Parent Education Packet

Indiana Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

This packet contains resources to assist facilities on the Child and Adult Care Food Program with providing parent education.

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IMAGINING the possibilities. MAKING THEM HAPPEN.

Indiana Department of Education

Glenda Ritz, NBCT
Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction

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CACFP Parent Education Online Resources

1. Indiana CACFP quarterly newsletter (with parent reproducible):
   http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/nutrition/cacfp-news2useindex

2. Indiana CACFP Menu Templates:
   http://www.doe.in.gov/student-services/nutrition/cacfp-resources

3. Indiana CACFP Healthier Alternatives for Parties:
   http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/nutrition/healthieralternativesforparties.pdf

4. MyPlate 10 tips series:
   http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html

5. Mooove to low-fat or fat-free milk:
   http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/1_percent_or_less/Nutrition%20Education%20for%20Parents%20Master%20File.pdf

6. Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children:
   http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/nibbles.html

7. NFSMI's Mealtime Memo for Child Care:
   http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=87

8. Children's Health Fund: Health Education Materials:
   http://www.childrenshealthfund.org/publications/health-ed

9. Color Me Healthy Parent Newsletters:
   http://colormehealthy.com/parent-newsletters/

10. KidsHealth for parents:
    http://kidshealth.org/parent/centers/fitness_nutrition_center.html

11. Maximizing the Message: Helping Moms and Kids Make Healthier Food Choices:
    http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/maximizingmessage.html

Adding More Fiber to Children's Diets

Few kids would say they crave a good fiber-rich meal. Although the thought of fiber might bring gags and groans from kids, many appetizing foods are actually great sources of fiber — from fruits to whole-grain cereals. And kids are probably eating them without even knowing it.

Not just for the senior-citizen crowd, foods with fiber are beneficial because they're filling and, therefore, discourage overeating — even though fiber itself adds no calories. Plus, when combined with adequate fluid intake, high-fiber fare helps move food through the digestive system and may protect against gut cancers and constipation. It may also lower LDL cholesterol ("bad" cholesterol) as well as help prevent diabetes and heart disease.

Here are some creative, fun, and tasty ways to incorporate more fiber-rich foods into children's diets:

Breakfast

- Make oatmeal (a whole grain) part of morning meals.
- Choose whole-grain cereals that have 3 grams or more fiber per serving.
- Make pancakes with whole-grain (or buckwheat) pancake mix and top with apples, berries, or raisins.
- Serve bran or whole grain waffles topped with fruit.
- Offer whole-wheat bagels or English muffins, instead of white toast.
- Top fiber-rich cereal with apples, oranges, berries, or bananas.
- Mix kid-favorite cereals with fiber-rich ones or top with a tablespoon of bran.

Lunch and Dinner

- Make sandwiches with whole-grain breads (rye, oat, or wheat) instead of white.
- Make a fiber-rich sandwich with whole-grain bread, peanut butter, and bananas.
- Serve whole-grain rolls with dinner instead of white rolls.
- Use whole-grain pastas instead of white.
- Serve wild or brown rice with meals instead of white rice.
- Spice up salads with berries, chickpeas, cooked artichokes, and beans (kidney, black, navy, or pinto).
- Use whole-grain (corn or whole wheat) soft-taco shells or tortillas to make burritos or wraps. Fill them with eggs and cheese for breakfast; turkey, cheese, lettuce, tomato, and light dressing for lunch; and beans, salsa, taco sauce, and cheese for dinner.
- Add lentils or whole-grain barley to soups.
- Create mini-pizzas by topping whole-wheat English muffins or bagels with pizza sauce, low-fat cheese, mushrooms, and pieces of grilled chicken.
- Add bran to meatloaf or burgers. (But not too much bran or the kids might catch on!)
- Serve sweet potatoes with the skins as tasty side dishes. Regular baked potatoes with the skins are good sources of fiber, too.

Source: www.kidshealth.org

Tips for Parents of Picky Eaters

- **Be a good example**

  - Children learn a lot about food by watching what people around them are eating. A child may not try a food if they do not see anyone around them eating it. By eating a variety of nutritious foods, parents are role modeling healthy behaviors and encouraging children to do the same.

- **Ask for help at the grocery store**

  - Take your child to the produce section and let him or her pick out a few fruits and vegetables. Seeing the many different foods on display may trigger an interest in your child, and may help to excite him or her to try what they picked out.

- **Have fun!**

  - Plant a small garden with your child and watch the vegetables grow together. He or she will be eager to try the vegetables when they are ready to eat! Mealtime activities also help kids to explore new foods. Bake cupcakes made with carrots or zucchini together. Or pick out fruits or vegetables with fun names like papaya or squash to try together. Talk about how the new food looks, tastes, or sounds, and make sure to talk about how good it is for the body!

- **Let your child be the chef**

  - Working together in the kitchen is a fun way to get your child involved in his or her nutrition. Let him or her sort or mix ingredients, or toss together a salad. If your child helps prepare a new food, he or she is more likely to try it.

- **Don't let snacks replace meals**

  - Children need snacks between meals, but what your child chooses as a snack should be monitored to be sure he or she is not eating too much between meals. Snacks should also be given at roughly the same times each day. This will ensure that your child is hungry at dinner time, which will help him or her to be more likely to eat what is served.

- **Be patient**

  - Most kids need to try a food many times before they can decide whether they like it or not. Encourage your child to touch and taste the new food each time it is offered, so he or she can explore the texture and flavor of the food.

- **Get rid of distractions during meal time**

  - Make sure your child's main focus is on eating during meal time. Meals should be eaten in the kitchen or dining room, and electronics such as televisions or cell phones should not be present.

- **Trust your child's instincts**

  - Kids are born with an innate sense of how much they need to eat. Therefore, do not make your child eat if he or she claims not to be hungry. Many parents fear that their child is not getting adequate nutrition if he or she is a picky eater, but this is usually not the case. Children have a natural tendency to experience a fear of trying new foods, and learning to try new foods is part of normal development.

Adapted from: www.pbs.org, www.mayoclinic.com

An Introduction to Beans!

Preparing and Cooking Dry Beans

1. **Sort**: Before soaking beans, pick them over and remove any damaged beans, small stones or dirt
2. **Soak**: Most beans will rehydrate to triple their dry size, so be sure to start with a large enough pot. Choose one of the following ways to soak your beans:
   - Hot Soak: hot soaking helps reduce intestinal gas. For each pound (2 cups) of dry beans, add 10 cups hot water; heat to boiling and let boil 2-3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for up to 4 hours.
   - Quick Soak: For each pound (2 cups) of dry beans, add 10 cups hot water; heat to boiling and let boil 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and set aside for at least one hour.
   - Overnight Soak: for each pound (2 cups) dry beans, add 10 cups cold water and let soak overnight, or at least 8 hours.
3. **Cook**: Drain soaking water and rinse beans. Cover beans with fresh water. Simmer for 1 1/2 - 2 hours until tender.

Simple Cooking Tips

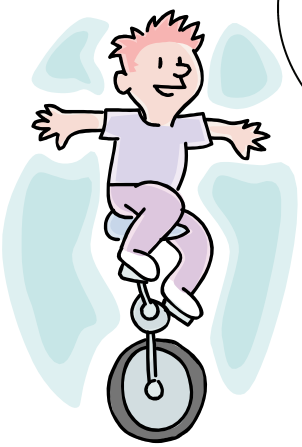
- To avoid broken or mushy beans, boil gently and stir very little
- Taste-test beans often for desired tenderness
- Foods containing acid such as tomatoes, chili sauce, lemon juice, vinegar or catsup will slow the cooking and softening of the beans. Add these items last so they will not add to the cooking time.
- Any of the following can be added during the last half hour of cooking: minced onion, garlic, green pepper, diced carrots or celery, chopped tomatoes or cooked meat.

Bean Nutrition

- Beans provide more protein for your money than most other foods.
- Beans are naturally low in fat and salt, with no cholesterol
- Beans are high in fiber and complex carbohydrates.
- Beans are packed with vitamins and minerals, including B, E, Calcium, Potassium and Iron

Source: Beans: The Bold and Beautiful Book of Bean Recipes
Washington State Department of Health

Active Play for Children



Your child is designed to move! Most kids like to climb, crawl, run, jump, swing, tumble, twist, stretch, and peddle. In fact, active play is the "work" of childhood. By moving more and sitting less, your child also learns to live a healthful way!

Surround your child with active fun!

Set aside a play area inside—Find a safe spot where your child can tumble, roll, jump, and toss things without breaking something or getting hurt.

Have a place outdoors—to run, kick a ball, and ride a scooter or bicycle.

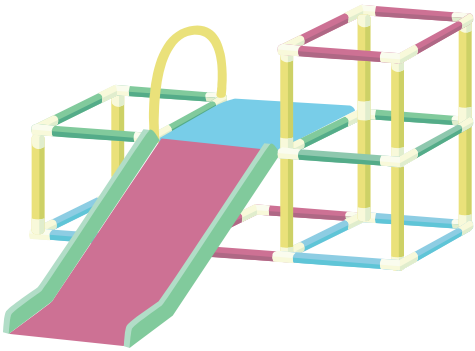
Turn active play into family time—maybe after a family meal.

Ask babysitters to play actively with your child

Gather "active" toys—purchase toys that require active movement. A ball or a tricycle encourages active play.

Join a playgroup—where young children and grown-ups play together.

Make active play a day care priority—Find a day care that offers safe, active play that matches your child's abilities. Visit to see and ask what they do, for how long, and how often.

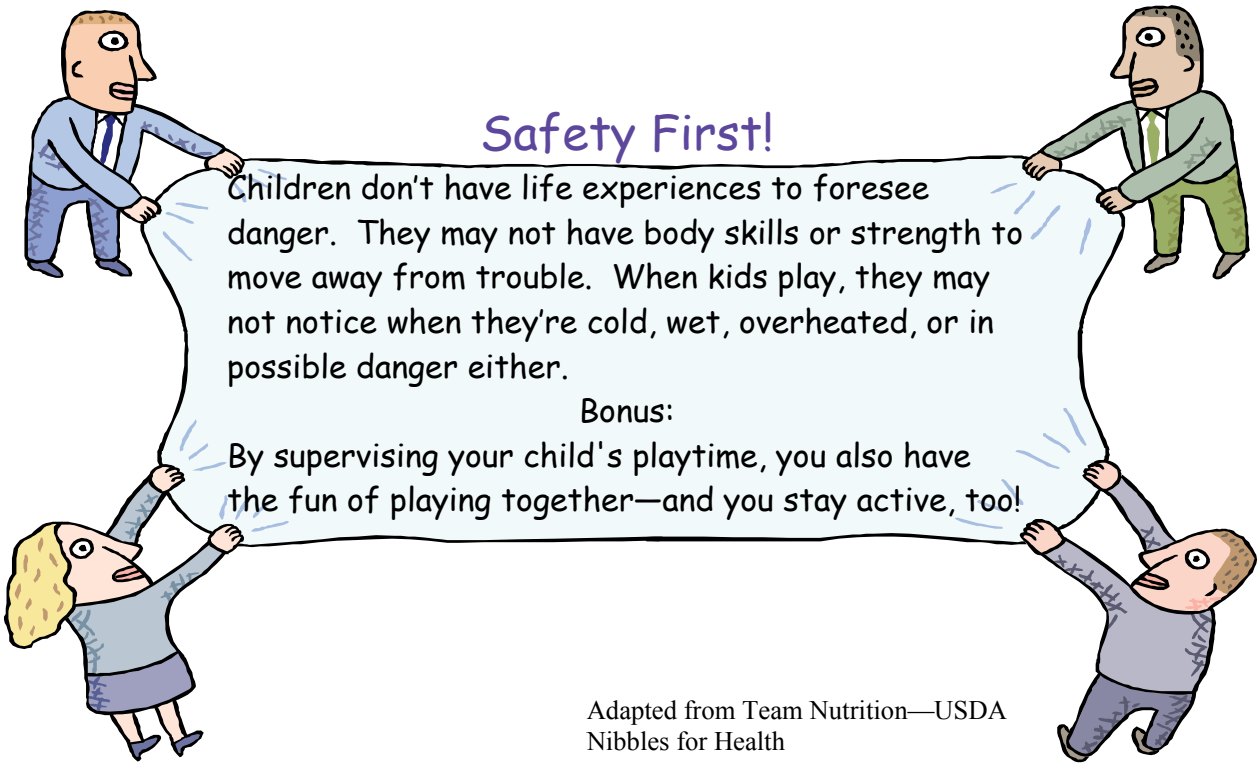


Why is an active lifestyle important for kids?

Active play can promote:
Cooperation and sharing
Curiosity and creativity
Confidence and independence
Learning

Active play can develop body skills:
Strength, flexibility, and endurance
Coordination
Body awareness

Active play promotes:
Stress relief and good sleep
Healthy weight
Lifelong health



Safety First!

Children don't have life experiences to foresee danger. They may not have body skills or strength to move away from trouble. When kids play, they may not notice when they're cold, wet, overheated, or in possible danger either.

Bonus:

By supervising your child's playtime, you also have the fun of playing together—and you stay active, too!

Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA
Nibbles for Health

Breakfast—

the most important meal of the day!

Eating breakfast is smart because it …

Fuels your body with nutrients— Nutrients lost by not eating breakfast may not be made up later in the day.

Provides energy for the mornings active play and classroom lessons—kids learn better when they are fueled with healthy foods from breakfast. You might get more done in the morning too when you eat breakfast.

Helps maintain a healthy body weight— Eating breakfast helps control the urge to nibble or eat too big a lunch. Even with breakfast, young kids may need a morning snack.

Helps kids feel good—Kids who eat breakfast have less morning tummy aches and headaches because they are well fueled.

Don't let a rushed morning be an excuse for no breakfast!

Manage your early morning time by:

- ✓ Making breakfast the night before. Pour juice, slice fruit, make hard-cooked eggs, or pour cereal into covered bowls.
- ✓ Go to bed earlier and get up earlier. You only need about 10-15 extra minutes for a good breakfast when you plan ahead.
- ✓ Stock your pantry and fridge with quick-fix breakfast foods that are whole-grain, low sugar and low-fat.
- ✓ Give your child time to wake up. Sometimes kids aren't hungry first thing and rushing them puts pressure on breakfast eating.
  Wake up earlier.

Quick Breakfast Ideas

Ready to eat cereal with milk and fruit
Bagel with cheese
Scrambled egg in pita bread
Yogurt with toasted English muffin
Toasted waffle topped with fruit
Peanut butter on whole wheat toast
Oatmeal with applesauce
Tortilla with peanut butter and banana
Whole grain bread with turkey

Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA
Nibbles for Health

Fats and Oils in Foods
Finding a Balance

Your child needs some fats and oils from food.

Fats and oils are part of a healthful diet, but the type of fat makes a difference to heart health, and the total amount of fat consumed is also important. Get the majority of the oils in your diet from fish, nuts, avocados, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, olive oil, and canola oil.

Trying to cut way back on fats and oils may seem like a good idea. But your child needs some fats and oils to be healthy:

- For energy to play, learn, and grow
- To grow properly
- To use vitamins from food
- To add flavor to foods

Eating less saturated fat, *trans* fat, and cholesterol is good for the whole family.

Low-fat eating is not recommended for children under the age of 2. Little ones need more fat for brain development. Once your child turns 2, eating low-fat foods, especially low-fat or fat-free milk, is healthful.

If family meals and snacks have less fat, your child will learn to eat that way, too.

Choose to limit foods with solid fats. Eating a lot of solid fat increases the chance of heart disease later in your lives. Solid fats are solid at room temperature. Examples include butter, stick margarine, and fat in meat.

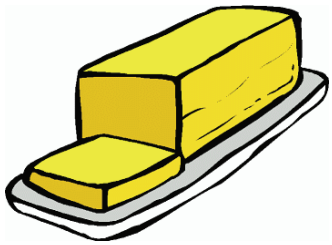
Eating lots of fats and oils can add up to too many calories. Weight gain over time may lead to type 2 diabetes and other chronic diseases at an early age. Choose mostly lean and low-fat foods to help your child and you maintain a healthy weight and a healthy heart.

For Less Fat In Family Foods

You can plan and prepare family foods with less fat.
Check (✓) one or two things to try this week. Add your own ideas.

❑ Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose foods, especially those with less *trans* and saturated fat.
❑ Limit foods high in solid fat (bacon, sausage, other high-fat processed meats).
❑ Keep low-fat snacks in your kitchen: raw vegetables, fruit, pretzels, and bagels.
❑ Make whole-grain products, vegetables, and fruits part of family meals and snacks.
❑ Buy mostly low-fat or fat free milk, yogurt, and cheese.
❑ Make cooked dry beans, fish, lean meats, and chicken the center of the meal.

❑Use vegetable oils with no *trans* fat. Limit solid fats, such as butter, hard margarine, and lard.
❑ Use less fat and oils when you cook.
❑ Cut fat from meat, and take skin off chicken.
❑ Broil, roast, microwave, or stir-fry most of the time. Limit frying because it adds fat.
❑ Limit creamy sauces and salad dressings.
❑ Offer small amounts of higher fat foods, such as fries and cheese.
❑ Serve mostly fruit for dessert.
❑ Get your oils from fish, nuts, avocados, and liquid oils such as corn oil, soybean oil, olive oil, and canola oil.



Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA
Nibbles for Health

Food Shopping: Spend Less, Get More

For most of us, it's important to find ways to stretch our food dollars and find ways to eat healthier. You can do both!

Decide What to Buy

Buy a variety of foods from all the food groups—Grains, cereals, breads, pasta and rice are generally inexpensive. Purchase fresh/frozen/canned/dried fruits and veggies that are on sale and/or in season as these are most economical.

Choose smaller amounts of more costly protein foods—Beans and eggs cost less than other animal protein sources.

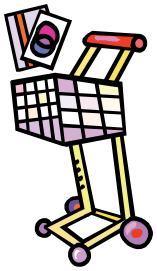
Go easy on convenience foods—boxed, bagged, frozen and canned convenience foods generally contain added sugars, fats, and sodium—and they cost more.

Buy the amount you need—not more! - Only purchase what you plan to use during the week.

Buy foods from bulk bins—If you can find foods in bulk bins, you usually pay less because you don't have to pay for packaging and handling. And you only buy the amount you need!

Use coupons and sales for foods you really want—A food isn't a bargain if no one eats it.

Check the price of foods in different forms—Foods may cost more if they are partially prepared. You decide if you want to pay more to save some time in the kitchen. Also, frozen fruits and veggies may be cheaper than fresh if it's not in season!



Figuring out food costs

Check the unit price on store shelves—the unit price shows the price per ounce, pound, quart, or some other amount. Unit prices let you compare brands and sizes to get the best buy!

Smart Shopping Tips

Save Money, Time and Energy!

- ✓ **Make a shopping list**—and then stick to it! First, choose the recipes you want to make, check to see what you have on hand, write down the items you need to purchase, then go shopping.
- ✓ **Group foods on your list to match the store layout**—You'll be able to shop faster and backtrack less. It's also easier to remember everything on your list.
- ✓ **Try to shop after eating, not before**—You may buy more than you intend to if you go to the store hungry.
- ✓ **Leave your kids with a sitter or friend if you need to**—Store put many foods that children like, such as candy and products with prizes where they can see them and reach them.
- ✓ **Shop when you have time to read labels and compare prices.**
- ✓ **Try to shop once a week**—It's easier to shop smart if you shop less often!
- ✓ **Take food home right away**—refrigerate meat, chicken, and other perishable foods so they stay fresh and safe.

Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA
Nibbles for Health

Grocery List

Dairy
_____Milk (1% or skim)
_____Cheese (string, cottage, slices)

Fruits
_____Fresh fruit in season
_____Canned in water or light syrup
_____Raisins
_____Other

Vegetables
_____Fresh veggies in season
_____Frozen veggies
_____Tomato/Tomato sauce
_____Onions
_____Other

Grains/Cereals
_____Whole grain cereals, hot/cold
_____Flour
_____Noodles, macaroni, spaghetti
_____Rice (brown)
_____Bread, tortillas

Proteins
_____Dried beans, peas, lentils
_____Canned tuna in water
_____Peanut (or other nut) butter
_____Ground turkey or 90/10 ground beef
_____Other

Other
_____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Juice or Fruit Drink? Which to Choose

Why Fruit Juice?

Juice is a way to enjoy fruit. Keeping 100% juice on hand is good for your whole family!
Here's what juice provides.

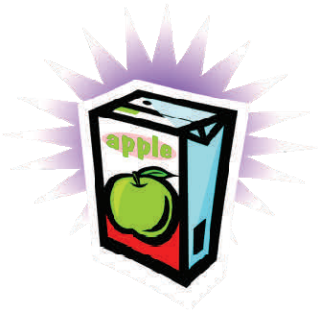
- **Vitamin C** to help heal cuts and bruises, fight infection, and use iron from food.
- **Vitamin A** in some juices for healthy eyes and skin.
- **Carbohydrates** for energy. Sugar from fruit is the carbohydrate in 100% juice.

Juice is mostly water. Like you, your child needs enough fluid to stay healthy.

Go Easy!

Because juice is convenient, it is easy to drink too much of it. Here is why drinking too much juice can be a problem:

- Juice has calories. Too much may give your child more calories than he or she needs. That may contribute to overweight. Go easy for yourself, too!
- If juice replaces milk or calcium-fortified soy beverages, your child may not get enough bone building calcium.
- Sipping juice a lot promotes cavities.
- Sometimes diarrhea is a problem too.



How Much?

Offer your child enough, but not too much:

Ages 2 to 5: when serving 100% juice, offer no more than ½ to ¾ cup depending on age, gender, and activity level.

Limit servings of juice, even 100% juice, to less than 12 ounces per day. Go for whole

Adapted from USDA Team Nutrition Nibbles for Health

Which Would You Buy?

Orange juice, orange drink, or orange soda?
Each has a sweet, citrus flavor. Labels can help you choose beverages for your family.

- For nutrition, 100% orange juice is the best.
- Juice drinks have some juice, added vitamin C, and added sugars.
- Orange soda is carbonated water with added sugar and flavorings.

Labels can help you choose!

- Nutrition Facts tell how calories and nutrients differ.
- Ingredients tell what it is made from.

Orange Juice

100% Juice

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 8 fl oz (249g)
Servings Per Container 8

Amount Per Serving		
Calories 112		
		%Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g		0 %
Saturated Fat 0g		0 %
Trans Fat 0g		0 %
Cholesterol 0mg		0 %
Sodium 0mg		0 %
Total Carbohydrate 26g		9 %
Dietary Fiber 0g		0 %
Sugars 21g		
Protein 2g		
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 200%
Calcium 3%	•	Iron 0%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients: **Orange juice (not from concentrate)**

Orange Drink

Made with 5% Juice

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 12 fl oz (240g)
Servings Per Container 1

Amount Per Serving		
Calories 120		
		%Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g		0 %
Saturated Fat 0g		0 %
Trans Fat 0g		0 %
Cholesterol 0mg		0 %
Sodium 30mg		1 %
Total Carbohydrate 31g		10 %
Dietary Fiber 0g		0 %
Sugars 29g		
Protein 0g		
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 70%
Calcium 0%	•	Iron 0%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients: **Water, high fructose corn syrup, pear juice, citric acid, ascorbic acid, yellow 5, red 40, (other ingredients)**

Orange Soda

Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 8 fl oz (240g)
Servings Per Container 1.5

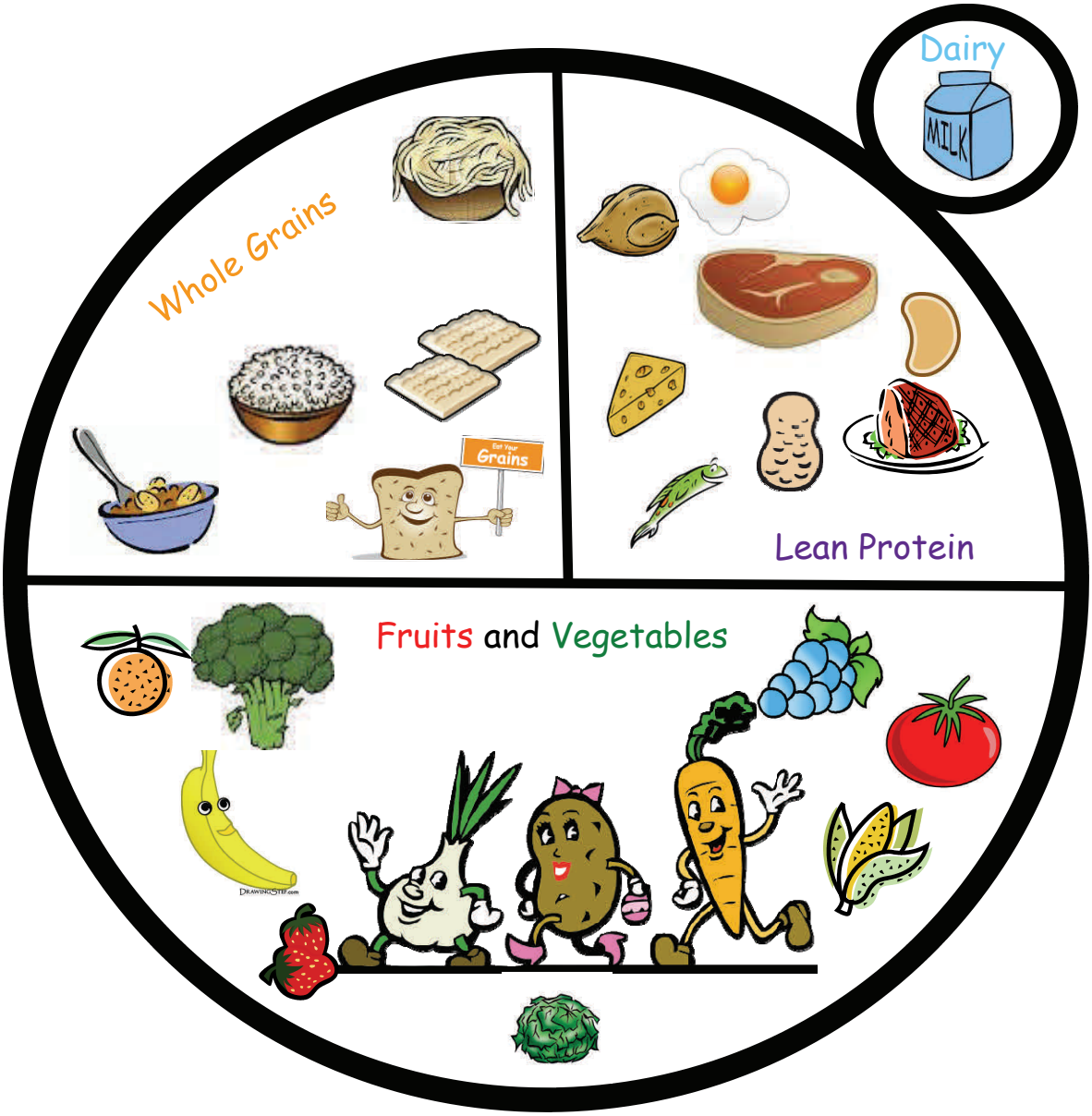
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 120		
		%Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g		0 %
Saturated Fat 0g		0 %
Trans Fat 0g		0 %
Cholesterol 0mg		0 %
Sodium 35mg		1 %
Total Carbohydrate 32g		11 %
Dietary Fiber 0g		0 %
Sugars 32g		
Protein 0g		
Vitamin A 0%	•	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	•	Iron 0%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ingredients: **Water, high fructose corn syrup, citric acid, ascorbic acid, yellow 6, red 40, (other ingredients)**

Make Your Preschoolers Plate Great

1 Great Plate =
1/2 fruits/veggies + 1/4 whole grains + 1/4 lean protein



Healthy Eating for the Whole Family

- ✓ Offer a variety of foods

  Think about color, texture, temperature, and shape

- ✓ Let your child control how much they eat

  Avoid having children clean their plates as this can promote overeating and bad feelings toward food

- ✓ Try new foods often
- ✓ Choose fresh, canned and frozen fruits more often than juice. When choosing juice, look for 100% juice on the label.
- ✓ Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Choose foods and beverages with little added sugars and fats
- ✓ Make at least half your grains whole grains
- ✓ Vary your protein choices

  Choose fish two or more times per week

  Choose beans instead of meat and poultry

- ✓ Choose low-fat or fat-free milk/dairy products
- ✓ Reduce consumption of high sodium foods
- ✓ Eat the right amount of calories for you
- ✓ Be physically active

What is a Serving??

For a preschooler

Dry Cereal = 1/3 cup

Cooked pasta or rice = 1/4 cup

Vegetables = 1/4 cup

Fruit = 1/4 cup

Milk = 1/2 cup

Egg = 1 whole egg

Meat or Poultry =

Making Meal time less stressful -

- ✓ Set the stage for family meals

  Schedule regular mealtimes - children like a routine

- ✓ Transition from playtime to mealtime

  Give a 15-20 minute heads-up so children know it's time to use the restroom, wash hands and set the table

- ✓ Control distractions during meals and snacks

  Turn off the television, computer and video games and put away books

Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA Nibbles for Health

Raising a Healthy Eater

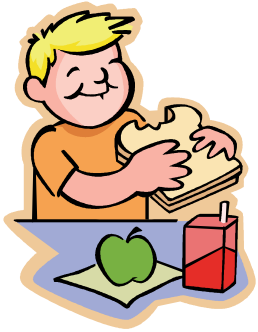
Offer small, easy-to-eat amounts to make eating easy and more enjoyable.

- ✓ Use smaller bowls, plates and utensils for your child to eat with.
- ✓ Don't insist that your child finish all the food on their plate. Let you child know that it's ok to eat as much as he or she wants at that time.
- ✓ As children are able, allow them to serve themselves.

  Teach them to take small amounts first. Tell them they can have more if they are still hungry.

Offer a variety of foods. As a parent or caregiver, you play an important role in helping your child learn about food. It is your responsibility to provide a variety of healthy foods to your child.

- ✓ Mix it up. Change your typical foods. Try something new with your family. Here are just a few ideas: fresh pineapple, green peppers, low-fat cheese, canned salmon, or a whole wheat pita with hummus.
- ✓ Let your child chose a new vegetable to add to soup. Only an adult should heat and stir hot soup.
- ✓ Add different ingredients to your typical salads. Try adding mango, spinach, or black beans to your green salad.
- ✓ Vary the cereals, types of bread, and sandwich fillings you buy week to week.
- ✓ Add fruit to your preschooler's breakfast by using it to top cereal.
- ✓ Put rinsed and cut fruits and vegetables, in a bag or bowl, on a shelf in your refrigerator where your child can see them.



Help them know when they've had enough. Babies know when they have eaten enough. Help your children keep listening to their bodies as they grow.

Kids who "listen" to their own fullness cues stop eating when they feel full and are less likely to become overweight. Give your kids a chance to stop eating when they feel full, even if you think they aren't. They'll feel more independent and you'll help them keep a healthy weight.

- ✓ **Avoid praising a clean plate.** Your child should stop eating when he or she is full, rather than when the plate is clean.
- ✓ **Reward your child with attention and kind words, not food.** Show your love with hugs and kisses. Console with hugs and talks.

Giving your child sweets when they feel sad or as a special treat can teach your child to eat when he or she is not hungry. This may cause your child to ignore body signals of fullness and overeat. Rewarding with sweets also lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. For example, telling your child "no dessert until you finish your vegetables" may make them like the vegetable less and the dessert more.

Try not to restrict specific foods. If that restricted food becomes available to your child, he or she might eat it despite feeling full. This can lead to a habit of overeating. Also, don't restrict sweets or other treats as punishment for bad behavior.

Help! My Child is a Picky Eater

Picky eating is temporary and there are many things you can do to deal with picky eating in a positive way. One way is to make food fun!

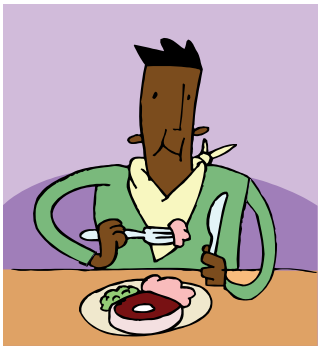
Get creative in the kitchen:

- ✓ Name a food your child helps create. Make a big deal of serving "Dawn's Salad" or "Peter's Sweet Potatoes" for dinner.
- ✓ Cut a food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.
- ✓ Encourage your child to invent and help prepare new snacks or sandwiches. For example, make your own trail mixes from dry cereal and dried fruit.
- ✓ Have your child make towers out of whole-grain crackers, spell words with pretzel sticks, or make funny faces on a plate using different types of fruit.
- ✓ Jazz up the taste of vegetables with low-fat dressings or dips. Try hummus or bean spread as a dip for veggies.

Picky eating is a typical behavior for many preschoolers. It is simply another step in the process of growing up and becoming independent.

As long as your preschooler is healthy, growing normally, and has plenty of energy, he or she is most likely getting needed nutrients.

If you're concerned that your child's picky eating has lasted for a long time or is very restrictive, speak with your child's doctor.



Many preschoolers are hesitant to try new foods. It is completely normal for young kids to reject foods they have never tried before.

Here are some tips on how to get your preschooler to try new foods:

- ✓ Sometimes, new foods take time. Kids don't always take to new foods right away. Offer new foods many times. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food.
- ✓ Small portions, big benefits. Let your kids try small portions of new foods that you enjoy. Give them a small taste at first and be patient with them. When they develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals.
- ✓ Be a good role model by trying new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell.
- ✓ Offer only one new food at a time. Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering too many new foods all at once could be overwhelming.
- ✓ Offer new foods first, at the beginning of a meal, when your child is the most hungry.

Serve food plain if that is important to your preschooler. For example, instead of a macaroni casserole, try meatballs, pasta, and a vegetable. Also, to keep the different foods separate, try plates with sections. For some kids the opposite works and serving a new food mixed in with a familiar item is helpful.

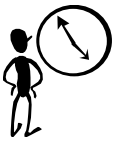
Adapted from USDA www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

Why Family Meals Matter

Family meals are important! Close bonds and lifelong memories are formed around the family table. Family meals can teach children about healthful eating and allow you to be a good role model. When you try new foods your child may be more adventurous with food, too!

Try these ideas for making family meals
a pleasant part of your family routine!

Set a regular family mealtime -

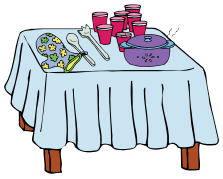


Regular mealtimes give your child a better chance to eat a variety of foods to get the right amount to grow, stay healthy, and keep a healthy weight.

Show that family meals are important—
During mealtime, turn off the TV, computer and video games. Let the answering machine take your phone calls and save the newspaper or favorite book for after the meal.

Make it simple, make it quick -
Spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the family table. Simple meals, even cold sandwiches, taste as good a meals that take more work.

Eat around a table—
It's easier to talk and listen to your family when you are face to face with each other. Eating side by side at a kitchen counter, or worse, on the couch, takes away eye contact.



Enjoy meal talk—
Make easy conversation—no nagging or complaining at the table. Talk so everyone can be a "star" at mealtime. Let each family member talk about their day, share ideas, or stories.

Be realistic at mealtime—
Try to sit down together. If dinner is too hectic, try breakfast together. Keep meals from lasting too long. If kids get fussy, you family meal won't be fun. Wait until everyone is done to be excused. Use the time to chat!

Adapted from Team Nutrition—USDA
Nibbles for Health

I can help!

Kids love to help with family meals—it makes them feel important in the family! Children learn even when tasks aren't perfectly done. So, even if you work faster alone, ask your child to help you. They will learn a lot and you'll get to spend some valuable time together.

Ask kids to...

Pick flowers for the table

Create paper place mats

Put pets in another room if they are a distraction at mealtime

Clear and wash the table and his/her hands before mealtime

Help with table setting

Help with simple kitchen tasks, perhaps tearing greens for salad or putting bread in a basket

Pour milk (maybe with your help!)

Turn off the TV, video games or computer. Turn on fun music!

Clear and clean the table after mealtime

Ask them what they would like to help you with and jot down their ideas

Age Appropriate Kitchen Tasks

2-3 year olds

- ✓ Stir with a spoon
- ✓ Shake ingredients in a plastic container with a tight cover
- ✓ Use a butter knife to spread cream cheese, jelly or peanut butter
- ✓ Mash boiled fruits and vegetables after they have cooled
- ✓ Combine ingredients in a large bowl and mix
- ✓ Make no-cook recipes such as sandwiches and salads
- ✓ Practice using whisks, spatulas, strainers, colanders, wooden spoons, cookie cutters, and rolling pins.

3-4 year olds

- ✓ Use plastic measuring spoons and cups marked to the proper amounts
- ✓ Cut soft fruits and boiled vegetables with plastic knives
- ✓ Combine dry and wet ingredients using forks, whisks, spoons or rotary beaters
- ✓ Pour liquids into containers with large openings such as colanders, blenders, or wide-mouth bowls
- ✓ Use non-electric food grinders, choppers, and juicers

4-5 year olds

- ✓ Use a heat source placed on a low surface (with adult supervision)
- ✓ Use a hand mixer (with adult supervision)
- ✓ Cut flat ingredients with a plastic serrated knifes (with adult supervision)
- ✓ Be taught to use vegetable peelers, cheese graters, and nut crackers