

**OMB# 0584-0524 Exp: 09-30-2019**

**RETAIN FOR YOUR RECORDS**

**Attachment R: Stimulus: Nutrition and  
Wellness Tips for Young Children:  
Provider Handbook for the Child and  
Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)  
(English)**

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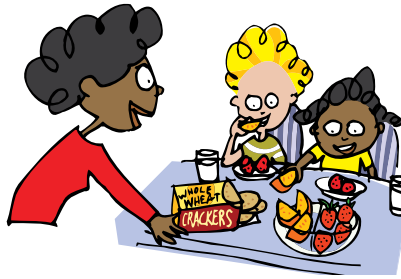


# Build a Healthy Plate With Less Salt and Sodium



## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

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, barbeque sauce, 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%
<b>Sodium 140 mg</b>	<b>5%</b>
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 lists 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 lunch meats.
- ▶ **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 fish sticks.



- **Hot dogs, sausages, nuts, seeds, nut and seed butters, and small pieces of raw vegetables may pose choking hazards.**
- **See Supplement A on page 77 for more information on 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. [http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_3.pdf](http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_3.pdf)
- ▶ **Enjoy a variety of foods with less sodium.** See *Choose MyPlate* for more ideas. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/daily-food-plans/about-salt.html>



## 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.** Find the percent (%) Daily Value for sodium, 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** is a number that tells you if there is a lot or a little of a nutrient in a serving of the food. This number can also help you see how a serving of food fits into a total daily diet.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
%	
Total Fat 12g	
Saturated Fat 3g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
<b>Sodium 140 mg</b>	<b>5%</b>
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 6g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 20%	Iron 4%

**A % Daily Value** of 5% or less is low; 20% or more is high. Choose foods that are low in sodium.

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

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

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

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

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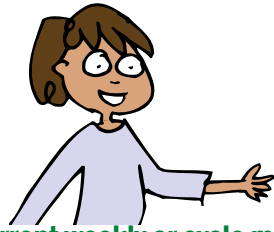
- ▶ **How do you know if this food contributes a high or low amount of sodium?**

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more 'activities' on next page ...



... more 'activities'



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?

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- ▶ 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.)

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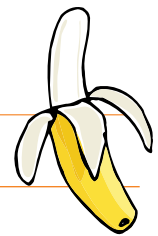
- ▶ What fresh foods can you use in place of canned or processed foods to reduce sodium in your menu?

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- ▶ 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:



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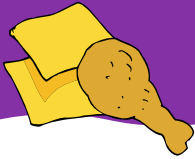
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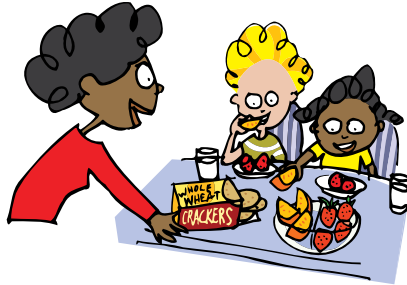


# Meat and Meat Alternates: Build a Healthy Plate With Protein

## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



**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, eggs and tofu. 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.

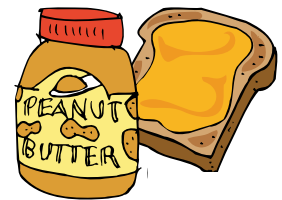
### What types of meat and meat alternates should I offer?

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 fats 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.



*more 'types of meats and meat alternates' on next page ...*

... more 'types of meat and meat alternates'

- ▶ **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.



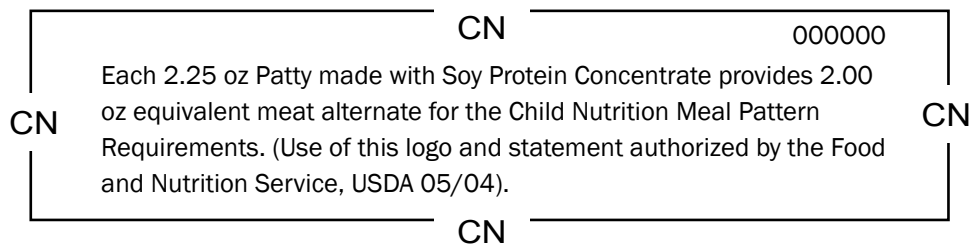
**CACFP Crediting Tip:**

Both yogurt and cheese must be “commercially prepared,” such as those you would find in your local grocery store. While yogurt and cheese are considered meat alternates, they *cannot* be substituted for the fluid milk meal pattern requirement. Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per six ounces to be creditable in CACFP

- ▶ **Tofu can be served as a meat alternate when served as an easily identifiable part of a meal, such as in a stir-fry, or miso soup**
- ▶ **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 for 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 Supplement 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.**
- **See Supplement B on page 81 for more information on food allergies.**



**CACFP Crediting Tips:**

- **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.**

**NOTE:**

**Be mindful of serving dairy-based meat alternates like yogurt and cheese to children who are lactose-intolerant. Consider alternatives like beans or eggs instead.**



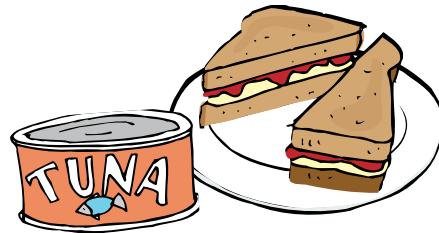


## How can I serve a variety of meat and meat alternates low in sodium and solid fats?

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:

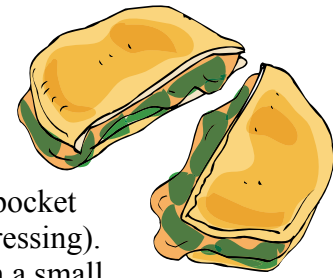
- ▶ **Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of salt, butter, or stick margarine to season dishes.** This will lower solid fats, sodium, and calories in the dishes while adding flavor.
- ▶ **Trim away visible fat from meats and poultry before cooking.** Remove the skin from chicken and turkey to reduce the amount of solid fats. Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.
- ▶ **Broil, grill, roast, poach, or boil fish, meat, or poultry.** These cooking methods do not add extra fat and calories.
- ▶ **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 fats, sodium, and calories. Use canned tuna or salmon (packed in water) for sandwiches in place of deli or lunch 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.** <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/protein-foods-tips.html>

## 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 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

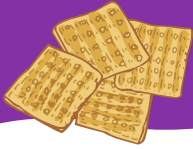


- ▶ **Put kids in charge.** Have children make a potato fixin’s bar by choosing their own toppings for half a baked potato. Arrange separate bowls and serving utensils for refried beans, black-eyed peas, chopped chicken tenders, shredded low-fat cheese, sliced cherry tomatoes, thinly chopped spinach, 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. [http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/ Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_31.pdf](http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_31.pdf)
- ▶ **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. [http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/ Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_20.pdf](http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_20.pdf)



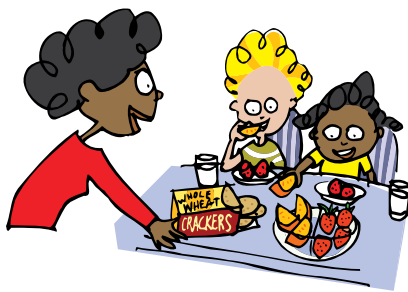
# Build a Healthy Plate With Whole Grains

## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



**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 products. Grains are divided into two groups: **whole grains** and **refined grains**. **Whole grains** contain the entire grain kernel--the bran, germ and endosperm. As you can see in the picture below, each part of the grain has important nutrients that children and adults need to be healthy. When grains become **refined**, the bran and germ are removed. This means that dietary fiber, iron and many vitamins are also removed. Whenever possible, whole-grain versions of these grain products should be offered.

CACFP requires at least one serving of grains per day be whole grain-rich for children and adults. Whole grain-rich foods are foods that contain 100 percent whole grains, or that have at least 50% whole grains and remaining grains in the food are enriched. Whole grains have vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other nutrients to help keep children healthy and strong. Including whole-grain foods in meals and 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 as they grow.
- Add texture and flavor to their plate.

### What types of grains should I offer?

#### Instead Of:

White rice

White flour

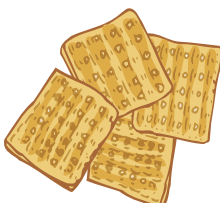
White bread or wheat bread

Noodles, pasta, spaghetti, macaroni

Flour tortillas

Crackers

Degermed cornmeal



#### Choose Whole Grains:

Brown rice, wild rice, quinoa

Whole-wheat flour

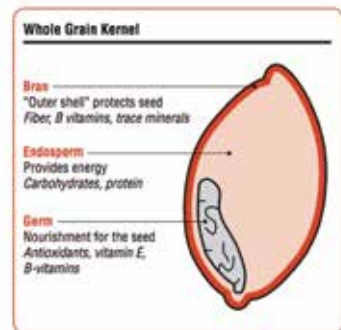
100% Whole-grain bread

Whole-wheat pasta or whole.

Whole-grain tortillas and whole-corn tortillas

Whole-grain crackers

Whole-grain cornmeal



more 'types of grains tips' on next page ...

... more 'types of grains tips'

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

### Choosing Whole Grain-Rich Foods

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.

- ▶ **To see if a food is whole grain-rich,** check the ingredient list to see if a whole grain is listed as the first ingredient on the ingredient list, or second after water. A food can also be whole grain-rich if the total weight of whole grains in the food is more than the weight of the other ingredients. A grain or grain product can be considered whole grain-rich if it has one of the two Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved health claims on the package that says:

“Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”

or

“Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”

### 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.

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains.html>

- ▶ **100% whole-grain foods,** including “100% whole-grain” breads, breakfast cereals, pasta, and whole-corn tortillas, are also good choices.



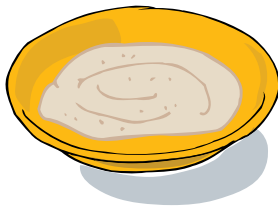
- ▶ **Serve whole grain-rich versions of cereal, bread, tortillas, or pancakes at breakfast.** Top them with unsweetened applesauce or fresh or frozen fruit instead of sugar, syrup, jam, jelly, or honey.

more 'types of grains tips' on next page ...

... more 'types of grains tips'

## 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. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/daily-food-plans/about-empty-calories.html>



### TIP:

When serving oatmeal, use old-fashioned rolled oats. They do not contain as much sodium (salt) or added sugar compared some varieties of 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 Supplement 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.**

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



## 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:



- ▶ **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 savory crackers, 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. [http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_5.pdf](http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_5.pdf)
- ▶ **Enjoy whole grains and children will too.** They learn from watching you.

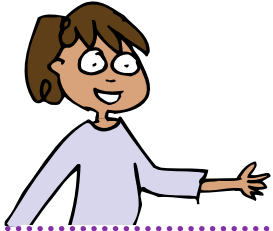


## Activities

### 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.



Which new whole grains or whole grain-rich foods listed 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**  
**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:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Sandwich</b> (on whole-grain bread, pita, sandwich bun, or roll)                   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Side Dish</b>  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Kangaroo Pocket</b> (veggies and fillings in a whole-grain pita pocket)            | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Breakfast</b> (featuring oatmeal or ready-to-eat breakfast cereals, such as whole-grain cereal flakes or muesli) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Veggie Roll-Up</b> (veggies wrapped in a whole-grain tortilla with ranch dressing) | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Cheese and Cracker Snack</b> (with whole-grain crackers)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Burrito or Quesadilla</b> (using a whole-grain or whole-corn tortilla)             | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Meatless Meal</b> (featuring beans and brown rice)   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Stir-Fry</b> (with brown rice)   | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>One Pot Meal</b> (with whole grains, veggies, and beans or meat in a slow cooker)                                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Hot Pasta Meal</b> (using whole-grain noodles)                                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Pasta Salad</b> (using whole-wheat pasta)  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Brown Rice Salad</b>   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Casserole</b> (with wild rice)   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Soup, Chili, or Stew</b> (with whole-wheat macaroni or whole-grain barley)         |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Snack</b>  |  |



**CACFP Crediting Tip:**  
 Include the full portion of grain/bread, depending on the meal and the age of the child.



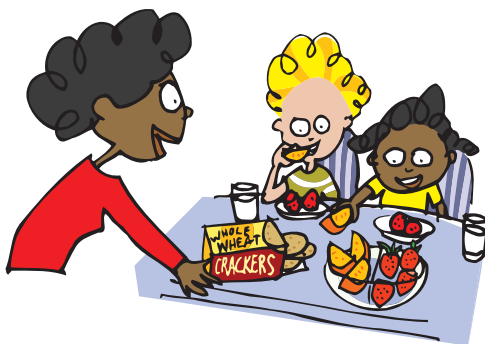
# My Notes:





# Supplement D: Create a Positive Meal Environment

## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program



**A child's eating environment may be as important as the foods he or she eats.** While food nourishes children's bodies physically, mealtime serves as emotional nourishment. Positive interactions and patience are important, as is an engaging eating experience. Child care providers can promote positive attitudes toward food and create a friendly eating environment to help children form lifelong healthy eating habits.

### How can I provide a comfortable and safe place for children to eat?

Plan your environment carefully, while thinking about the larger eating space, as well as the table-setting.\* To create a pleasant environment when children eat meals and snacks, **you** can:

► **Provide child-sized tables and chairs.**

Adults may want to sit on low chairs or crates to keep from “hovering” over the children. Children will be more relaxed when adults are next to, but not above, them.

► **Provide child-sized dinnerware and utensils.**

- Purchase dinnerware and utensils made for young children or use smaller plates and bowls, like salad or dessert plates.
- Use non-disposable dishes, cups, and utensils that are difficult to break.

► **Create a more home-like environment.**

- Let children help set the table with small table decorations like a vase of flowers or seasonal gourds. This can also be a mealtime conversation starter.
- Have children make decorated name cards that can be laminated and re-used.

► **Plan for spills and easy clean-up.**

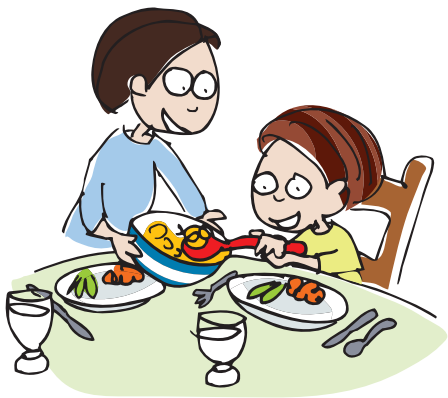
- Use cloth placemats or table covers along with, or instead of, plastic tablecloths. This will absorb liquids, *and sounds*, for a less stressful meal.
- When spills do occur, teach children how to help clean them up.

► **Before mealtime**, clear the eating area of materials used during other times, such as art supplies, books, etc.



\* Be sure to follow local safety and sanitation regulations.





## How can I make a smooth transition to mealtime?

Busy and active young children often don't want to sit and eat, so allow some time between high-energy activities and mealtimes. A calm transition to meals slows children down and helps them get ready to eat.

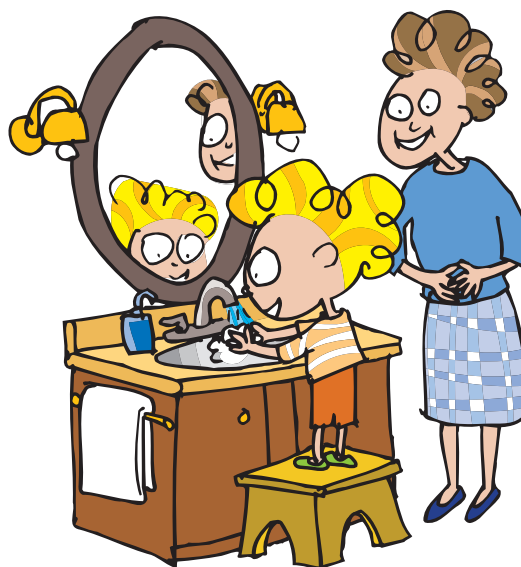
### ▶ Try some activities to help children slow down, such as:

- Coloring or drawing
- Playing with blocks
- Listening to soft music
- Reading a story
- Talking about the meal
- Preparing and setting the table

▶ **Tell children** a few minutes ahead of time that it will soon be time to eat.

▶ **Turn off any electronic devices** and keep them turned off during mealtime.

▶ **Use handwashing** as the first step of the meal. This will also encourage good hygiene.



## How can I get children involved in mealtime?

Giving children a sense of independence at mealtime supports child development. Children of all ages can help prepare meals. When they are involved in meal preparation and share foods with others, they learn about food and feel a sense of pride.

Cooking with children requires patience. It can be messy and doesn't always exactly turn out the way the recipe intended! Once you make it a practice, you'll find the benefits of including children in meal preparation far outweigh any drawbacks.



*more 'involve children in mealtime' tips on next page...*



...more 'involve children in mealtime' tips

► **Allow children to help prepare various food items for a meal, with proper supervision.\***

### Age 2:

Two-year-olds are learning to use the large muscles in their arms.

**Try letting them:**

- **Wipe table tops.**
- **Move premeasured dry ingredients** from one place to another, or pour them into a bowl.
- **Wash and tear** lettuce and salad greens.
- **Carry** unbreakable items to the table.

### Age 3:

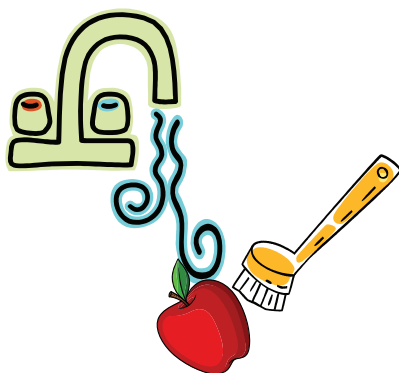
Three-year-olds are learning to use their hands. They can manage the tasks for age 2, and also:

- **Pour liquids** into a bowl.
- **Mix ingredients** such as batter (use an extra-large bowl to contain mess).
- **Spread soft spreads**, such as hummus or peanut butter, on firm bread.
- **Knead** dough.
- **Rinse** fruits and vegetables.
- **Wrap** potatoes in foil for baking.

### Ages 4 - 5:

Children in this age group are learning to control smaller muscles in their fingers. In addition to all of the above, allow them to:

- **Scrub** firm fruit, like apples.
- **Form round shapes** (of dough or other soft foods) with hands.
- **Measure** dry and liquid ingredients.
- **Peel** loose-skinned oranges and hard-cooked eggs.
- **Beat** eggs with an eggbeater or whisk.
- **Mash** soft or cooked fruits and vegetables with a fork.



*\*Check with your State agency or sponsoring organization for specific food handling requirements in your community.*

► **Involve** children in pre- and post-mealtime activities. With supervision, invite them to help:

- Set the table.
- Bring food to the table.
- Clear and clean the table after eating.

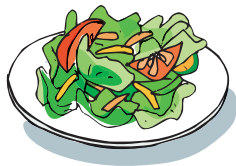
► **Encourage** children to do as much as possible for themselves. First efforts are an important step toward growth.

Be patient, and be okay with messes. Think of it as an opportunity to teach about food safety and clean-up!



## How can I make eating a pleasure for the children?

Remember that we eat with all of our senses! Serve foods in ways that are both pleasantly exciting as well as soothing to children's eyes, ears, touch, taste, and sense of smell.

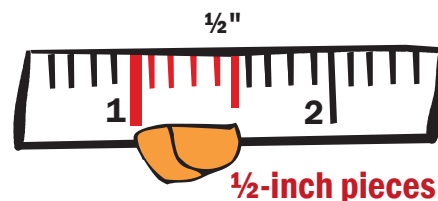


- ▶ **Keep it colorful.** Children like lots of different colors on their plates.
  - Offer different colored foods on the same plate, for example, chicken, carrots, green grapes, and whole wheat bread.
  - Try serving a colorful salad with green lettuce, purple cabbage, and sliced cherry red tomatoes.



### 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.**
- **Offer cooked or soft vegetables to younger children to prevent choking.**
- **Slice cherry tomatoes, grapes, and other round foods in half, and then cut into smaller pieces.**



- ▶ **Mix it up!** Children prefer when their plates contain a variety of foods.
  - Prepare different varieties of the same food in a dish, such as different shaped pasta. Foods like beans and peas offer many different fun shapes, colors, and textures.
    - Try serving a tri-colored bean salad for lunch.
    - Serve beans and peas as great finger foods for toddlers.
  - Offer hot and cold foods in the same meal, such as a hot entrée with a chilled fruit salad.
  - Serve food from other cultures to increase variety and teach about new foods. Have theme days with recipes and activities from different cultures.



**For great recipe ideas, visit the What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl Web site:**

<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>

- ▶ **Encourage** positive feelings about eating.
  - Plan plenty of time to allow children to serve themselves and eat without feeling rushed.
    - Encourage children to take time to taste the food.
  - Let children follow their hunger cues and allow them to leave food on their plates if they are full. They may learn to overeat if they are told to eat everything on their plates.
  - Avoid using food as a reward (such as giving them a "treat" when they behave) or punishment (such as not allowing seconds if they spill their milk).



## How can I be a good role model?

Children learn eating behaviors, such as what foods to eat and how much to eat, from their parents and other caregivers at home, as well as from child care providers.

### Set a good example:

- ▶ **Sit with children** during meals and eat the same foods they eat.
- ▶ **Practice** good table manners.
- ▶ **Avoid labeling foods** as being “good” or “bad.”
- ▶ **Try new foods** in front of children and encourage them to try them too.
- ▶ **Keep** any negative experiences or feelings about food to yourself.
- ▶ **Focus on the meal** and stay engaged with the children. Avoid doing other tasks during mealtime.

**Having “taste-test” activities outside of mealtime is a great way to let children explore food using all of their senses. Let them touch, feel, smell, and taste samples of food. They can also listen to cooking and food preparation sounds.**

**Try some of the taste-test ideas in "Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables." <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it>**

## Connect with Parents

- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share ChooseMyPlate.gov’s “Be a Healthy Role Model for Children” tip sheet with parents and other caregivers to encourage good role modeling at home too.  
<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/ten-tips-be-a-healthy-role-model>



- ▶ **You’ll also find** great messages, tips and advice, and a Child Feeding Video for families on the USDA Food and Nutrition Service *Core Nutrition Messages Child Feeding* Web page. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/core-nutrition/child-feeding>

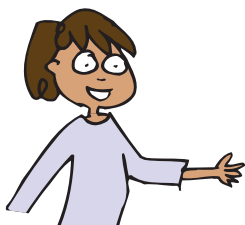


## Activities

What are some specific ways I can create a positive meal environment in my child care program?

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

- Make “Produce Placemats”** from *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables, Booklet 1: The Basics*, page 29. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/growit\\_book1.pdf](http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/growit_book1.pdf)
- Choose a new recipe** that has easy steps children can help with. Older preschoolers would enjoy following the “Look and Cook Recipes.” <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-look-and-cook-recipes>
- Pick a special song** to play when preparing the table for a meal. When the children hear the song, they will know the meal is about to start and it’s time to help set the table. You can download the “Reach for the Sky” song. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-nutrition-education-kindergarten>
- Provide colorful cloth napkins** that children can place on their laps (or tuck into their shirts) during meals and use to wipe their hands and mouths. You can buy these from a discount store. The sides of the squares can be folded over and sewn to keep from fraying when washed. Place them in a basket and have children choose one as they come to the table for a meal. After the meal, children can place the cloths in an appropriate basket for laundering.
- Include a “conversation starter”** centerpiece on the table. Use it to get children talking about recent activities or discoveries, ongoing projects, or for teaching new words. The centerpiece could be made from items such as objects found on a nature walk or structures built from blocks.
- Other ideas:**



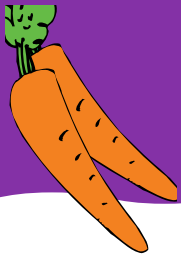
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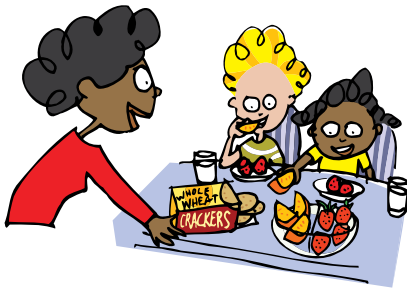
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# Build a Healthy Plate With Vegetables

## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

**Brightly colored vegetables can be the “superstars” 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. Fruits and vegetables are two separate components at lunch, snack and supper for those one year and older. This gives more opportunities during the day to serve vegetables. Serving vegetables at meals and snacks can:



- Give children the vitamins and minerals they need to grow and play.
- Help children maintain a healthy weight as they grow.
- 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.

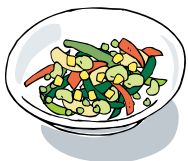


### CACFP Crediting Tips:

- **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 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 vegetables that are** steamed, baked, roasted, or sautéed more often instead of breaded and pre-fried vegetables, including fried potatoes.

*more ‘variety’ tips on next page ...*



... more 'variety' tips

- ▶ **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 different colored 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. [http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_31.pdf](http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_31.pdf)
- ▶ **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. <http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html>
- ▶ **Participate in Farm to Child Care activities.** Arrange to have farmers bring fresh, seasonal produce deliveries for your child care program. [http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/farm\\_to\\_childcare.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/F2S/farm_to_childcare.htm)
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share the *Nibbles for Health* take-home newsletter for parents on trying new foods together. [http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles\\_Newsletter\\_14.pdf](http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/Nibbles/Nibbles_Newsletter_14.pdf)



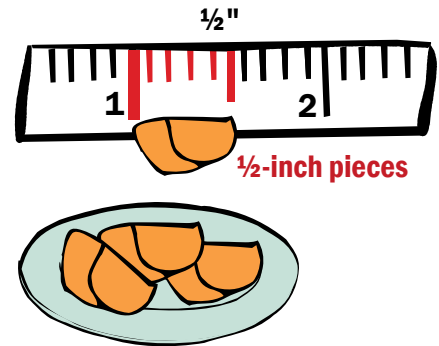


## How can I keep vegetables safe?



**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 Supplement A on page 77 for more information on choking hazards.**

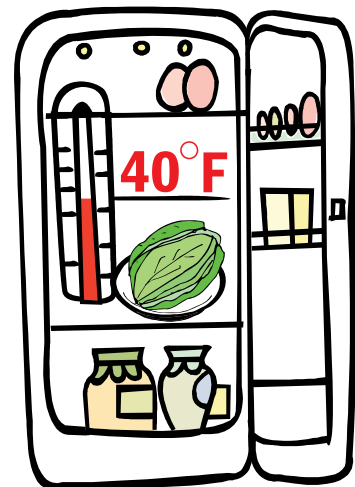


### Clean

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **See the Food Safety tip sheet on page 55 for more food safety tips.**



## 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:

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- 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.

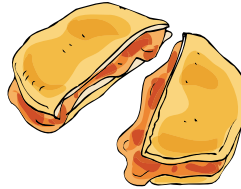
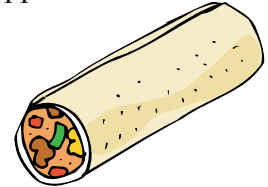
#### How will you offer vegetables next month? As part of a:

- Salad



- Sandwich

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



- Veggie Burrito or Quesadilla

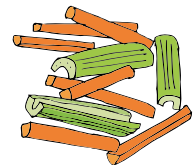
- Stir-Fry

- Pasta Dish or Lasagna Meal

- Pasta Salad

- Snack

- Veggie Sticks With Dip Snack



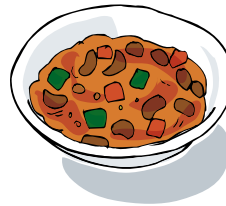
- Veggie Bake (vegetables roasted in the oven)

CHOKING!

For children younger than 4 years, offer cooked or soft vegetables to prevent choking.



**CACFP Crediting Tip:** Two different vegetables can be served in place of a fruit and vegetable at lunch and supper. Prepackaged vegetable mixes, such as succotash or peas and carrots count as one type of vegetable.



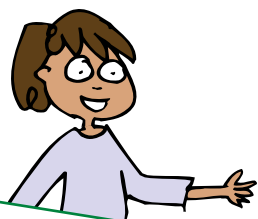
- Soup, Chili, or Stew

- Pizza

- Egg Dish

more 'Activities' on next page ...

... more 'Activities'



Which 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 Vegetables

- 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 (yuca)
- 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
- Chickpeas (garbanzo beans)
- Kidney beans
- Lentils
- Navy beans
- Pinto beans
- Soy beans
- Split peas
- White beans



# My Notes:



## Sandbox Playcare Childcare Home

Garden City, Kansas  
Debbie Tomlin, Owner

### Best Practice

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

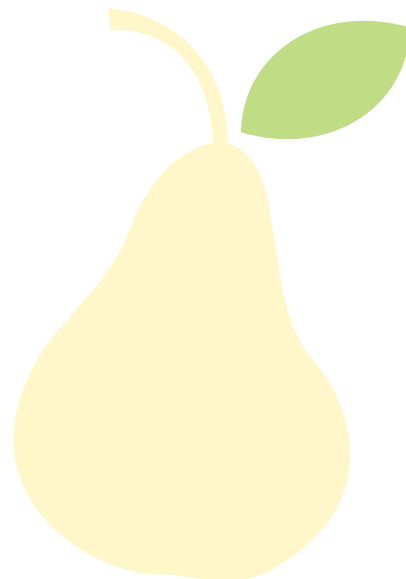
Offering a healthy meal seems to give the kids more energy (although on some days they don't need the extra energy). They also seem to play better, have less of an "attitude," and get along better with their peers because their tummies are full of the right foods. They don't ask for snacks all day long 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 increased our “outside times” in the morning and afternoon – offering 1 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.

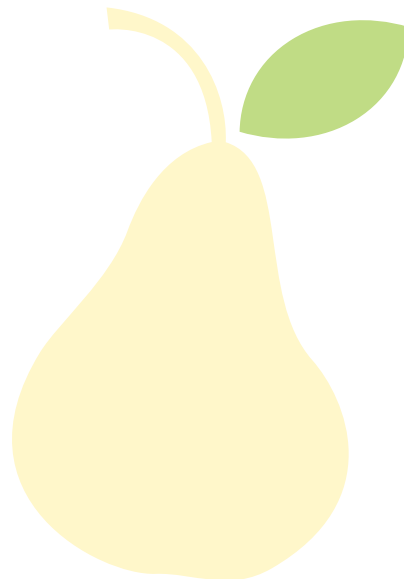


Build fun, healthy activities around the food you serve.

### 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 your veggies. Most of all, tell your children how great foods make our hearts 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.**

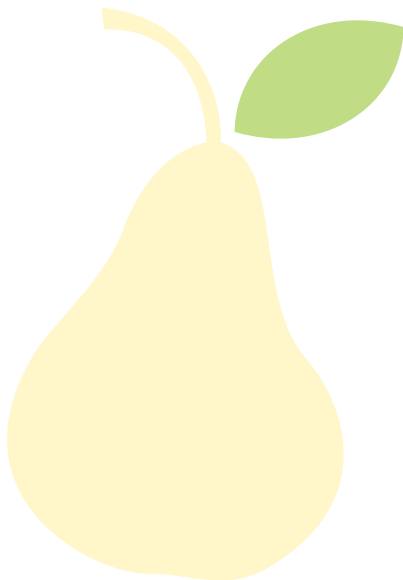
The children love it. They eat whole fruits and veggies. This all came about after I started a new menu with the children, but first I began to eat the new foods. As the children watched me eating these new foods, the children would ask me what I was eating. I would share with them and I would ask them 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.

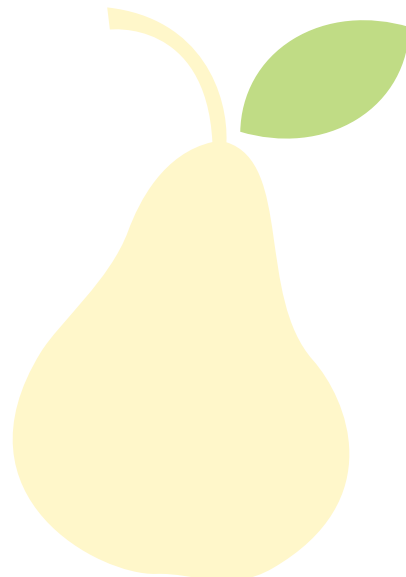
Some of the physical activity games are more popular than others and some staff took longer to warm up to the curriculum, but now, all staff try to use CATCH at least 3 days per week. Our site at Skillin School is over 50 percent free/reduced lunch. So, in 2011, we partnered with the University of Maine 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 day care 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 and  
encouraging  
healthy eating

### TIP

**I tell my day care 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.**

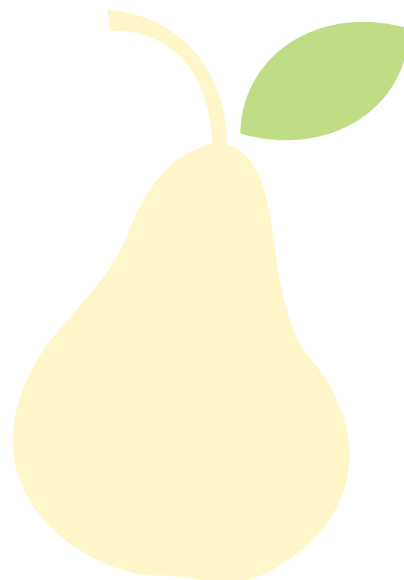
A nutritionist from the health department provided nutrition education to the families, with activities for them to follow up with at home. The YMCA staff conducted physical activities with the families and provided suggestions for age-appropriate activities that they could do at home. The family nights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





# My Notes:

