Promoting Healthy Nutrition in Early Care Settings

Learning Objectives

• Understand basic knowledge of nutrition for young children
• Understand caregiver’s role in creating a positive mealtime environment
• Consider approaches to working with families to encourage healthy nutrition

Overview

• Importance of nutrition
• Trends in childhood health and nutrition
• Healthy childhood nutrition
• The role of the caregiver
• Working with families
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Why Focus on Nutrition?

- Healthy nutrition is essential for healthy child development.
- Setting healthy eating habits at a young age sets habits for life.
- Poor nutrition can lead to obesity and other health problems.

Childhood Obesity

- Affects 13.7 million children and adolescents in the United States
- Affects about 13.9 percent of 2- to 5-year-olds
- Higher rates for children of low socio-economic status and in households with parents who have lower level of education

Impact of Childhood Obesity

- Future health risks
- Social and emotional impacts

Source: [www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html](http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html)
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Early Care and Education Settings

- Families with children under age 6 spent an average of 2 hours per day providing primary care.
- Between 2012–2016, 72 percent of Rhode Island children under age 6 had all parents in the workforce.


Choose My Plate

ChooseMyPlate.gov

Serving Size
Recommended Serving Sizes

Breakfast example:
- Serving of bread:
  - Ages 1 to 5: ½ slice equals one serving
  - Ages 6 and older: 1 slice equals one serving
- Serving of fruit:
  - Ages 1 to 2: ¼ cup equals one serving
  - Ages 3 and older: ½ cup equals one serving

Building Healthy Plates

Infant Lunch or Supper
- 0 to 2 tablespoons of vegetables or fruit, or combo
- 0 to 2 tablespoons of cereal or pasta or the 1 serving of cheese, or the 4 ounces of cottage cheese or yogurt
- 6 to 8 ounces of breast milk or formula
**Building Healthy Plates**

Preschooler Breakfast

- ½ cup of vegetables or fruits, or combo
- 6 fluid ounces of milk
- ½ slice of whole-grain bread, or ½ serving of cereal, or ½ cup of cooked cereal, or up to ¾ cup of the cereal, depending on type

**Development and Feeding Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
<th>Tips for Parents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td>Has strong head control</td>
<td>Offer a variety of foods to encourage self-feeding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18 months</td>
<td>Teeth have started to erupt</td>
<td>Encourage self-feeding with utensils.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24 months</td>
<td>Early eating skills are developing</td>
<td>Offer foods that require cutting, like soft fruits.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Beverages: Water**

- 6 fluid ounces of water
- Waters: both still and sparkling
- Near the end of the meal or snack, or between meals
- For children under 1 year old, breast milk or formula is the main source of nutrition.
Choosing Foods

Labels

- Serving Size
- Servings Per Container
- Calories
- % Daily Value
- Macronutrients
  - Carbohydrates
  - Fat
  - Protein
- Micronutrients
  - Vitamins
  - Minerals

![Sample label for Macaroni & Cheese]

Nutrition Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size</th>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>Total Fat</th>
<th>Saturated Fat</th>
<th>Cholesterol</th>
<th>Sodium</th>
<th>Total Carbohydrate</th>
<th>Dietary Fiber</th>
<th>Sugars</th>
<th>Protein</th>
<th>Trans Fat</th>
<th>Cholesterol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serves 4</td>
<td>200 kcal</td>
<td>10 g</td>
<td>2 g</td>
<td>30 mg</td>
<td>400 mg</td>
<td>20 g</td>
<td>2 g</td>
<td>5 g</td>
<td>2 g</td>
<td>0 g</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Ingredients & Packaging

- First ingredient
- Allergens
- Statements
Choosing Cereals Activity

Serving Size: 27 grams
Sugar: 8 grams
Recommended Sugar: 6 grams or less
Does NOT meet guidelines

Serving Size: 40 grams
Sugar: 13 grams
Recommended Sugar: 10 grams or less
Does NOT meet guidelines

Serving Size: 56 grams
Sugar: 9 grams
Recommended Sugar: less than 12 grams of sugar
Does meet guidelines
Choosing Yogurts Activity

Serving Size: 6 oz
Sugar: 19 grams
Recommended Sugar: less than 23 grams
DOES meet guidelines

Serving Size: 150 grams
Sugar: 16 grams
Recommended Sugar: less than 20 grams
DOES meet guidelines

Serving Size: 150 grams
Sugar: 7 grams
Recommended Sugar: less than 20 grams
DOES meet guidelines

Serving Size: 6 oz
Sugar: 19 grams
Recommended Sugar: less than 23 grams
DOES meet guidelines
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Caregiver as a Role Model

- Model appropriate behaviors
- Create positive eating environments
- Offer healthy foods and beverages

Food and You

Mealtime Behaviors

- Sit at table with children, or in close proximity
- Provide family-style meal service
- Encourage children to help themselves to all food components
- Role model

Source: nrckids.org/CFOC/Database/4.5.0.4
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Nutrition and the RIELDS

Engaging Children in Nutrition
- Mealtime
- Cooking activities
- Gardening
- Books

Children Self-Regulation
# Promoting Healthy Nutrition in Early Care Settings

## Children Self-Regulation

- Infant is hungry or full?
- Toddler is hungry or full?
- Preschooler is hungry or full?

## Choose Your Words

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases that HINDER</th>
<th>Phrases that HELP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instead of.....</td>
<td>Try.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat that for me.</td>
<td>This is a kiwi fruit; it’s sweet like a strawberry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instead of.....</td>
<td>Try.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You’re such a big girl; you finished all your peas.</td>
<td>Is your stomach telling you that you’re full?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instead of.....</td>
<td>Try.....</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No dessert until you eat your vegetables.</td>
<td>We can try these vegetables again. Next time, would you like them raw?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Video

**Family Style Meals in the Child Care Setting**
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Working with Families

Family Engagement and Nutrition
- Garden
- Family workshops
- Cultural sharing
- Exotic fruit salad
- Family handbook, conferences, and newsletters
- Daily intake form

Healthy Celebrations
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Check Them Out!

Let’s Move: America's Move to Raise a Healthier Generation of Kids
https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (ECLKC) Healthy Active Living
https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/nutrition/article/healthy-active-living

Choose My Plate
https://www.choosemyplate.gov/

United States Department of Agriculture Child and Adult Care Food Program
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-day-care-centers

You Make a Difference!

Contact Information

Center for Early Learning Professionals
401-736-9020
www.center-elp.org