

# Mealtime Memo

*for Child Care*

## Everyday I'm Guzzlin'!

When children are thirsty, they tend to reach for something other than water; however, it is the ideal choice. Although it cannot take the place of milk, which must be offered as required by Child and Adult Care Food Program guidelines, water helps hydrate children's growing bodies. Thus, as child care providers, it is crucial to make water easily accessible and to offer it to children throughout the day.

Water is essential for every living thing, from plants and animals to the children you care for. All living things need water to survive. In fact, over half of the human body is water! Although humans can stay alive for over a month without food, they cannot live for more than a few days without water. It hydrates and aids in removing waste from the body. Fluoridated water can even help prevent cavities.



Think about a car needing oil to run correctly. What happens when the engine does not get oil? The engine will give out, and the car will stop working. The human body is just like the car, and water is the oil. Discuss this concept with the children and educate them on why water is important and how their bodies use it. By teaching children the benefits of drinking water, it may help increase the chances that they will drink water outside of the child care setting as well. Consider these tips to help children stay hydrated and healthy.

- Have child-sized cups available next to the kitchen sink faucet.
- Keep small pitchers of water and child-sized cups in classrooms and on playgrounds.
- Offer a snack with water.
- Take regular water breaks before and during active play.

Lastly, remember you are a role model, so reinforce a habit of hydration. Drink water throughout the day and encourage parents to do the same. Consider sharing this Mealtime Memo with them to provide the benefits of drinking water and to offer ways they can encourage their children to drink water. The more positive role models children have, the more likely they will be to adopt good hydration habits.



Consider these additional benefits of drinking water.

## Some Benefits of Drinking Water Instead of Sugary Drinks

- Prevents weight gain and type 2 diabetes
- Enables children to think better
- Helps lessen tooth decay

Adapted from [DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://DrinkingWaterAlliance.org)

**Kids' bodies work best when hydrated the healthy way—with water!**

**DRINK WATER AGV**

- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks prevents weight gain and type 2 diabetes
- Staying hydrated helps children think better
- Drinking water instead of sugary drinks helps prevent dental cavities

Kids don't drink enough water. And they drink too many sugary drinks. You can help your kids by serving water at home and asking the places where they learn and play to make water first for thirst.

Learn more at [www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org](http://www.DrinkingWaterAlliance.org).

**NATIONAL Drinking Water ALLIANCE**

To learn more about the research, visit [www.drinkingwateralliance.org](http://www.drinkingwateralliance.org). Content developed by the Nutrition Policy Institute at UNMC and members of the Nutrition & Obesity Policy Research & Evaluation Network (NOPREN) at the University of Mississippi. Research supported by the CDC Prevention Research Centers. Graphics developed by the PhotoBank Group of Public Health and People. The contents are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official views/policies of the UNMC Foundation, LLC, or UNMC.

The National Drinking Water Alliance is a nationwide clearinghouse for essential drinking water research and resources. The *Kids' Bodies Work Best When Hydrated the Healthy Way—With Water!* fact sheet is available in English and Spanish. Fact sheets can be found at <https://www.drinkingwateralliance.org/facts>

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