

Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

Physical Activity

When it comes to physical activity, any type of movement that works your muscles is good. There are many benefits to being active for children and adults. Children are usually active because they like to play, move around, and have fun. According to USDA (2015), physical activity means movement of the body that uses energy, such as in climbing the stairs, dancing, or pushing a stroller. In this month's Mealtime Memo, you will be provided with tips and guidelines for incorporating physical activity within your CACFP operation.



What is Exercise?

Any movement that a person does is considered to be physical activity. Physical activity counts toward the goal of being physically active during the day or week. Exercise is a planned physical activity that is structured, repetitive, and usually has a goal. You burn more calories when you exercise versus when you are at rest or walking around. Children should be active throughout the day. Physical activity is important because

- exercise can tone muscles and strengthen bones,
- it may help a person live longer,
- it helps individuals move around better
- you tend to feel better about yourself, and
- people who exercise usually sleep better at night.

When a person feels good, they usually will have more fun and enjoy themselves.



Physical Activity Guidelines

Child care centers, child care homes, providers, as well as Head Start Programs, have physical activities planned for its students. Based on guidelines from USDA's ChooseMyPlate, young children should be active throughout the day. Activities should be fun for children so they will want to participate. It should happen several times per day. Choose an activity that is appropriate for their age. The activity should also be safe as well as fun for children. Being physically active throughout the day may enhance growth and development. Encourage active play that includes a variety of activities.

Types of Physical Activities

Children should be active throughout the day. There are a number of activities that can be planned for young children. Some include: walking, gardening, climbing stairs, playing soccer, and dancing to name a few. Allow children to decide what activity they want to do. You may notice that some children are more active than others. Some may prefer sports while others may enjoy walking. You should encourage all children to play and have fun according to the things they enjoy doing. Provide help for children in your care that cannot do exercise on their own. Help could come from you as a provider, a parent, a nurse, or physical therapist. Remember that not everyone is an athlete, but everyone should try to stay active. Children will need to simply move and stay active. For health benefits, physical activity should entail moderate to vigorous bodily movement.

Activities to Try

- See who can walk the fastest without running
- Play tag
- Play musical chairs
- Walk Backwards

Child care centers and homes have time set aside for physical activity during the day. This practice helps teach children the positive health benefits that come from being physically active. Adding games like kickball and tag to their schedules may help children stay interested in playing more. Encourage children to stay active when at home by playing music and dancing. Regular physical activity can produce long term health benefits. People of all ages, shapes, sizes, and abilities can benefit from being physically active. The more physical activity you do, the greater the health benefits.



Benefits of Being Physically Active

- Increase chances of living longer
- Feel better about one's self
- Decrease chances of becoming depressed
- Sleep better at night
- Move around more easily
- Have stronger muscles and bones
- Helps maintain a healthy weight
- Be with friends or meet new people
- Enjoy yourself and have fun
- Strengthens the heart
- Improves energy levels
- Reduces blood sugar levels
- Enhances emotional well-being

Just think children can jump, dance, move, walk, have fun while doing it, and get stronger bones while playing!



References

Department of Human Services. Head Start Policy & Regulations. (n.d.) *Head start performance standards 1302.46*. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/policy/45-cfr-chap-xiii/1302-46-family-support-services-health-nutrition-mental-health>

U.S. Department of Agriculture ChooseMyPlate.gov. (2015 Jun). *Physical activity*. Retrieved from <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/physical-activity-what-is>

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/Title VI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

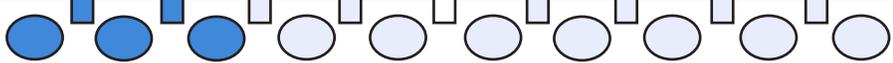
To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2019, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.





Mealtime Memo

This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with the Institute of Child Nutrition at the University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

The University of Mississippi is an EEO/AA/TitleVI/Title IX/Section 504/ADA/ADEA Employer.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights; Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

© 2019, Institute of Child Nutrition, The University of Mississippi, School of Applied Sciences

Except as provided below, you may freely use the text and information contained in this document for non-profit or educational use with no cost to the participant for the training providing the following credit is included. These materials may not be incorporated into other websites or textbooks and may not be sold.

The photographs and images in this document may be owned by third parties and used by the University of Mississippi under a licensing agreement. The University cannot, therefore, grant permission to use these images.

