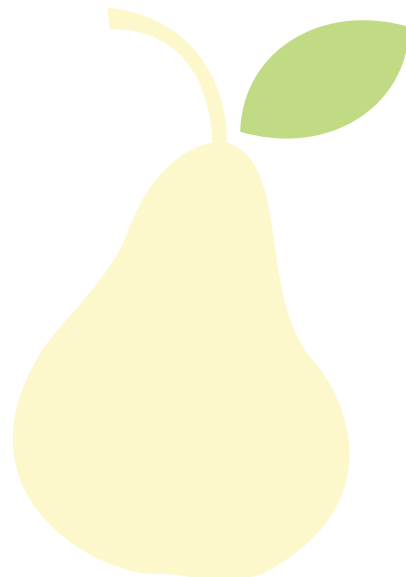
Some of the physical activity games are more popular than others and some staff took longer to warm up to the curriculum, but now, all staff try to use CATCH at least 3 days per week. Our site at Skillin School is over 50 percent free/reduced lunch. So, in 2011, we partnered with the University of Maine Cooperative Extension's Eat Well program and a nutritionist visited our after school program twice a month to prepare healthy snacks and do a nutrition lesson with students.

Partner with a nearby university or college to bring nutrition & physical activity programs to your child care center or home.

TIP

Stick with it and show kids it is fun! Sometimes students are reluctant to try new things – snacks, games, etc.

But, if you keep with it and make it an expectation, eventually they will join in or give it a try. At one site, kids really didn't enjoy CATCH and other group games. They protested and complained, but my staff member kept with it – starting with smaller doses and working up to more minutes of structured play per day. The kids now expect it, look forward to it, and willingly participate. Our other staff is impressed with how this has worked at the one site.



JoAnn's Helping Hands

Sterling Heights, Michigan
JoAnn Clarke, Owner

Best Practice

Since JoAnn's Helping Hands' inception, I have been told by the parents that their children are fed better here than even their own homes. I love to cook for my own family, and our dinner today is the lunch recipe tomorrow for the daycare children.

I use very little, if any, prepared food, so the children are getting well-balanced, home-cooked meals with lots of fresh veggies and seasonal fruit. I have a "no thank you" rule where every child has to take at least a "no thank you" bite. More times than not, the children are more apt to eat something because everyone else is eating, which means more nutritious eating and less throwing away.

After breakfast in the mornings, the children are still waking up but their systems are getting in gear from a good breakfast. We like to put music on and jump and dance either by themselves, in a group, or with a partner. We also have days when we just need to "chill out" and stay in our own spaces. It's not unusual for the children to sit with me and do yoga stretches or some relaxation poses to help calm them and concentrate on just themselves.

Ideas for
active play!

TIP

I tell my daycare children/families that they are mine during the day.

My advice to other providers is to prepare your menus, and make food choices you would want your own child to be served. I also serve the food on cute plates with dividers. Get the children involved in menu planning too. Maybe make one week out of the month children's choice, and ask different children to make a good choice for one of the meals your program offers. They are so proud on "their days" and it also encourages them to eat healthier when they're at home too!



King's Kids Child Development Center

Snow Hill, Maryland
Davida Washington

Best Practice

King's Kids collaborated with their local YMCA and county health department to host two "Family Fun Nights" for the center's children and families.

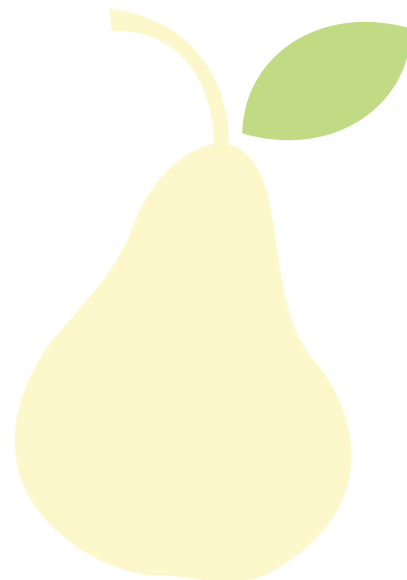
A nutritionist from the health department provided nutrition education to the families, with activities for them to follow up with at home. The YMCA staff conducted physical activities with the families and provided suggestions for age-appropriate activities that they could do at home. The family nights were so successful that the center plans to continue them in the future.

Make an impact that will also affect children at home – invite families to participate in activities.

TIP

New fruits and vegetables were introduced through regular cooking activities and taste tests.

Once the new foods were introduced, they were ultimately added to the center's menus, significantly increasing the variety of fruits and vegetables consumed by the children during mealtimes.





“This document was developed from the public domain document: Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program – U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.”