

Resource Cards

Set 1

Best Practices for
Building a Healthy Plate



2017

Steps to Building a Healthy Plate

Each of the resource cards in this set states one or more of the following best practices, the rationale for why they are best practices, and strategies for implementing the best practices.

Best Practices for Building a Healthy Plate

- 1.1.1 Serve fresh, frozen, or canned (in juice, not syrup) fruit at least two times per day or more.
- 1.2.1 Serve fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables at least two times per day or more.
- 1.2.2 Serve vegetables that are a variety of colors (dark green, red, orange, deep yellow) every day.
- 1.3.1 Serve dry beans and peas at least one time per week or more as a protein or a vegetable.
- 1.4.1 Serve lean protein sources with minimal or no added fat, sugars, and salt. Lean protein sources include lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, eggs, fat-free or low-fat yogurt, and low-fat cheeses.
- 1.5.1 Serve whole grains for at least half of all grains served.
- 1.6.1 Serve only low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk to preschoolers ages two and older. (Requirement in CACFP)
- 1.7.1 Provide drinking water that is clearly visible and available for self-serve to children at all times, indoors and outdoors.
- 1.8.1 Limit serving salty foods and snacks (such as chips and crackers) to less than one time per week or never.
- 1.9.1 Limit serving fried or pre-fried foods (such as French fries, fish sticks, tater tots, and hash browns) to less than one time per month or never.
- 1.9.2 Never serve foods with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils (trans fats).
- 1.10.1 Limit serving high-sugar foods (such as cookies, cakes, doughnuts, muffins, ice cream, and pudding) to less than one time per week or never.
- 1.10.2 Serve cereals that contain 6 grams of sugar per serving or less.
- 1.11.1 Serve meals to preschoolers family-style and allow children to serve themselves.
- 1.11.2 Provide appropriate child-sized tables and chairs when serving meals and snacks.
- 1.11.3 Provide appropriate child-sized plates, spoons, and serving bowls and utensils when serving meals and snacks.
- 1.11.4 Encourage teachers and staff to eat the same foods as preschoolers during meals and snacks to role model eating healthy foods.

Sources

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Card #1-1: Fruits

Best Practice

1.1.1 Serve fresh, frozen, or canned (in juice, not syrup) fruit at least two times per day or more.

Why is this a best practice?

- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend eating at least two servings of a variety of fruits every day.
- Fruits give children the vitamins and minerals they need for healthy growth and development.
- Fruits are high in fiber, which helps children feel fuller longer and promotes good digestion.
- Eating fruits provides children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- Eating fruits helps children develop lifelong healthy eating habits to maintain a healthy weight.
- Serving whole fruits is preferred to serving juice because juice does not contain fiber.
- Excessive juice consumption is associated with tooth decay and diarrhea.

Strategies for implementation

1. Offer a variety of colorful, tempting fruits at every meal. Serving ideas include the following:
 - a. Using cut-up fruit as a topping on waffles or pancakes instead of syrup.
 - b. Serving fruit salads at meals or snacks.
 - c. Serving fresh fruit instead of fruit pies, cobblers, or crisps with added sugar and fat.
 - d. Adding canned, crushed pineapple or mandarin oranges to salads or coleslaw.
 - e. Blending frozen fruit like peaches or berries with fat-free or low-fat milk for a fruit smoothie at breakfast or snack.
2. Choose good sources of vitamin C daily, such as oranges, grapefruit, cantaloupe, peaches, pears, and pineapple.
3. Select good sources of vitamin A at least twice a week, such as apricots, melons, plums, and mango.
4. Purchase fresh fruits when they are in season to save money.
5. Purchase canned fruits that are in their natural juices or water instead of syrup.
6. Purchase frozen fruits with no added sugars.
7. Limit 100% fruit juices (with no added sweeteners) to no more than ½ cup (4 ounces) per day for children 2-5 years old and 1 cup (8 ounces) for children 6-12 years old.
8. Limit added fat, sugar, or sodium when preparing fruits.
9. Ensure that fruits are cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking.
10. Have taste tests and offer samples to encourage children to try new fruits.

Card #1-2: Vegetables

Best Practices

- 1.2.1 Serve fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables at least two times per day or more.
- 1.2.2 Serve vegetables that are a variety of colors (dark green, red, orange, deep yellow) every day.

Why are these best practices?

- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend eating at least two servings of a variety of vegetables every day.
- Vegetables give children the vitamins and minerals they need for healthy growth and development.
- Vegetables are high in fiber, which helps children feel fuller longer and promotes good digestion.
- Eating vegetables provides children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- Eating vegetables helps children develop lifelong healthy eating habits to maintain a healthy weight.

Strategies for implementation

1. Offer a variety of colorful, tempting vegetables at every meal. Serving ideas include the following:
 - a. Serving mild salsa over an egg omelet for breakfast.
 - b. Serving fresh, lightly steamed vegetables with a small amount of low-fat dressing or dip as a crunchy snack.
 - c. Using frozen mixed vegetables for easy-to-prepare stir-fries.
 - d. Offering vegetables in small, easy-to-eat shapes: sliced zucchini and yellow squash sticks, broccoli or cauliflower “trees”, green and red pepper rings.
 - e. Adding shredded vegetables to soups and casseroles.
2. Choose servings from each of the following groups every week:
 - a. Dark green, such as broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, and other dark leafy greens.
 - b. Red and orange, such as acorn and butternut squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin.
 - c. Starchy, such as corn, green peas, green lima beans, and potatoes.
 - d. Others, such as cauliflower, celery, cabbage, tomatoes, and green beans.
3. Purchase fresh vegetables when they are in season to save money.
4. Purchase canned vegetables labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium”. Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes to boost flavor.
5. Purchase frozen vegetables with no added fats, sugar, or sodium.
6. Cut fresh or frozen vegetables into bite-size pieces and cook to prevent choking.
7. Limit added fat, sugar, or sodium to vegetables.
8. Limit serving fried or pre-fried vegetables (e.g. French fries, tater tots, hash browns) to less than one time per month or never.
9. Ensure that vegetables are cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking.
10. Have taste tests and offer samples to encourage children to try new vegetables.

Card #1-3: Dry Beans and Peas

Best Practice

1.3.1 Serve dry beans and peas at least one time per week or more as a protein or a vegetable.

Why is this a best practice?

- Dry beans and peas are lean sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals that children need for healthy growth and development.
- Dry beans and peas are high in fiber, which promotes good digestion and helps children feel fuller longer.
- They provide children with the opportunity to learn about different textures, colors, and tastes.
- Eating dry beans and peas helps children develop lifelong healthy eating habits to maintain a healthy weight.

Strategies for implementation

1. Serve a meatless meal at least once a week. Serving ideas include the following:
 - a. Combining two different types of beans, such as kidney and garbanzo beans, to make meatless chili more interesting.
 - b. Adding variety to winter menus with split pea, lentil, minestrone, or white bean soups.
 - c. Preparing main dish salads featuring garbanzo beans, red kidney beans, black beans, or a mixture of all three.
 - d. Pureeing garbanzo beans to make a hummus dip to serve with fresh vegetables for a snack.
2. Purchase dry beans and peas to save money. Soak them overnight in unsalted water to prepare the following day.
3. Purchase canned beans labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium” to save preparation time. If lower sodium options are not available, rinse and drain the canned beans to reduce the sodium content.
4. Select canned refried beans with no added fat and canned baked beans with reduced sugar and sodium.
5. Limit added fat, sugar, or sodium to dry beans and peas. Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes to boost flavor.
6. Have taste tests and offer samples to encourage children to try new dry beans and peas.

Card #1-4: Protein

Best Practice

- 1.4.1 Serve lean protein sources with minimal or no added fat, sugars, and salt. Lean protein sources include lean meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), skinless poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, eggs, fat-free or low-fat yogurt, and low-fat cheeses.

Why is this a best practice?

- Lean meats, poultry, and eggs provide protein, vitamins, and minerals that children need for healthy growth and development.
- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* encourage increasing consumption of fish and seafood for young children due to the heart-healthy oils they provide.
- Nuts and seeds are rich sources of heart-healthy oils.
- Protein foods help children feel full longer.

Strategies for implementation

1. Offer a wide variety of lean proteins each week. Serving ideas include the following:
 - a. Preparing main dishes with dry beans or peas, eggs, or fish.
 - b. Making healthy sandwiches from turkey slices, lean roast beef, canned tuna, or peanut butter.
 - c. Serving omelets stuffed with vegetables, such as green and red peppers.
 - d. Serving tuna fish salad as a snack item along with crispy celery or carrot sticks.
 - e. Serving low-fat yogurt with fruit as a snack or dessert.
2. Select lean cuts of meat, which include round steaks and roasts (round eye, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts for beef, and loin, tenderloin, and center loin for pork. Choose ground meats that are labeled 90% lean or higher.
3. Remove the skin from chicken and turkey before cooking.
4. Use cooking methods such as broiling, grilling, or roasting instead of frying or deep-fat frying to limit added fat.
5. Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of salt on meat, poultry, and fish to boost flavor.
6. Cook meat until tender and cut into bite-size pieces to prevent choking.
7. Limit serving the following items:
 - a. Baked pre-fried food items, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks.
 - b. Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon, and sausage.
 - c. Processed cheese food or product.
 - d. Shark, swordfish, king mackerel, tilefish, albacore tuna (potential for high level of mercury).

Card #1-5: Whole Grains

Best Practice

1.5.1 Serve whole grains for at least half of all grains served.

Why is this a best practice?

- The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* recommend making at least half of total grain intake be whole grains.
- Whole grains provide vitamins and minerals that children need for healthy growth and development.
- Some whole grain foods are high in fiber, which helps children feel fuller longer and promotes good digestion.
- Eating whole grains provides children with the opportunity to learn about different textures and tastes.
- Eating whole grains helps children develop lifelong healthy eating habits to maintain a healthy weight.

Strategies for implementation

1. Offer a wide variety of whole grains each week. Serving ideas include the following:
 - a. Serving whole grain cereals for breakfast.
 - b. Preparing sandwiches with whole wheat breads instead of white, or making sandwiches with half of each.
 - c. Using brown rice instead of white rice and whole wheat pastas instead of white flour pastas in recipes.
 - d. Introducing whole grains in popular products like pizza crust, breads, rolls, and hamburger buns.
 - e. Adding whole grains to mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soup and chili or bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries.
 - f. Modifying recipes to include more whole grain by replacing $\frac{1}{3}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the white enriched flour with whole wheat flour.
2. Look for whole grain to be listed as the first ingredient or that the food contains the entire grain kernel. Examples include whole-wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal, and brown rice.
3. Read the ingredient label and avoid products with added sugars (sugar, honey, and ingredients ending in “-ose”) as one of the first three ingredients, as well as products containing solid fats (butter, shortening, lard and hydrogenated oils).
4. Use vegetable oils, low-fat cheeses, or other low-fat toppings instead of butter, stick margarine, bacon, and cream sauces to limit added fat.
5. Limit serving the following items:
 - a. Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
 - b. Baked goods for breakfast that are high in sugar and fat such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, and doughnuts.
 - c. Baked snacks that are high in sugar and fat such as cookies, cakes, and rice treats.
 - d. Snacks that are high in sodium and fat such as chips and crackers.
6. Have taste tests and offer samples to encourage children to try new whole grain products.

Card #1-6: Milk

Best Practice

1.6.1 Serve only unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk to preschoolers aged two to five. (Requirement in CACFP)

Why is this a best practice?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the daily consumption of milk, cheese, yogurt, and other calcium rich foods to help build strong bones, teeth, and muscles in growing children.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends serving 1% or fat-free milk to children aged 2 years and older.
- Low-fat and fat-free milk contain as much calcium and vitamin D as reduced-fat and whole milk without the extra calories and saturated fat.
- Intake of milk and milk products, including fortified soy beverages, is less than recommended amounts for many children ages 2 to 3 years and most children and adolescents ages 4 to 18 years, according to the 2010 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Milk and milk products are high in nutritional value and provide calcium, protein, and vitamin D for bone growth and development.
- Children who consume milk at an early age are more likely to do so as adults.

Strategies for implementation

1. Offer fat-free or low-fat milk at every meal. *CACFP Requirement
2. Offer lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk to children who are lactose-intolerant.
3. Serve a pre-approved, nutritionally equivalent nondairy milk, like soymilk, to children with milk protein allergies or if a parent requests a milk substitution.

Card #1-7: Water

Best Practice

1.7.1 Offer water to the children throughout the day. Provide drinking water that is clearly visible and available for self-serve to children at all times, indoors and outdoors.

Why is this a best practice?

- Water is necessary to keep children well hydrated and healthy.
- Fluoridated water helps build and maintain strong teeth.
- Water helps rinse food from teeth and reduce acid in the mouth, both of which contribute to dental cavities.
- Water is preferable to other high-calorie, sweetened beverages.
- Drinking water helps children develop lifelong healthy eating habits to maintain a healthy weight.

Strategies for implementation

1. Display child size water pitchers with cups for easy access.
2. Place cups beside the water fountain or the appropriate sink for easy access.
3. Teach children how to use pitchers to serve themselves.
4. Offer mini sliced lemons, limes, or oranges to add flavor to water.
5. Serve water chilled.
6. Encourage teachers and staff to set an example for children by drinking water.

Card #1-8: Pass on the Salt and Sodium

Best Practice

1.8.1 Limit serving salty foods and snacks (such as chips and crackers) to less than one time per week or never.

Why is this a best practice?

- Serving foods with lower sodium helps children learn to like and enjoy foods with a less salty taste.
- Eating foods containing too much sodium may raise blood pressure.

Strategies for implementation

1. Select “reduced-sodium”, “low-sodium”, and “no salt added” versions of canned, packaged, and frozen foods.
2. Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of salt to boost flavor in vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, or other dishes.
3. Offer more fresh fruits and vegetables in season and fewer heavily processed foods.
4. Purchase canned beans labeled “no salt added” or “low sodium”. If these are not available, rinse and drain the canned beans to reduce the sodium content.
5. Limit serving highly processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon, and sausage, which are high in sodium.
6. Limit serving highly processed snacks, such as chips and crackers, which are high in sodium.
7. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare sodium in foods and select those that are low in sodium (less than 140 mg per serving).

Card #1-9: Low to No Solid Fats

Best Practices

- 1.9.1 Limit serving fried or pre-fried foods (such as French fries, fish sticks, tater tots, and hash browns) to less than one time per month or never.
- 1.9.2 Never serve foods with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils (*trans* fats).

Why is this a best practice?

- Extra calories from solid fats can make children feel full before they obtain the nutrients they need from other foods to be healthy.
- Extra calories from solid fats in foods make it hard for children to maintain a healthy weight.
- Solid fats are high in saturated fat and/or *trans* fat which increases blood cholesterol levels.

Strategies for implementation

1. Use cooking methods such as grilling, baking, broiling, roasting, and boiling instead of frying or deep-fat frying to limit added fat.
2. Use herbs or no-salt spice mixes instead of added fat to boost flavor in vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, or other dishes.
3. Switch from solid fats to liquid oils when preparing foods.
4. Use vegetable oils, low-fat cheeses, or other low-fat toppings instead of butter, stick margarine, bacon, and cream sauces to limit added fat.
5. Select lean cuts of meat, which include round steaks and roasts (round eye, top round, bottom round, round tip), top loin, top sirloin, and chuck shoulder and arm roasts for beef, and loin, tenderloin, and center loin for pork. Choose ground meats that are labeled 90% lean or higher.
6. Remove the skin from chicken and turkey before cooking.
7. Offer only fat-free and low-fat milk to children two years of age and older. *CACFP Requirement
8. Use unsweetened applesauce in place of butter or margarine when preparing baked goods.
9. Limit serving the following high-fat items:
 - a. Baked pre-fried food items, such as chicken nuggets and fish sticks.
 - b. Processed meats, such as hot dogs, bologna, bacon, and sausage.
 - c. Baked goods such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, and doughnuts.
 - d. Baked snacks such as cookies, cakes, and rice treats.
 - e. Snacks such as chips and crackers.
10. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare fat in foods and select those that are lower in fat.
11. Read the ingredient list on foods to avoid those that list shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Card #1-10: No Sugar Please

Best Practices

- 1.10.1 Limit serving high-sugar foods (such as cookies, cakes, doughnuts, muffins, ice cream, and pudding) to less than one time per week or never.
- 1.10.2 Serve cereals that contain 6 grams of sugar per serving or less.

Why is this a best practice?

- Extra calories from added sugars can make children feel full before they get the nutrients they need from other foods to be healthy.
- Extra calories from added sugars in foods make it hard for children to maintain a healthy weight.
- Sugars in foods increase the risk for dental cavities.

Strategies for implementation

1. Purchase canned fruits that are in their natural juices or water instead of syrup.
2. Purchase frozen fruits with no added sugars.
3. Select cereals, preferably whole grain, with little or no added sugars.
4. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare sugar in foods and select those that are lower in sugar.
5. Read the ingredient list on foods to avoid those that list added sugars.
6. Limit serving the following items:
 - a. Cereals or grains with more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
 - b. Baked goods for breakfast that are high in sugar and fat such as cinnamon rolls, toaster pastries, muffins, and doughnuts.
 - c. Baked snacks that are high in sugar and fat such as cookies, cakes, and rice treats.

Card #1-11: Healthy Mealtimes

Best Practices

- 1.11.1 Serve meals to preschoolers family-style and allow children to serve themselves.
- 1.11.2 Provide appropriate child-sized tables and chairs when serving meals and snacks.
- 1.11.3 Provide appropriate child-sized plates, spoons, serving bowls, and utensils when serving meals and snacks.
- 1.11.4 Encourage teachers and staff to eat the same foods as preschoolers during meals and snacks to role model eating healthy foods.

Why is this a best practice?

- Serving meals family-style allows children to choose the amount of food they want on their plate according to their hunger.
- Children see all foods as important when they are placed on the table at one time.
- Children are more willing to try new foods when they see other children eating them.
- Children learn and practice fine motor skills and social skills when they serve themselves.
- Children learn about healthy eating and table manners from adult role models eating with them.

Strategies for implementation

1. Help children to serve themselves by providing appropriate tableware:
 - a. Choose child-sized plates and cups that are not easily broken.
 - b. Choose child-sized cups that do not tip over easily.
 - c. Serve foods in small bowls with a wide rim or lip rather than platters to avoid spills.
 - d. Place several small bowls of the same food on the table so they are not too heavy for children to handle.
 - e. Put hot foods into bowls that are insulated so they are not too hot to handle.
 - f. Use smaller scoops and tongs that are easier for children to handle than long-handled utensils.
 - g. Use $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup measuring cups with handles as scoops for foods such as vegetables.
 - h. Choose small child-sized pitchers with lids and pouring spouts for young children.
 - i. Fill pitchers only partially full of liquids so they are not too heavy to handle.
 - j. Have a small bucket of soapy water, sponges, and paper towels available to quickly take care of spills.
2. Help preschoolers learn about healthy eating by encouraging teachers and staff to be good role models:
 - a. Keep meal time relaxed and let children select which foods to put on their plates and how much to eat from the healthy choices provided.
 - b. Be patient when introducing new foods. Children are more likely to enjoy new foods when eating them is their own choice.
 - c. Talk to children about the food's color, shape, aroma, and texture to help them learn about new foods. Explain how healthy foods help their bodies grow and give them energy.
 - d. Show enjoyment and enthusiasm about eating a wide variety of foods.

Resource Toolkit: Supplemental Best Practices Fact Sheets

Building a Healthy Plate

- Seasonal Fresh Fruit Chart
- Seasonal Fresh Vegetable Chart
- Cooking with Whole Grains
- Cooking with Herbs and Spices
- Using the Nutrition Facts Label to Eat Healthier
- Activities for Children – Easy Food Preparation for Preschoolers
- Activities for Children – Taste Testing for Preschoolers

Seasonal Fresh Fruit Chart

Fall	Asian Pear, Cactus Pear, Cape Gooseberries, Crab Apples, Cranberries, Grapes, Guava, Huckleberries, Key Limes, Muscadine Grapes, Passion Fruit, Pear, Persimmons, Pineapple, Pomegranate, Pumpkin, Quince, Sapote, Sharon Fruit, Sugar Apple
Winter	Cactus Pear, Cherimoya, Clementine, Dates, Grapefruit, Kiwifruit, Mandarin Oranges, Oranges, Passion Fruit, Pear, Pomelo, Red Banana, Red Currants, Sharon Fruit, Tangerines
Spring	Apricots, Asian Pear, Barbados Cherries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Breadfruit, Cantaloupe, Champagne Grapes, Cherries, Crenshaw Melon, Elderberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Honeydew Melon, Jackfruit, Key Limes, Limes, Loganberries, Mulberries, Nectarines, Passion Fruit, Peaches, Persian Melon, Plum, Raspberries, Sapodillas, Strawberries, Sugar Apple, Watermelon
Summer	Apricots, Asian Pear, Barbados Cherries, Blackberries, Blueberries, Breadfruit, Cantaloupe, Champagne Grapes, Cherries, Crenshaw Melon, Elderberries, Figs, Grapefruit, Grapes, Honeydew Melon, Jackfruit, Key Limes, Limes, Loganberries, Mulberries, Nectarines, Passion Fruit, Peaches, Persian Melon, Plum, Raspberries, Sapodillas, Strawberries, Sugar Apple, Watermelon
Year Round	Apples, Dried Apricots, Avocados, Bananas, Dried Cranberries, Coconut, Kiwano, Lemons, Papaya

Source:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2014). *Food purchasing for child care participant's workbook*. University, MS: Author. Retrieved from www.theicn.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20140430105631.pdf

Seasonal Fresh Vegetable Chart

Fall	Acorn Squash, Black Salsify, Belgian Endive, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Butter Lettuce, Buttercup Squash, Butternut Squash, Cardoon, Cauliflower, Chayote Squash, Chinese Long Beans, Delicate Squash, Daikon Radish, Endive, Feijoa, Garlic, Ginger, Jerusalem Artichoke, Kohlrabi, Mushrooms, Radicchio, Sweet Dumpling Squash, Swiss Chard, and Turnips
Winter	Brussels Sprouts, Buttercup Squash, Cardoon, Collard Greens, Delicate Squash, Sweet Dumpling Squash, Sweet Potatoes, Turnips
Spring	Artichoke, Asparagus, Beets, Broccoli, Butter Lettuce, Collard Greens, Corn, Fava Beans, Fennel, Green Beans, Manoa Lettuce, Morel Mushrooms, Mustard Greens, Pea Pods, Peas, Purple Asparagus, Radicchio, Red Leaf Lettuce, Rhubarb, Snow Peas, Sorrel, Spinach, Vidalia Onions, Watercress, White Asparagus
Summer	Beets, Butter Lettuce, Chayote Squash, Chinese Long Beans, Corn, Crookneck Squash, Cucumbers, Eggplant, Garlic, Green Soybeans, Lima Beans, Manoa Lettuce, Peas, Radishes, Shallots, Sugar Snap Peas, Summer Squash, Tomatillo, Tomatoes, Winged Beans, Yukon Gold Potatoes, Zucchini

Source:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2014). *Food purchasing for child care*. University, MS: Author. Retrieved from www.theicn.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/2014O4301O5631.pdf

Cooking Whole Grains

Whole grains, such as brown rice, quinoa, and bulgur, can be delicious additions to your menus. Whole grains have a chewier texture and nuttier flavor than refined grains. Many children and adults find they are more flavorful and interesting than refined grains, so don't be afraid to experiment with adding whole grains to your meals.

Preparing most whole grains is similar to simmering rice. Bring the proper amount of water to a boil, add the grain, and then simmer until almost all of the liquid has been absorbed. Avoid stirring too much or overcooking. Doing so will result in a grain that is sticky and gummy.

Whole grain dishes may be served at any meal by themselves, or added to soups, salads, main dishes, side dishes, and desserts. For child-tested recipe ideas, refer to *Recipes for Healthy Kids - Whole Grain Recipes for Child Care Centers and Schools* at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-child-care-version-whole-grain-recipes.

The following chart from the Whole Grains Council will help you cook whole grains perfectly.

To cook 1 cup of this grain...	Add this much water or broth:	Bring to a boil, then simmer for:	Amount after cooking
Amaranth	2 cups	20-25 minutes	3 1/2 cups
Barley, hulled	3 cups	45-60 minutes	3 1/2 cups
Buckwheat	2 cups	20 minutes	4 cups
Bulgur	2 cups	10-12 minutes	3 cups
Cornmeal (polenta)	4 cups	25-30 minutes	2 1/2 cups
Couscous, whole wheat	2 cups	10 min. (heat off)	3 cups
Kamut® grain	4 cups	Soak overnight, then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Millet, hulled	2 1/2 cups	25-35 minutes	4 cups
Oats, steel cut	4 cups	20 minutes	4 cups
Pasta, whole wheat	6 cups	8-12 minutes (varies by size)	Varies
Quinoa	2 cups	12-15 minutes	3+ cups
Rice, brown	2 1/2 cups	25-45 minutes (varies by variety)	3-4 cups
Rye berries	4 cups	Soak overnight, then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Sorghum	4 cups	25-40 minutes	3 cups

To cook 1 cup of this grain...	Add this much water or broth:	Bring to a boil, then simmer for:	Amount after cooking
Spelt berries	4 cups	Soak overnight, then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Wheat berries	4 cups	Soak overnight, then cook 45-60 minutes	3 cups
Wild rice	3 cups	45-55 minutes	3 1/2 cups

Source:

Whole Grains Council. (n.d.) *Cooking and eating whole grains*. Retrieved from wholegrainscouncil.org/files/CookingWholeGrains.pdf

Cooking with Herbs and Spices

Using a variety of herbs and spices in cooking is a healthy way to add flavor to foods without adding a lot of sodium and sugar. The charts below are a starting point to help you think about how you can use herbs and spices to replace sodium and sugar in recipes.

Herb Chart

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Anise seed	Whole, ground	Sweet licorice flavor	Cookies, cakes, fruit mixtures, chicken
Basil	Fresh, dried chopped leaves	Mint licorice like flavor	Pizza, spaghetti sauce, tomato dishes, vegetable soups, meat pies, peas, zucchini, green beans
Bay leaves	Whole, ground	Flavor distinctly different from celery	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad, dressing
Caraway seed	Whole	Sharp and pungent	Baked goods such as rye bread, cheeses, sauerkraut dishes, soups, meats, stews
Celery seed	Whole, ground	Flavor distinctly different from celery	Fish, soups, tomato juice, potato salad
Chives	Fresh, freeze-dried	In the onion family; delicate flavor	Baked potato topping, all cooked green vegetables, green salads, cream sauces, cheese dishes
Coriander seed	Whole, ground	Pleasant, lemon orange flavor	Ingredient in curry; ground form used in pastries, buns, cookies, and cakes; in processed foods such as frankfurters
Cilantro	Fresh, dried	Sweet aroma, mildly peppery	Ingredient in Mexican foods
Cumin	Whole seeds, ground	Warm, distinctive, salty-sweet, resembles caraway	Ingredient in chili powder and curry powder; German cooks add to pork and sauerkraut and Dutch add to cheese
Dill	Fresh, dried, seeds	Aromatic, like caraway but milder and sweeter	Dill pickles; seeds in meats, sauces, salads, coleslaw, potato salad, and cooked macaroni; dill weed in salads, sandwiches, and uncooked mixtures
Fennel seed	Whole	Flavor similar to anise, pleasant sweet licorice	Bread, rolls, apple pies, seafood, pork and poultry dishes; provides the distinctive flavor to Italian sausage
Marjoram	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Faintly sage like, slight mint aftertaste, delicate	Vegetables; one of the ingredients in poultry and Italian seasoning; processed foods such as bologna

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Mint	Fresh leaves or dried flakes	Strong and sweet with a cool aftertaste	Peppermint is the most common variety; popular flavor for candies and frozen desserts; many fruits, peas and carrots
Oregano	Fresh, dried leaves, ground	More pungent than marjoram, reminiscent of thyme	Pizza, other meat dishes, cheese and egg dishes; vegetables such as tomatoes, zucchini, or green beans; an ingredient in chili powder
Parsley	Fresh, dried flakes	Sweet, mildly spicy, refreshing	A wide variety of cooked foods, salad dressings, and sandwich spreads
Poppy seed	Whole, crushed	Nut flavor	Whole as a topping for rolls, breads, cakes, cookies, and pastries; crushed in fillings for pastries; over noodles and pasta or rice; in vegetables such as green beans
Rosemary	Fresh, whole leaves	Refreshing, pine, resinous, pungent	Chicken dishes and vegetables such as eggplant, turnips, cauliflower, green beans, beets, and summer squash; enhances the flavor of citrus fruits
Sage	Whole, rubbed, ground	Pungent, warm, astringent	Meats, poultry stuffing, salad dressings; cheese; a main ingredient in poultry seasoning blend; an ingredient in a wide variety of commercial meat products
Savory	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Warm, aromatic, resinous, delicate sage flavor	Beans, meats, soups, salads, sauces; an ingredient in poultry seasoning blend
Sesame seed	Whole	Toasted nut flavor	Rolls, bread, and buns
Tarragon	Fresh, dried leaves	An aroma with a hint of anise; licorice flavor, pleasant, slightly bitter	Vinegar, salad dressings, chicken, tartar sauce, and egg salad
Thyme	Fresh, dried whole or ground	Strong, pleasant, pungent clove flavor	New England clam chowder, Creole seafood dishes, Midwest poultry stuffing; blended with butter is good over green beans, eggplant, and tomatoes
Turmeric (tumeric)	Dried, powder	Aromatic, warm, mild	Prepared mustard; a main ingredient in curry powder; chicken and seafood dishes, rice, creamed or mashed potatoes, macaroni; salad dressing for a seafood salad; in melted butter for corn on the cob

Spice Chart

Name	Form	Taste	Uses
Allspice	Whole berries, ground	The aroma suggests a blend of cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg; sweet flavor	Fruit cakes, pies, relishes, preserves, sweet yellow vegetables, such as sweet potatoes and tomatoes
Cardamom seed	Whole, ground	Mild, pleasant, sweet ginger-like flavor	Baked goods, apple and pumpkin pies; an important ingredient in curry
Cinnamon	Whole sticks, ground	Warm, spicy sweet flavor	Cakes, buns, breads, cookies, and pies
Cloves	Whole, ground	Hot, spicy, sweet, penetrating flavor	Whole cloves for baking hams and other pork, pickling fruits, and in stews and meat gravies; ground cloves in baked goods and desserts and to enhance the flavor of sweet vegetables, such as beets, sweet potatoes, and winter squash
Ginger	Fresh, whole, cracked, ground	Aromatic, sweet, spicy, penetrating flavor	Baked goods; rubbed on meat, poultry, and fish; in stir-fry dishes
Mace	Ground	Strong nutmeg flavor	The thin red network surrounding the nutmeg fruit; used in baked goods where a color lighter than nutmeg is desirable
Mustard	Whole seeds, powder, prepared	Sharp, hot, very pungent	Meats, poultry, fish, sauces, salad dressings, cheese and egg dishes; whole seeds in pickling and boiled beets, cabbage, or sauerkraut
Nutmeg	Whole, ground	Spicy, pleasant flavor	Seed of the nutmeg fruit for baked goods, puddings, sauces, vegetables; in spice blends for processed meat; with butter for corn on the cob, spinach, and candied sweet potatoes
Paprika	Ground	Sweet, mild, or pungent flavor	A garnish spice, gives an appealing appearance to a wide variety of dishes; used in the production of processed meats such as sausage, salad dressings, and other prepared foods
Peppercorns: black, white, red, and pink	Whole, ground, coarse ground	Hot, biting, very pungent	Many uses in a wide variety of foods; white pepper ideal in light-colored foods where dark specks might not be attractive
Red pepper (cayenne)	Ground, crushed	Hot, pungent flavor	Meats and sauces

Common Blends of Herbs and Spices

Name	Ingredients	How it is used
Apple pie spice	Cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, mace, allspice, ginger	Baked pies, cakes, pastries
Barbeque spice	Cumin, garlic, cloves, paprika, and other ingredients: chili pepper, salt, sugar	Barbeque sauce, salad dressing, meat casseroles, potatoes
Chili powder	Cumin, garlic, oregano, cloves, allspice, powdered onion, and other ingredients: chili pepper, salt	Chili con carne, gravy, meat stews
Curry powder	Ginger, turmeric, cloves, cinnamon, cumin, black and red pepper, fenugreek seed (a spice specific to this blend)	Indian curry dishes, curry sauces, French dressing, scalloped tomatoes, fish chowders, split pea soup
Poultry seasoning	Sage, thyme, marjoram, savory, sometimes rosemary	Poultry and other stuffing, meat loaf; biscuits served with poultry
Pumpkin pie spice	Cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, ginger	Pumpkin pie, spice cookies and cakes, gingerbread

Source:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2009). *Culinary techniques for healthy school meals* (2nd ed.). University, MS: Author. Retrieved from www.theicni.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20100210102351.pdf.

USE THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL TO EAT HEALTHIER

Check the serving size and number of servings.

- The Nutrition Facts Label information is based on ONE serving, but many packages contain more. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming; if you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients, including the % DVs.
- When you compare calories and nutrients between brands, check to see if the serving size is the same.

Calories count, so pay attention to the amount.

- This is where you'll find the number of calories per serving and the calories from fat in each serving.
- Fat-free doesn't mean calorie-free. Lower fat items may have as many calories as full-fat versions.
- If the label lists that 1 serving equals 3 cookies and 100 calories, and you eat 6 cookies, you've eaten 2 servings, or twice the number of calories and fat.

Look for foods that are rich in these nutrients.

- Use the label not only to limit fat and sodium, but also to increase nutrients that promote good health and may protect you from disease.
- Some Americans don't get enough vitamins A and C, potassium, calcium, and iron, so choose the brand with the higher % DV for these nutrients.
- Get the most nutrition for your calories—compare the calories to the nutrients you would be getting to make a healthier food choice.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g		18%
Saturated Fat 3g		15%
Trans Fat 3g		
Cholesterol 30mg		10%
Sodium 470mg		20%
Potassium 700mg		20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g		10%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 5g		
Protein 5g		
Vitamin A		4%
Vitamin C		2%
Calcium		20%
Iron		4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

The % Daily Value is a key to a balanced diet.

The % DV is a general guide to help you link nutrients in a serving of food to their contribution to your total daily diet. It can help you determine if a food is high or low in a nutrient—5% or less is low, 20% or more is high. You can use the % DV to make dietary trade-offs with other foods throughout the day. The * is a reminder that the % DV is based on a 2,000-calorie diet. You may need more or less, but the % DV is still a helpful gauge.

Know your fats and reduce sodium for your health.

- To help reduce your risk of heart disease, use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.
- Trans fat doesn't have a % DV, but consume as little as possible because it increases your risk of heart disease.
- The % DV for total fat includes all different kinds of fats.
- To help lower blood cholesterol, replace saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in fish, nuts, and liquid vegetable oils.
- Limit sodium to help reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

Reach for healthy, wholesome carbohydrates.

- Fiber and sugars are types of carbohydrates. Healthy sources, like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains, can reduce the risk of heart disease and improve digestive functioning.
- Whole grain foods can't always be identified by color or name, such as multi-grain or wheat. Look for the "whole" grain listed first in the ingredient list, such as whole wheat, brown rice, or whole oats.
- There isn't a % DV for sugar, but you can compare the sugar content in grams among products.
- Limit foods with added sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn or maple syrup), which add calories but not other nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals. Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few items in the ingredients list.

For protein, choose foods that are lower in fat.

- Most Americans get plenty of protein, but not always from the healthiest sources.
- When choosing a food for its protein content, such as meat, poultry, dry beans, milk and milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat free.

Activities for Children – Easy Food Preparation for Preschoolers

A great way to teach preschoolers about food is to let them do some simple food preparation. Children learn best when they are interested in what they are doing. When kids have the opportunity to help prepare food, they develop a sense of pride. They also learn lifelong skills for good health.

Listed below are some age-appropriate tasks for young children. Remember that children develop at their own rate, so they may not be able to do some tasks. Always remember to keep food safe and have children wash hands with warm water and soap before and after handling food.

Most 2- and 3-year olds are able to:

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Wash and tear lettuce and salad greens
- Put bread in the toaster
- Break bread into pieces
- Dip foods
- Carry unbreakable items to the table
- Clean table tops with paper towels
- Place things in the trash

Most 3- and 4-year olds are able to do everything that 2- and 3-year olds can, and the following:

- Open packages
- Knead and shape dough
- Pat refrigerated biscuit dough into crust
- Pour milk, juice, and water into sturdy glasses
- Make sandwiches
- Toss salads with wooden spoon
- Wrap foil around potatoes for baking
- Mash potatoes and other soft fruits and vegetables

Most 5-year olds are able to do everything that 2- 4-year olds can, and the following:

- Measure and mix ingredients
- Crack open/breaking eggs
- Make cakes and cookies using baking mixes
- Cut soft foods with a plastic knife (with close supervision)
- Set and clear the table

Below are some tips to help you be successful when doing food preparation activities with preschoolers:

- Select easy recipes with few ingredients. Think ahead about the children's skills and what they will be able to do. If possible, use a picture recipe with no more than four foods.
- Plan ahead to have all the necessary equipment and supplies.
- Teach children to wash their hands before any activity involving food.
- Teach children how to wash fruits and vegetables before food preparation.
- Clean and sanitize the tops of tables where children will prepare the food.
- Supervise the children as they prepare the food to assure they use all utensils safely.
- Be aware of any children with food allergies and select foods and activities that everyone can participate in safely.
- Be a good role model and eat the food that the children prepare.

For more recipes and tips on how to cook with preschoolers, check out the following two curricula:

- Institute of Child Nutrition. (2009). *More than mud pies: A nutrition curriculum guide for preschool children (5th ed.)*. University, MS: Author. Retrieved from theicn.org/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20120910010154.pdf
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). *Grow it, try it, like it! Nutrition education kit featuring MyPlate*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it

Try the following Spinach-Strawberry-Cantaloupe Salad, adapted from USDA's *Grow It, Try It, Like It!* Nutrition Education Kit Featuring MyPlate curriculum, available at www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it.

Spinach-Strawberry-Cantaloupe Salad

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Yield: 12 ½-cup child-size servings

½ cup provides ½ cup fruit/vegetable towards CACFP meal pattern

- 4 cups fresh spinach leaves
- 1 cup bite-size pieces of fresh strawberries
- 1 cup bite-size pieces of fresh cantaloupe
- Poppy seed salad dressing or raspberry vinaigrette

1. Have children wash their hands.
2. Children can help wash the spinach in a salad spinner or in a colander with lots of water. Dry spinach leaves washed in a colander between sheets of paper towel before tearing into bite-size pieces.
3. Children can help wash the strawberries in a colander and gently dry with a paper towel. Adults should remove green leaves and stem with a knife.
4. Children can scrub the outside rind of the cantaloupe with a vegetable brush. Adults should cut the melon in half, scoop out seeds, and remove the rind.
5. Children can toss spinach and fruit pieces together in a large bowl using a wooden spoon.
6. Dress lightly with dressing of choice.
7. Serve immediately. Refrigerate any leftovers.

Nutrients per 1 child-size serving of ½ cup: Calories 43, Protein 0.5 g, Carbohydrate 4 g, Total Fat 3.1 g, Saturated Fat 0.4 g, Cholesterol 2 mg, Vitamin A 1150 IU, Vitamin C 16.9 mg, Iron 0.4 mg, Calcium 14 mg, Sodium 18 mg, Dietary Fiber 0.7 g

Source:

U.S. Department of Agriculture (2013). *Grow it, try it, like it! Nutrition education kit featuring MyPlate*. Washington, D.C. Retrieved from www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it

Activities for Children – Taste Testing for Preschoolers

The child care setting provides an opportunity for preschoolers to learn about new, healthy foods that they may not have tried at home. It's normal for preschool children to be hesitant about trying new foods. Accepting and eating a wide variety of foods happens over a period of time. One way to introduce new foods to children in a non-threatening way is to have taste tests. Taste tests offer children a way to become familiar with a food before it appears on the menu. You can test just one food at a time or compare new foods with familiar foods. When taste tests are a hit, children are more likely to eat the new foods when they are served at breakfast, lunch, or snack. Here are some tips for conducting successful taste tests with preschoolers.

Getting Started

- Be aware of children who have food allergies or intolerances. Avoid taste testing any foods that they may be allergic or sensitive to.
- Select healthy foods that you want to increase on your menus - vegetables and fruits, whole grains, dried beans and peas, and low fat or fat free dairy. When taste testing a cooked item, show children the food in its normal state before cooking.
- Keep costs down by using seasonal foods, foods grown in the school's garden, USDA foods, or donations from a reputable source.
- Think about where and when you would like to set up the taste-test. Taste tests can be conducted either in the classroom by bringing food in on a portable cart or in the cafeteria at a special table. Taste tests are usually best as part of a special activity, rather than during mealtime.
- Think about how many children will be participating in the taste test so the appropriate amount of food will be purchased. Serve good-sized samples and make sure you have plenty for every child to participate.
- Prepare food samples in advance and have all materials (plates, small cups, napkins, etc.) readily available, along with clean-up items such as paper towels, wet wipes and trash bins.
- Maintain proper sanitation procedures when preparing the samples. Thoroughly wash all hands, clean and sanitize work and surface areas, and wash and dry all fresh produce. Maintain foods at the proper safe food temperatures. Make sure all children wash their hands before the taste test as well as teachers or others who will be serving the food.
- Talk to the children about rules and expectations ahead of the taste test. Ask children to wait until everyone has been served before trying the food. Don't force a child to try a new food they think they won't like, but do explain that tasting is a good way to find out. Praise them for trying something new.
- Help children describe what they tasted. Was it spicy, sweet, or bland? Was it crunchy or soft? Did it taste like another food? What did it smell like?
- Involve teachers in taste tests, too. Consider allowing staff to sample the foods ahead of time. Ask them to gently encourage children to participate in the taste test and talk about the importance of eating healthy foods.
- Have children rate whether they liked the foods or not. The children can either put smiles or frowns on a piece of paper or you can pass out colored strips of paper to put in a bucket: green = I like it and red = I don't like it. Remind them there is no right or wrong answer.
- Overall, make taste testing fun! Decorate the classroom or area where the taste testing will take place with posters of colorful, healthy foods. Play some music. Give children stickers, bookmarks, or pencils for participating.

What to Taste Test

Provide multiple opportunities for children to explore a variety of foods in each food group. When young children are exposed to healthy food options on a regular basis, they learn how to make better food choices and develop healthy habits. Focus on foods that you want to add to your child care menus. Below are some ideas to help you get started:

Fruits

- Berries, different varieties
- Cantaloupe
- Kiwi
- Mango
- Papaya
- Pears, different varieties
- Plums

Vegetables

- Avocado
- Bell peppers, different colors
- Bok choy
- Eggplant
- Greens, different varieties
- Parsnips
- Squash, different varieties
- Turnips

Dried beans and peas

- Black beans
- Edamame
- Garbanzo beans (and hummus made from garbanzos)
- Lentils
- Navy beans
- Split peas

Whole-grains

- Barley
- Bulgur
- Brown rice
- Couscous
- Quinoa
- Wheat berries
- Whole wheat pasta

Dairy

- Cheese, low-fat
- Milk, low-fat or fat-free
- Yogurt, low-fat or fat-free

Take advantage of taste tests to include other learning activities about the food in the classroom. Read a story book about the food. Play a “Mystery Game” by placing fresh fruits and vegetables in a paper bag and asking children to identify them by touch. Have children do an art project related to the food, like finding pictures in magazines or making a drawing of the food.

Give taste tests a try to encourage preschoolers to try new foods. One bite can lead to a healthy eating habit for a lifetime!

Sources:

Action for Healthy Kids. (n.d.) *Tips for hosting a successful taste test*. Retrieved from www.actionforhealthykids.org/what-we-do/programs/701-tips-for-hosting-a-successful-taste-test

Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station. (n.d.). *Creating a taste-testing event: A resource for school nutrition professionals*. Retrieved from njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/fs1227/

The President and Fellows of Harvard College. (2011). *Food and fun after school: A basic guide to taste tests*. Retrieved from www.foodandfun.org/?p=learn/staff/activities&subject=A+Basic+Guide+to+Taste+Tests&unit=About

Michigan Department of Community Health. (n.d.) *Try it, you'll like it! The benefits of taste testing*. Retrieved from https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/97-98_Try_it_you_445128_7.pdf

Resource Toolkit: Instructor Scripts

Building a Healthy Plate

- Building a Healthy Plate Using MyPlate
- Water
- Pass on Salt and Sodium
- Low to No Solid Fats
- No Sugar Please

Instructor Script: Building a Healthy Plate Using MyPlate

Target Audience: CACFP personnel, other child care staff, and volunteers

Lesson Purpose:

- To introduce best practices for healthful food choices that promote healthy growth and development in young children
- To develop recommendations for implementing best practices at the child care facility

Time Needed to Conduct Lesson: 20 minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

- Handout 1: Parent Fact Sheet, *Healthy Eating for Preschoolers*
- Handout 2: Several copies each of the following pages from USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. There should be enough copies for each participant to get one of the sections:
 - Pages 5-8, *Build a Healthy Plate with Fruits*
 - Pages 9-13, *Build a Healthy Plate with Vegetables*
 - Pages 15-18, *Build a Healthy Plate with Dry Beans and Peas*
 - Pages 19-25, *Build a Healthy Plate with Protein*
 - Pages 27-31, *Build a Healthy Plate with Whole Grains*
 - Pages 33-36, *Build a Healthy Plate with Milk*
- Handout 3: Several copies each of the following Resource Cards from the Resource Toolkit. There should be enough copies for each participant to get one of the cards:
 - Card #1-1: *Fruits*
 - Card #1-2: *Vegetables*
 - Card #1-3: *Dry Beans and Peas*
 - Card #1-4: *Protein*
 - Card #1-5: *Whole Grains*
 - Card #1-6: *Milk*
- Handout 4: Copy of the child care facility's current weekly or cycle menu
- Pens or pencils

Materials Needed for the Instructor:

- Instructor Script
- Flip chart (optional)
- Marker (optional)

Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the child care provider will be able to

1. State at least one best practice for providing healthful food choices to preschoolers and at least two reasons why it is a best practice.
2. Make recommendations for providing healthful food choices to preschoolers at their child care facility.

Instructor Script

SAY:

Today we will discuss *MyPlate for Preschoolers*, which is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) food guide for young children. It offers many tips and suggestions for caregivers to ensure that preschoolers eat well, be active, and are healthy. We will also discuss best practices for building a healthy plate for preschoolers in our child care facility.

ASK:

Have you heard of *MyPlate*?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for a show of hands.

DO:

Pass out the Parent Fact Sheet, *Healthy Eating for Preschoolers*.

SAY:

MyPlate for Preschoolers was designed for parents and caregivers of children between the ages of 2 and 5. *MyPlate for Preschoolers* provides guidance on strategies to help preschoolers eat well, be active, and be healthy. The colorful plate is a reminder to eat a variety of foods on a daily basis from each of the five food groups: vegetables, fruits, grains, proteins, and dairy. One feature of the *MyPlate* graphic is that it displays the proportions of each food group.

ASK:

Looking at the *MyPlate* graphic, which food group is the largest?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is vegetables.

SAY:

The vegetable group, which is represented by green on the plate, is the largest. This is a reminder that we need to eat more vegetables.

One of the best practices for feeding preschoolers is to serve fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables two times per day or more. Another best practice is to serve vegetables that are a variety of colors (dark green, red, orange, deep yellow) every day. Each group of vegetable colors provides its own unique blend of nutrients. Overall, vegetables offer vitamin A, vitamin E, and vitamin C and other nutrients such as potassium, folate, and dietary fiber. We will talk more about best practices later in the lesson.

ASK:

Look at the *MyPlate* graphic again. Which food group is located next to vegetables on the same side of the plate?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is fruits.

SAY:

Fruits are represented by the red color on the *MyPlate* icon. Fruits, like vegetables, are one of the cornerstones to eating healthfully because they promote and support healthy growth and development. They are naturally low in calories and fat and are high in fiber, which helps children feel fuller longer. As a best practice for child care, we should serve fresh, frozen, or canned (in juice, not syrup) fruit two times per day or more.

ASK:

Look at the other side of *MyPlate* now. Which is the next largest food group?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is grains.

SAY:

Grains are represented by the orange color on the plate. You will notice there is a message related to grains if you look at the Daily Food Plan side of the sheet.

ASK:

Can anyone tell me what it says?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is make half your grains whole.

SAY:

The message is to make at least half of all grains whole grains, which is also a best practice for child care because of the health benefits. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel – the bran, germ, and endosperm – while refined grains have the bran and germ removed. Whole grains provide children with several B vitamins (riboflavin, thiamin, niacin, folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, selenium), and dietary fiber, while refined grains have only some of these nutrients.

ASK:

What food group is on the same side of the plate as the grain group?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is protein foods.

SAY:

Protein foods are represented by purple on the plate. Foods in this group include meat (beef, veal, and/or pork), poultry (chicken, turkey), fish, cooked beans and peas (legumes), nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, and eggs. In the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), yogurt and cheeses are also a part of this group. The best practices for this group are to serve lean protein sources with minimal or no added fat, sugars, and salt and to serve dry beans and peas one time per week or more. Protein foods provide a wide variety of nutrients that include protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B₆), vitamin E, iron, magnesium, and zinc. However, some protein foods can be high in natural saturated fat and/or added fat, so it's important to choose protein foods carefully.

ASK:

What is the final food group shown as part of *MyPlate*?

FEEDBACK:

Wait for answers from the audience. The correct answer is dairy.

SAY:

The dairy group is represented by the blue circle next to the plate. Foods from the dairy group include fat-free or low-fat dairy products like milk, cheese, and yogurt. In the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), for children ages 2 and older, low-fat (1%) and fat-free (skim) milk are part of this group. Milk provides children with nutrients essential to growth and development including calcium, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, vitamins A, B, and D, and protein. Low-fat and fat-free milk provide all of these nutrients with about one third of the saturated fat found in whole milk.

Best practices for providing healthful food choices to preschoolers have been mentioned throughout this presentation. You will now do an activity related to those best practices.

DO:

Divide the audience into six smaller groups by having participants count off 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Pass out one of the following Resource Cards to the members of each group along with the appropriate section from USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children* and a copy of the facility's menu:

- Group 1 - Card #1-1: *Fruits and Build a Healthy Plate with Fruits*
- Group 2 - Card #1-2: *Vegetables and Build a Healthy Plate with Vegetables*
- Group 3 - Card #1-3: *Dry Beans and Peas and Build a Healthy Plate with Dry Beans and Peas*
- Group 4 - Card #1-4: *Protein and Build a Healthy Plate with Protein*
- Group 5 - Card #1-5: *Whole Grains and Build a Healthy Plate with Whole Grains*
- Group 6 - Card #1-6: *Milk and Build a Healthy Plate with Milk*

SAY:

Each group has been given three items. One is a Resource Card. Each resource card lists one or more best practices at the top, reasons why it is a best practice for child care, and then strategies for implementation. The second item is from USDA's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. USDA put together this provider handbook to help child care programs like ours make changes in our policies and practices. These policies will help assure that children in our care will be more likely to adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors and attain their full educational potential. The third item is our current child care menu.

In your groups, please read through the Resource Card and discuss the best practice for each food group or subgroup (dried beans and peas is a subgroup of the vegetable group and the protein group). The provider handbook provides more information on each topic. The back page of each section from the provider handbook has an activity called "How can I put this information into practice?" Work in your groups to complete that activity and make recommendations on how we can follow these best practices. You will need to refer to our current child care menu to complete the activity. You'll have about 10 minutes to complete the activity, and then I will ask each group to report to the whole group on your recommendations.

ASK:

Are there any questions before we begin?

DO:

Allow the groups about 10 minutes to complete the activity. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions or provide clarification.

ASK:

Who would like to share their recommendations first to the whole group? Please tell us what food group you had, the best practice or practices for that group, and what you would recommend to implement best practices.

DO:

You may want to take notes on a flip chart as each group reports. Have each group report back their ideas to the whole group.

SAY:

Thank you for sharing your ideas today on how we can begin implementing best practices for building a healthy plate at our facility. Over the next few months, we will be putting your ideas into practice at our facility so that we can help the children in our care develop healthy habits they'll keep for a lifetime.

Instructor Script: Water

Target Audience: CACFP personnel, other child care staff, and volunteers

Lesson Purpose:

- To introduce best practices for healthful food choices that promote healthy growth and development in young children
- To develop recommendations for implementing best practices at the child care facility

Time Needed to Conduct Lesson: 20 minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

- Handout 1: *Resource Card #1-7: Water* from the Resource Toolkit
- Handout 2: Pages 51-53, *Make Water Available Throughout the Day*, from the USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*
- Pens or pencils

Materials Needed for the Instructor:

- Instructor Script
- Flip chart (optional)
- Marker (optional)

Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the child care provider will be able to

1. State the best practice for providing drinking water to preschoolers and at least two reasons why it is a best practice.
2. Make recommendations for providing drinking water to preschoolers at their child care facility.

Instructor Script

SAY:

Today we will discuss water and why it's the best beverage to offer children between meals and snacks. We will also discuss ways we can make water more available to preschoolers in our child care facility.

ASK:

Who thinks water is a nutrient?

DO:

Wait for a show of hands.

SAY:

You have probably heard that a person can only live about three days without water. A child's body is about 85% water. Water helps many of our organs to function, particularly the kidneys, the digestive system, and the brain. It helps transport nutrients to our body's cells and helps carry waste away from the cells. So water is very important and a vital nutrient we can't do without.

Each of you will now get a resource card that describes a best practice for providing water to preschoolers at child care facilities.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Resource Card #1-7: Water*.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read the best practice for water?

DO:

Have a volunteer read the best practice at the top of the card.

SAY:

Thank you. The *Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* included a water provision for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requiring child care centers, family child care homes, at-risk afterschool programs, and shelters participating in CACFP to make drinking water freely accessible to children. The best practice is to provide drinking water that is clearly visible and available for self-serve to children at all times, indoors and outdoors.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read why this is a best practice?

DO:

Have a volunteer read the bullet points.

SAY:

Thank you! Our child care facility is committed to implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity. Making sure that water is readily available to all preschoolers is one of the best practices we want to improve.

The bottom of the resource card has some strategies for implementation. There is also some information about water in USDA's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. USDA developed this provider handbook to help child care programs like ours make changes in our policies and practices. By implementing best practices, children in our care will be more likely to adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors and attain their full educational potential.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Make Water Available Throughout the Day*.

SAY:

Please divide into groups of two or three people. Read through the strategies for implementation on your Resource Card and *Make Water Available Throughout the Day*. Page 53 (the last page of *Make Water Available Throughout the Day*) has an activity called "How can I put this information into practice?" Discuss the questions with your partner(s) and make recommendations on how we can make water more readily available to children at our facility. You will have about 3-5 minutes to complete the activity. Each group will then report to the whole group on your recommendations.

ASK:

Are there any questions before we begin?

DO:

Allow the groups about 3-5 minutes to complete the activity. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions or provide clarification. When the groups have finished, have them report their ideas to the whole group. You may want to take notes on a flip chart as each group reports.

SAY:

Thank you for sharing your ideas today on how we can begin making water more readily available to preschoolers at our facility. Over the next few months, we will be putting your ideas into practice so that we can help the children in our care develop healthy habits they will keep for a lifetime.

Instructor Script: Pass on Salt and Sodium

Target Audience: CACFP personnel, other child care staff, and volunteers

Lesson Purpose:

- To introduce best practices for healthful food choices that promote healthy growth and development in young children
- To develop recommendations for implementing best practices at the child care facility

Time Needed to Conduct Lesson: 20 minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

- Handout 1: *Card #1-8: Pass on the Salt and Sodium* from the Resource Toolkit
- Handout 2: Pages 37-40, *Build a Healthy Plate With Less Salt and Sodium*, from the USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*
- Handout 3: Copy of the child care facility's current weekly or cycle menu
- Pens or pencils

Materials Needed for the Instructor:

- Instructor Script
- Flip chart (optional)
- Marker (optional)

Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the child care provider will be able to

1. State the best practice for limiting salt and sodium in meals and snacks for preschoolers and at least two reasons why it is a best practice.
2. Make recommendations for limiting salt and sodium in meals and snacks for preschoolers at their child care facility.

Instructor Script

SAY:

Today we will discuss building a healthy plate with less salt and sodium and how we can implement best practices at our child care facility to reduce salt and sodium in the meals and snacks we serve children in our care.

ASK:

Who thinks sodium is a nutrient?

DO:

Wait for a show of hands.

SAY:

Sodium is a nutrient that helps keep fluid in balance in our bodies, among other functions. However, while our bodies need some sodium, too much sodium can be unhealthy. For some people, as their sodium intake goes up, so does their blood pressure.

It is important to watch the intake of foods high in sodium in children's diets. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that most US preschoolers consume too much sodium, and nearly all do not consume enough potassium, which is in fruits and vegetables. They reported that 79% of children aged 1 to 3 years and 87% aged 4 to 5 years consumed too much sodium. Less than 10% of children aged 1 to 5 years consumed enough potassium each day.

Each of you will now get a resource card that describes a best practice for reducing sodium intake for preschoolers at child care facilities.

DO:

Pass out *Card #1-8: Pass on the Salt and Sodium*.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read the best practice for sodium and salt?

DO:

Have a volunteer read the best practice at the top of the card.

SAY:

Thank you. Most of the sodium we eat comes from processed and ready-to-eat foods, which usually come in cans, jars, packages, and boxes. When children eat salty foods on a regular basis, they learn to prefer the salty flavors more and more. In the next section of your card, you can see that by following this best practice, serving foods with lower sodium helps children learn to like and enjoy foods with a less salty taste. Since eating foods containing too much sodium may raise blood pressure, they will be healthier over their lifetimes by learning to like less salty tastes.

Our child care facility is committed to implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity. The bottom of your resource card has some strategies for implementation. There is also some information about salt and sodium in USDA's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. USDA developed this provider handbook to help child care programs like ours make changes in our policies and practices. By implementing best practices, children in our care will be more likely to adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors and attain their full educational potential.

DO:

Give each person a copy of *Build a Healthy Plate With Less Salt and Sodium* and a copy of the facility's current child care menu to each participant.

SAY:

Please divide into groups of two or three people. Read through the strategies for implementation on your Resource Card and *Build a Healthy Plate With Less Salt and Sodium*. Pages 39-40 (the last two pages of *Build a Healthy Plate With Less Salt and Sodium*) has an activity called "How can I put this information into practice?" Discuss the questions with your partner(s) and make recommendations on how we can reduce the amount of salt and sodium in the foods we serve at meals and snacks to children at our facility. You will need to use the child care menu to do the activity on page 40. You will have about 5-7 minutes to complete the activity. Each group will then report to the whole group on your recommendations.

ASK:

Are there any questions before we begin?

DO:

Allow the groups about 5-7 minutes to complete the activity. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions or provide clarification. When the groups have finished, have them report their ideas to the whole group. You may want to take notes on a flip chart as each group reports.

SAY:

Thank you for sharing your ideas today on how we can begin reducing salt and sodium in the meals and snacks we serve to preschoolers at our facility. Over the next few months, we will be putting your ideas into practice so that we can help the children in our care develop healthy habits they will keep for a lifetime.

Instructor Script: Low to No Solid Fats

Target Audience: CACFP personnel, other child care staff, and volunteers

Lesson Purpose:

- To introduce best practices for healthful food choices that promote healthy growth and development in young children
- To develop recommendations for implementing best practices at the child care facility

Time Needed to Conduct Lesson: 20 minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

- Handout 1: *Card #1-9: Low to No Solid Fats* from the Resource Toolkit
- Handout 2: Pages 41-46, *Build a Healthy Plate With Options Low in Solid Fats*, from the USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*
- Handout 3: Copy of the child care facility's current weekly or cycle menu
- Pens or pencils

Materials Needed for the Instructor:

- Instructor Script
- Flip chart (optional)
- Marker (optional)

Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the child care provider will be able to

- State the two best practices to limit solid fats in meals and snacks for preschoolers and at least two reasons why they are best practices.
- Make recommendations for limiting solid fats in meals and snacks for preschoolers at their child care facility.

Instructor Script

SAY:

Today we will discuss building a healthy plate with food choices that are low in solid fats and how we can implement best practices at our child care facility to limit solid fats in the meals and snacks we serve children in our care.

You have probably heard that a low-fat diet is good for you, while a high-fat diet is bad for you. But, it is a little more complex than that, as there are different types of fats in our diet.

ASK:

What are some of the things you've heard about different types of fat in the diet?

FEEDBACK:

Call on several people who raise their hands to share what they have heard about fats in the diet.

SAY:

Basically there are three major types of fats. One type is unsaturated fat. These are liquid at room temperature and are found in plant foods and fish. These fats seem to be good for heart health. Unsaturated fats are found in foods such as olive oil, peanut oil, canola oil, albacore tuna, and salmon.

Another type is saturated fat. These are solid at room temperature and are found in meat and other animal products, such as butter, cheese, and all milk except skim (nonfat). Eating too much saturated fat can raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.

A third type is *trans* fats. These are also solid at room temperature and are found in stick margarine and shortening. *Trans* fats are also found in certain foods that you buy at the store, such as snack foods, baked goods, and fried foods. When you see "hydrogenated" or "partially hydrogenated" oils on an ingredient list, the food contains *trans* fats. Just like saturated fats, *trans* fats raise blood cholesterol levels and increase the risk of heart disease.

Each of you will now get a resource card that describes two best practices for solid fats for child care facilities.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Card #1-9: Low to No Solid Fats*.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read the best practices for low to no solid fats?

FEEDBACK:

Have a volunteer read the best practices at the top of the card.

SAY:

Thank you. Would someone like to volunteer to read the next section on why these are best practices?

FEEDBACK:

Have a volunteer read the three bullet points on why these are best practices.

SAY:

Our child care facility is committed to implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity. The bottom of your resource card has some strategies for implementation. There is also some information about solid fats in USDA's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. USDA developed this provider handbook to help child care programs like ours make changes in our policies and practices. By implementing best practices, children in our care will be more likely to adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors and attain their full educational potential.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Build a Healthy Plate With Options Low in Solid Fats* and a copy of the facility's current child care menu.

SAY:

Please divide into groups of two or three people. Read through the strategies for implementation on the resource card and *Build a Healthy Plate With Options Low in Solid Fats*. Pages 45-46 (the last two pages of *Build a Healthy Plate With Options Low in Solid Fats*) has an activity called "How can I put this information into practice?" Discuss the questions with your partner(s) and make recommendations on how we can reduce solid fats in the foods we serve at meals and snacks to children at our facility. You will need to use the child care menu to do the activity on page 46. You will have about 5-7 minutes to complete the activity. Each group will then report to the whole group on your recommendations.

ASK:

Are there any questions before we begin?

DO:

Allow the groups about 3-5 minutes to complete the activity. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions or provide clarification. When the groups have finished, have them report their ideas to the whole group. You may want to take notes on a flip chart as each group reports.

SAY:

Thank you for sharing your ideas today on how we can begin reducing solid fats in the meals and snacks we serve to preschoolers at our facility. Over the next few months, we will be putting your ideas into practice so that we can help the children in our care develop healthy habits they will keep for a lifetime.

Instructor Script: No Sugar Please

Target Audience: CACFP personnel, other child care staff, and volunteers

Lesson Purpose:

- To introduce best practices for healthful food choices that promote healthy growth and development in young children
- To develop recommendations for implementing best practices at the child care facility

Time Needed to Conduct Lesson: 20 minutes

Materials Needed for Each Participant:

- Handout 1: *Card #1-10: No Sugar Please* from the Resource Toolkit
- Handout 2: Pages 47-50, *Build a Healthy Plate With Fewer Added Sugars*, from the USDA's Provider Handbook *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*
- Handout 3: Copy of the child care facility's current weekly or cycle menu
- Pens or pencils

Materials Needed for the Instructor:

- Instructor Script
- Flip chart (optional)
- Marker (optional)

Lesson Objectives:

At the end of the lesson, the child care provider will be able to

1. State the two best practices for child care providers to limit added sugars in meals and snacks for preschoolers and at least two reasons why they are best practices.
2. Make recommendations for limiting added sugars in meals and snacks for preschoolers at their own child care facility.

Instructor Script

SAY:

Today we will discuss building a healthy plate with fewer added sugars. We will also discuss how we can implement best practices to decrease added sugars in the meals and snacks we serve children in our care.

Sugar is found naturally in a variety of foods, such as fruit, milk, yogurt, and cheese. However, the majority of sugar in the typical American diet comes from added sugars.

ASK:

What are some of the foods and beverages that have added sugars?

FEEDBACK:

Call on several people who raise their hands to share foods and beverages with added sugars.

SAY:

Sodas, fruit drinks, pies, cakes, ice cream, sugar-sweetened breakfast cereals - all of these and more are major sources of added sugars in the diet. Added sugars are even found in some items you would not suspect, such as spaghetti sauce, breads, hamburger and hot dog buns, lunch meats, canned fruit, and sometimes even canned beans and vegetables!

Each of you will now get a resource card that lists two best practices for decreasing added sugars in the diets of preschoolers.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Card #1-10: No Sugar Please*.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read the best practices for decreasing sugar?

FEEDBACK:

Have a volunteer read the best practices at the top of the card.

SAY:

Thank you. It is important to limit the number of high sugar foods I mentioned a moment ago. Since many preschoolers eat cereal for breakfast, it is also important to monitor the amount of sugar that is in breakfast cereals.

ASK:

Would someone like to volunteer to read the next section on why these are best practices?

FEEDBACK:

Have a volunteer read the three bullet points on why these are best practices.

SAY:

Our child care facility is committed to implementing best practices for nutrition and physical activity. The bottom of your resource card has some strategies for implementation. There is also some information about added sugars in USDA's *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children*. USDA developed this provider handbook to help child care programs like ours make changes in our policies and practices. By implementing best practices, children in our care will be more likely to adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors and attain their full educational potential.

DO:

Give each participant a copy of *Build a Healthy Plate With Fewer Added Sugars* and a copy of the facility's current child care menu.

SAY:

Please divide into groups of two or three people. Read through the strategies for implementation on your resource card and *Build a Healthy Plate With Fewer Added Sugars*. Page 50 (the last page of *Build a Healthy Plate With Fewer Added Sugars*) has an activity called "How can I put this information into practice?" Discuss the questions with your partner(s) and make recommendations on how we can reduce added sugars in the foods we serve at meals and snacks to children at our facility. Use the child care menu to do the activity on the bottom of page 50. You will have about 5-7 minutes to complete the activity. Each group will then report to the whole group on your recommendations.

ASK:

Are there any questions before we begin?

DO:

Allow the groups about 5-7 minutes to complete the activity. Circulate among the groups to answer any questions or provide clarification. When the groups have finished, have them report their ideas to the whole group. You may want to take notes on a flip chart as each group reports.

SAY:

Thank you for sharing your ideas today on how we can begin reducing added sugars in the meals and snacks we serve to preschoolers at our facility. Over the next few months, we will be putting your ideas into practice so that we can help the children in our care develop healthy habits they will keep for a lifetime.

Resource Toolkit: Parent Tip Sheets

Building a Healthy Plate

Developing healthy eating habits is important for preschoolers. All adults are important role models, especially parents. Sharing information about healthy eating with parents can help support the best practices being implemented in your child care facility. The following fact sheets will help parents implement healthy practices at home.

Building a Healthy Plate using *MyPlate*

- Healthy Eating for Preschoolers - ChooseMyPlate.gov
- Kid-friendly Veggies and Fruits - 10 Tips for Making Healthy Foods More Fun for Children
- Vary Your Protein Routine - 10 Tips for Choosing Protein
- Make Half Your Grains Whole - 10 Tips to Help You Eat Whole Grains
- Choosing Whole-grain Foods - 10 Tips for Purchasing and Storing Whole-grain Foods
- Got Your Dairy Today? - 10 Tips to Help You Eat and Drink More Fat-free or Low-fat Dairy Foods

Water

- Water for Health - 10 Tips to Encourage Your Preschooler to Drink Water

Pass on Salt and Sodium

- Salt and Sodium - 10 Tips to Help You Cut Back

Low to No Solid Fats

- Build a Healthy Plate Low in Solid Fats - 10 Tips to Help You Cut Back

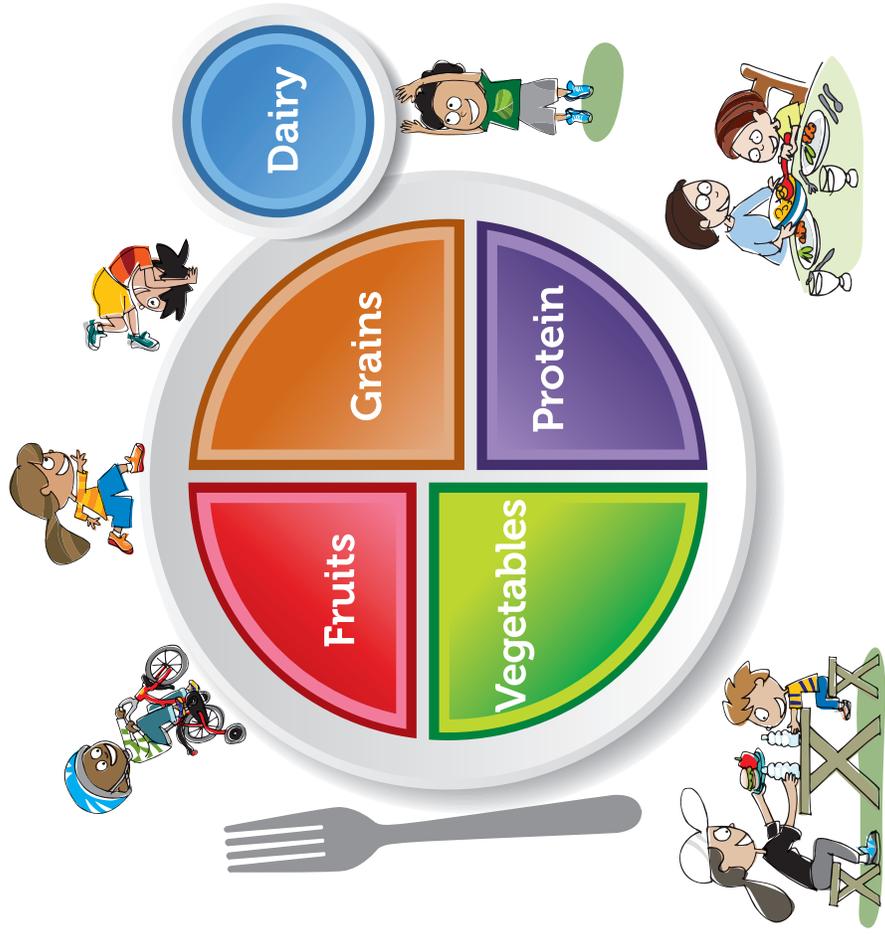
No Sugar Please

- Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats - 10 Tips to Decrease Added Sugars

Being a Role Model

- Be a Healthy Role Model for Children - 10 Tips for Setting Good Examples

Healthy Eating for Preschoolers



ChooseMyPlate.gov



Get your child on the path to healthy eating.

Focus on the meal and each other.

Your child learns by watching you. Children are likely to copy your table manners, your likes and dislikes, and your willingness to try new foods.

Offer a variety of healthy foods.

Let your child choose how much to eat. Children are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their own choice.

Be patient with your child.

Sometimes new foods take time. Give children a taste at first and be patient with them. Offer new foods many times.

Let your children serve themselves.

Teach your children to take small amounts at first. Let them know they can get more if they are still hungry.



Cook together.

Eat together.

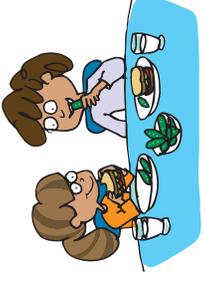
Talk together.

Make meal time family time.

Healthy ^{for} Eating

Preschoolers

Daily Food Plan



Use this Plan as a general guide.

- These food plans are based on average needs. Do not be concerned if your child does not eat the exact amounts suggested. Your child may need more or less than average. For example, food needs increase during growth spurts.

- Children's appetites vary from day to day. Some days they may eat less than these amounts; other days they may want more. Offer these amounts and let your child decide how much to eat.

Food group	2 year olds	3 year olds	4 and 5 year olds	What counts as:
Fruits 	1 cup	1 - 1½ cups	1 - 1½ cups	½ cup of fruit? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped fruit ½ cup 100% fruit juice ½ medium banana 4-5 large strawberries
Vegetables 	1 cup	1½ cups	1½ - 2 cups	½ cup of veggies? ½ cup mashed, sliced, or chopped vegetables 1 cup raw leafy greens ½ cup vegetable juice 1 small ear of corn
Grains Make half your grains whole 	3 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	4 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of grains? 1 slice bread 1 cup ready-to-eat cereal flakes ½ cup cooked rice or pasta 1 tortilla (6" across)
Protein Foods 	2 ounces	3 - 4 ounces	3 - 5 ounces	1 ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce cooked meat, poultry, or seafood 1 egg 1 Tablespoon peanut butter ¼ cup cooked beans or peas (kidney, pinto, lentils)
Dairy Choose low-fat or fat-free 	2 cups	2 cups	2½ cups	½ cup of dairy? ½ cup milk 4 ounces yogurt ¾ ounce cheese 1 string cheese

Some foods are easy for your child to choke on while eating. Skip hard, small, whole foods, such as popcorn, nuts, seeds, and hard candy. Cut up foods such as hot dogs, grapes, and raw carrots into pieces smaller than the size of your child's throat—about the size of a nickel.



There are many ways to divide the Daily Food Plan into meals and snacks. View the "Meal and Snack Patterns and Ideas" to see how these amounts might look on your preschooler's plate at www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers.html.

**10
tips**
Nutrition
Education Series

kid-friendly veggies and fruits



10 tips for making healthy foods more fun for children

Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun. 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 make them.

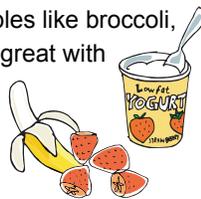
1 smoothie creations

Blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned, and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches, and/or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice!



2 delicious dippers

Kids love to dip their foods. Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, or cauliflower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.



3 caterpillar kabobs

Assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For a raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers, or tomatoes.

4 personalized pizzas

Set up a pizza-making station in the kitchen. Use whole-wheat English muffins, bagels, or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and cut-up vegetables or fruits for toppings. Let kids choose their own favorites. Then pop the pizzas into the oven to warm.

5 fruity peanut butterfly

Start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.

6 frosty fruits

Frozen treats are bound to be popular in the warm months. Just put fresh fruits such as melon chunks in the freezer (rinse first). Make "popsicles" by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing.

7 bugs on a log

Use celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or cherries, depending on what bugs you want!

8 homemade trail mix

Skip the pre-made trail mix and make your own. Use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts, or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple, cherries, apricots, or raisins. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.



9 potato person

Decorate half a baked potato. Use sliced cherry tomatoes, peas, and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.

10 put kids in charge

Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.





10 tips
Nutrition Education Series

vary your protein routine



10 tips for choosing protein

Protein foods include both animal (meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs) and plant (beans, peas, soy products, nuts, and seeds) sources. We all need protein—but most Americans eat enough, and some eat more than they need. How much is enough? Most people, ages 9 and older, should eat 5 to 7 ounces* of protein foods each day depending on overall calorie needs.

1 vary your protein food choices
Eat a variety of foods from the Protein Foods Group each week. Experiment with main dishes made with beans or peas, nuts, soy, and seafood.

2 choose seafood twice a week
Eat seafood in place of meat or poultry twice a week. Select a variety of seafood—include some that are higher in oils and low in mercury, such as salmon, trout, and herring.



3 make meat and poultry lean or low fat
Choose lean or low-fat cuts of meat like round or sirloin and ground beef that is at least 90% lean. Trim or drain fat from meat and remove poultry skin.

4 have an egg
One egg a day, on average, doesn't increase risk for heart disease, so make eggs part of your weekly choices. Only the egg yolk contains saturated fat, so have as many egg whites as you want.

5 eat plant protein foods more often
Try beans and peas (kidney, pinto, black, or white beans; split peas; chickpeas; hummus), soy products (tofu, tempeh, veggie burgers), nuts, and seeds. They are naturally low in saturated fat and high in fiber.



6 nuts and seeds
Choose unsalted nuts or seeds as a snack, on salads, or in main dishes to replace meat or poultry. Nuts and seeds are a concentrated source of calories, so eat small portions to keep calories in check.

7 keep it tasty and healthy
Try grilling, broiling, roasting, or baking—they don't add extra fat. Some lean meats need slow, moist cooking to be tender—try a slow cooker for them. Avoid breading meat or poultry, which adds calories.

8 make a healthy sandwich
Choose turkey, roast beef, canned tuna or salmon, or peanut butter for sandwiches. Many deli meats, such as regular bologna or salami, are high in fat and sodium—make them occasional treats only.



9 think small when it comes to meat portions
Get the flavor you crave but in a smaller portion. Make or order a small turkey burger or a "petite" size steak.

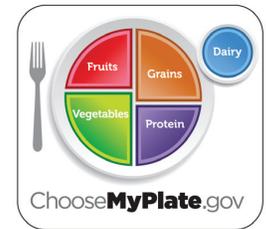
10 check the sodium
Check the Nutrition Facts label to limit sodium. Salt is added to many canned foods—including soups, vegetables, beans, and meats. Many processed meats—such as ham, sausage, and hot dogs—are high in sodium. Some fresh chicken, turkey, and pork are brined in a salt solution for flavor and tenderness.

* What counts as an ounce of protein foods? 1 ounce lean meat, poultry, or seafood; 1 egg; ¼ cup cooked beans or peas; ½ ounce nuts or seeds; or 1 tablespoon peanut butter.

10 tips

Nutrition Education Series

make half your grains whole



10 tips to help you eat whole grains

Any food made from wheat, rice, oats, cornmeal, barley, or another cereal grain is a grain product. Bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas, and grits are examples. Grains are divided into two subgroups, **whole grains** and **refined grains**. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel—the bran, germ, and endosperm. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases.

1 make simple switches

To make half your grains whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined-grain product. For example, eat 100% whole-wheat bread or bagels instead of white bread or bagels, or brown rice instead of white rice.



2 whole grains can be healthy snacks



Popcorn, a whole grain, can be a healthy snack. Make it with little or no added salt or butter.

Also, try 100% whole-wheat or rye crackers.

3 save some time

Cook extra bulgur or barley when you have time. Freeze half to heat and serve later as a quick side dish.

4 mix it up with whole grains

Use whole grains in mixed dishes, such as barley in vegetable soups or stews and bulgur wheat in casseroles or stir-fries. Try a quinoa salad or pilaf.

5 try whole-wheat versions

For a change, try brown rice or whole-wheat pasta. Try brown rice stuffing in baked green peppers or tomatoes, and whole-wheat macaroni in macaroni and cheese.



6 bake up some whole-grain goodness

Experiment by substituting buckwheat, millet, or oat flour for up to half of the flour in pancake, waffle, muffin, or other flour-based recipes. They may need a bit more leavening in order to rise.

7 be a good role model for children

Set a good example for children by serving and eating whole grains every day with meals or as snacks.

8 check the label for fiber

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



9 know what to look for on the ingredients list

Read the ingredients list and choose products that name a whole-grain ingredient **first** on the list. Look for “whole wheat,” “brown rice,” “bulgur,” “buckwheat,” “oatmeal,” “whole-grain cornmeal,” “whole oats,” “whole rye,” or “wild rice.”

10 be a smart shopper

The color of a food is not an indication that it is a whole-grain food. Foods labeled as “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain,” or “bran” are usually not 100% whole-grain products, and may not contain **any** whole grain.



10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

choosing whole-grain foods



10 tips for purchasing and storing whole-grain foods

Whole grains are important sources of nutrients like zinc, magnesium, B vitamins, and fiber.

There are many choices available to make half your grains whole grains. But whole-grain foods should be handled with care. Over time and if not properly stored, oils in whole grains can cause spoilage. Consider these tips to select whole-grain products and keep them fresh and safe to eat.

1 search the label

Whole grains can be an easy choice when preparing meals. Choose whole-grain breads, breakfast cereals, and other prepared foods. Look at the Nutrition Facts labels to find choices lower in sodium, saturated (solid) fat, and sugars.



2 look for the word “whole” at the beginning of the ingredients list

Some whole-grain ingredients include whole oats, whole-wheat flour, whole-grain corn, whole-grain brown rice, wild rice, and whole rye. Foods that say “multi-grain,” “100% wheat,” “high fiber,” or are brown in color may not be a whole-grain product.

3 kids can choose whole grains

The new school meal standards make it easier for your kids to choose whole grains at school. You can help your child adapt to the changes by slowly adding whole grains into their favorite recipes, meals, and snacks at home.

4 find the fiber on label

If the product provides at least 3 grams of fiber per serving, it is a good source of fiber. If it contains 5 or more grams of fiber per serving, it is an excellent source of fiber.

5 is gluten in whole grains?

People who can't eat wheat gluten can eat whole grains if they choose carefully. There are many whole-grain products, such as buckwheat, certified gluten-free oats or oatmeal, popcorn, brown rice, wild rice, and quinoa that fit gluten-free diet needs.



6 check for freshness

Buy whole-grain products that are tightly packaged and well sealed. Grains should always look and smell fresh. Also, check the expiration date and storage guidelines on the package.

7 keep a lid on it

When storing whole grains from bulk bins, use containers with tight-fitting lids and keep in a cool, dry location. A sealed container is important for maintaining freshness and reducing the possibility of bug infestations or moisture.

8 buy what you need

Purchase smaller quantities of whole-grain products to reduce spoilage. Most grains in sealed packaging can be kept in the freezer.



9 wrap it up

Whole-grain bread is best stored at room temperature in its original packaging, tightly closed with a quick-lock or twist tie. The refrigerator will cause bread to lose moisture quickly and become stale. Properly wrapped bread will store well in the freezer.

10 what's the shelf life?

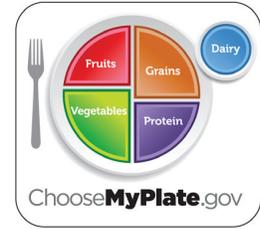
Since the oil in various whole-grain flours differs, the shelf life varies too. Most whole-grain flours keep well in the refrigerator for 2 to 3 months and in the freezer for 6 to 8 months. Cooked brown rice can be refrigerated 3 to 5 days and can be frozen up to 6 months.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

got your dairy today?

10 tips to help you eat and drink more fat-free or low-fat dairy foods



The Dairy Group includes milk, yogurt, cheese, and fortified soymilk. They provide calcium, vitamin D, potassium, protein, and other nutrients needed for good health throughout life. Choices should be low-fat or fat-free—to cut calories and saturated fat. How much is needed? Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups* a day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups, and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

1 “skim” the fat

Drink fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. If you currently drink whole milk, gradually switch to lower fat versions.

This change cuts calories but doesn't reduce calcium or other essential nutrients.

2 boost potassium and vitamin D, and cut sodium

Choose fat-free or low-fat milk or yogurt more often than cheese. Milk and yogurt have more potassium and less sodium than most cheeses. Also, almost all milk and many yogurts are fortified with vitamin D.



3 top off your meals



Use fat-free or low-fat milk on cereal and oatmeal. Top fruit salads and baked potatoes with low-fat yogurt instead of higher fat toppings such as sour cream.

4 choose cheeses with less fat

Many cheeses are high in saturated fat. Look for “reduced-fat” or “low-fat” on the label. Try different brands or types to find the one that you like.

5 what about cream cheese?

Regular cream cheese, cream, and butter **are not** part of the dairy food group. They are high in saturated fat and have little or no calcium.

* What counts as a cup in the Dairy Group? 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.

6 ingredient switches

When recipes such as dips call for sour cream, substitute plain yogurt. Use fat-free evaporated milk instead of cream, and try ricotta cheese as a substitute for cream cheese.

7 choose sweet dairy foods with care

Flavored milks, fruit yogurts, frozen yogurt, and puddings can contain a lot of added sugars. These added sugars are empty calories. You need the nutrients in dairy foods—not these empty calories.

8 caffeinating?

If so, get your calcium along with your morning caffeine boost. Make or order coffee, a latte, or cappuccino with fat-free or low-fat milk.

9 can't drink milk?

If you are lactose intolerant, try lactose-free milk, drink smaller amounts of milk at a time, or try soymilk (soy beverage). Check the Nutrition Facts label to be sure your soymilk has about 300 mg of calcium. Calcium in some leafy greens is well absorbed, but eating several cups each day to meet calcium needs may be unrealistic.

10 take care of yourself and your family

Parents who drink milk and eat dairy foods show their kids that it is important. Dairy foods are especially important to build the growing bones of kids and teens. Routinely include low-fat or fat-free dairy foods with meals and snacks—for everyone's benefit.



WATER FOR HEALTH

10 tips to encourage your preschooler to drink water

Water helps keep preschoolers hydrated and healthy. When children are thirsty between meals and snacks, water is the best beverage choice. Water helps reduce acid in the mouth and rinse food from teeth, both of which contribute to dental cavities. When water contains fluoride, it helps build and maintain strong teeth. Here are ten tips to help children develop a habit of drinking water they will keep for life.

1. Keep water readily available.

Children should have easy access to water whenever they are thirsty. Keep paper cups available by the kitchen sink or provide water whenever your child asks for it.

2. Serve fluoridated tap water.

Many community tap water supplies contain fluoride, while most bottled water does not. Serve fluoridated tap water when possible to help build strong, healthy teeth.

3. Allow children to serve themselves.

Children learn about drinking water when they pour water into cups with an adult's help.

4. Serve water with snacks.

Serve plain, unflavored, noncarbonated water to children with snacks. This helps them learn to like beverages that are not sweet.

5. Make water available outdoors.

When children are active outdoors, they can get thirsty quickly. Have plastic pitchers or bottles of water available to keep children well hydrated.

6. Be careful with ice cubes.

Ice cubes pose a choking hazard to children under the age of 4. Chill water in the refrigerator for a cold drink.

7. Encourage good dental hygiene.

When sugar is in contact with teeth, it can contribute to cavities. When children drink fluoridated water and brush teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, it lowers the risk. If your child cannot brush after a meal, offer water to drink to help rinse food from his or her mouth.

8. Replace other high-calorie sweetened beverages.

Fruit-flavored drinks, soda, fruit nectars, and sports drinks are high in calories and added sugars. When children taste sugar and sweet flavors often, they learn to prefer these sweet flavors. Offer plain, unflavored, noncarbonated water instead.

9. Be a good role model.

Drink water and kids will too. They learn from watching you!

10. Watch before meals.

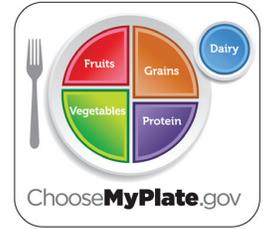
Some children who drink too much liquid right before a meal may feel too full to eat. If children drink normal amounts of water before a meal, it's less likely to affect hunger and appetite. Keep this in mind when deciding how much water to offer a child right before meals.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

salt and sodium

10 tips to help you cut back



It's clear that Americans have a taste for salt, but salt plays a role in high blood pressure. Everyone, including kids, should reduce their sodium intake to less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium a day (about 1 teaspoon of salt). Adults age 51 and older, African Americans of any age, and individuals with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should further reduce their sodium intake to 1,500 mg a day.

1 think fresh

Most of the sodium Americans eat is found in processed foods. Eat highly processed foods less often and in smaller portions—especially cheesy foods, such as pizza; cured meats, such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and deli/luncheon meats; and ready-to-eat foods, like canned chili, ravioli, and soups. Fresh foods are generally lower in sodium.

2 enjoy home-prepared foods

Cook more often at home—where you are in control of what's in your food. Preparing your own foods allows you to limit the amount of salt in them.

3 fill up on veggies and fruits—they are naturally low in sodium

Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits—fresh or frozen. Eat a vegetable or fruit at every meal.

4 choose dairy and protein foods that are lower in sodium

Choose more fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt in place of cheese, which is higher in sodium. Choose fresh beef, pork, poultry, and seafood, rather than those with salt added. Deli or luncheon meats, sausages, and canned products like corned beef are higher in sodium. Choose unsalted nuts and seeds.

5 adjust your taste buds

Cut back on salt little by little—and pay attention to the natural tastes of various foods. Your taste for salt will lessen over time.



6 skip the salt

Skip adding salt when cooking. Keep salt off the kitchen counter *and* the dinner table. Use spices, herbs, garlic, vinegar, or lemon juice to season foods or use no-salt seasoning mixes. Try black or red pepper, basil, curry, ginger, or rosemary.

7 read the label

Read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredients statement to find packaged and canned foods lower in sodium. Look for foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”

8 ask for low-sodium foods when you eat out

Restaurants may prepare lower sodium foods at your request and will serve sauces and salad dressings on the side so you can use less.

9 pay attention to condiments

Foods like soy sauce, ketchup, pickles, olives, salad dressings, and seasoning packets are high in sodium. Choose low-sodium soy sauce and ketchup. Have a carrot or celery stick instead of olives or pickles. Use only a sprinkling of flavoring packets instead of the entire packet.

10 boost your potassium intake

Choose foods with potassium, which may help to lower your blood pressure. Potassium is found in vegetables and fruits, such as potatoes, beet greens, tomato juice and sauce, sweet potatoes, beans (white, lima, kidney), and bananas. Other sources of potassium include yogurt, clams, halibut, orange juice, and milk.

BUILD A HEALTHY PLATE LOW IN SOLID FATS

10 tips to help you cut back

Americans consume too many foods that are high in solid fats. Children can fill up on the extra calories from solid fats and not get the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy. These extra calories from solid fats also make it harder for children to grow at a healthy weight. You can help by following these ten tips to offer children healthier choices.

1. Offer fat-free or low-fat milk and yogurt.

Serve fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and yogurt to children 2 years of age or older. They will get the calcium they need without the fat.

2. Read the label.

The % Daily Value is a number that tells you whether there is a little (5% or less is low) or a lot (20% or more is high) of a nutrient in a food. Choose foods with low numbers for saturated fat.

3. Choose lean proteins.

Select lean cuts of meat (loin and round), chicken breast, fish, and ground turkey and beef labeled 90% lean or higher to cut saturated fat. Dry beans and peas are also excellent protein sources without the fat.

4. Trim the fat.

Trim away all of the visible fat from meat and poultry before cooking. Remove the skin from chicken and turkey to reduce the amount of solid fats. Drain off any fat that appears during cooking.

5. Make healthy substitutions.

Select baked products over fried products whenever possible, such as baked chips or whole-grain crackers over tortilla chips or corn chips. Limit breaded meat and fish products and enjoy baked chicken breast or fish fillets instead.

6. Add flavor without the fat.

Add flavor to foods with lemon or herbs instead of butter, stick margarine, gravy, or cream sauce.

7. Grill, bake, broil, or roast.

Use these healthier cooking methods for meat, poultry, and fish rather than frying.

8. Enjoy desserts without the fat.

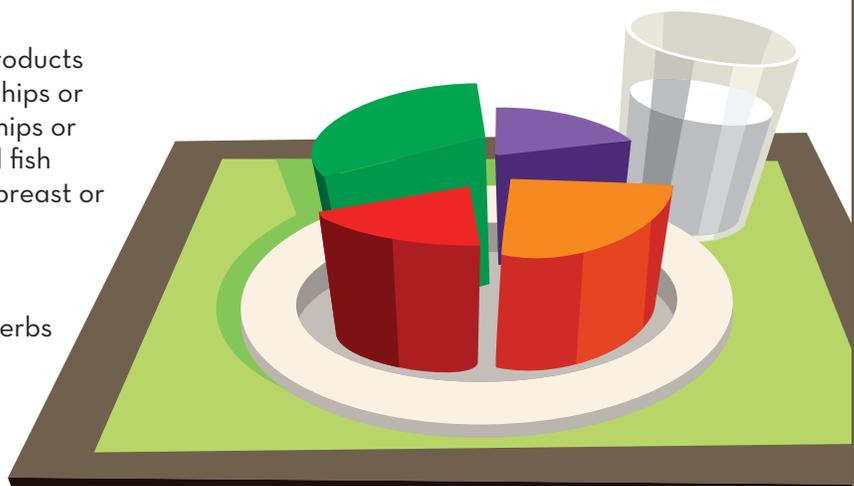
Make fruit the choice for dessert. Cakes, cookies, and pies are often high in solid fats.

9. Avoid trans fats.

Read the ingredient label to avoid foods that have *trans* fat. Steer clear of products that list partially hydrogenated vegetable oil or shortening on the list.

10. Include healthy oils.

Olive, canola, and other plant-based oils are rich in heart-healthy unsaturated fats. Switch from solid fats to oils when preparing foods at home.



10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

cut back on your kid's sweet treats

10 tips to decrease added sugars



Limit the amount of foods and beverages with added sugars your kids eat and drink. If you don't buy them, your kids won't get them very often. Sweet treats and sugary drinks have a lot of calories but few nutrients. Most added sugars come from sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, juice drinks, cakes, cookies, ice cream, candy, and other desserts.

1 serve small portions

It's not necessary to get rid of all sweets and desserts. Show kids that a small amount of treats can go a long way. Use smaller bowls and plates for these foods. Have them share a candy bar or split a large cupcake.

2 sip smarter

Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water, 100% juice, or fat-free milk when kids are thirsty.



3 use the check-out lane that does not display candy

Most grocery stores will have a candy-free check-out lane to help moms out. Waiting in a store line makes it easy for children to ask for the candy that is right in front of their faces to tempt them.

4 choose not to offer sweets as rewards

By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are better than other foods. Reward your child with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them non-food items, like stickers, to make them feel special.

5 make fruit the everyday dessert

Serve baked apples, pears, or enjoy a fruit salad. Or, serve yummy frozen juice bars (100% juice) instead of high-calorie desserts.



6 make food fun

Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as "fun foods." Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child's help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

7 encourage kids to invent new snacks

Make your own snack mixes from dry whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and unsalted nuts or seeds. Provide the ingredients and allow kids to choose what they want in their "new" snack.



8 play detective in the cereal aisle

Show kids how to find the amount of total sugars in various cereals. Challenge them to compare cereals they like and select the one with the lowest amount of sugar.

9 make treats "treats," not everyday foods

Treats are great once in a while. Just don't make treat foods an everyday thing. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.

10 if kids don't eat their meal, they don't need sweet "extras"

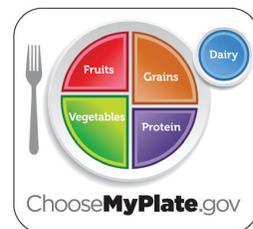
Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time.

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

be a healthy role model for children

10 tips for setting good examples



You are the most important influence on your child. You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

1 show by example

Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

2 go food shopping together



Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.

3 get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Name a food your child helps make. Serve “Janie’s Salad” or “Jackie’s Sweet Potatoes” for dinner. Encourage your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

4 offer the same foods for everyone

Stop being a “short-order cook” by making different dishes to please children. It’s easier to plan family meals when everyone eats the same foods.



5 reward with attention, not food

Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need “extras”—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.

6 focus on each other at the table

Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make eating meals a stress-free time.



7 listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Offer choices. Ask “Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?” instead of “Do you want broccoli for dinner?”

8 limit screen time

Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.

9 encourage physical activity

Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child—instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active and using safety gear, like bike helmets.



10 be a good food role model

Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.



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