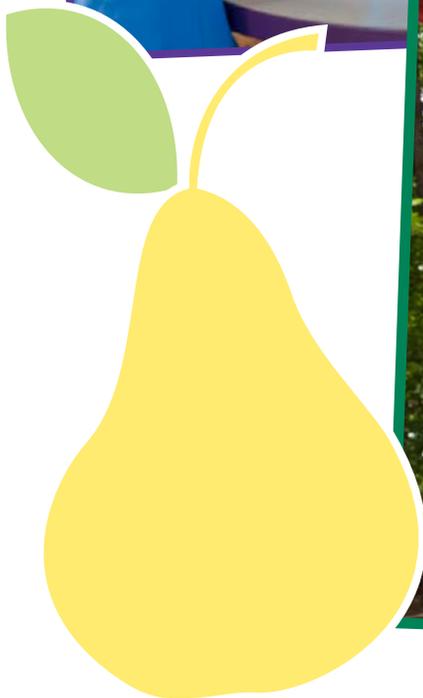
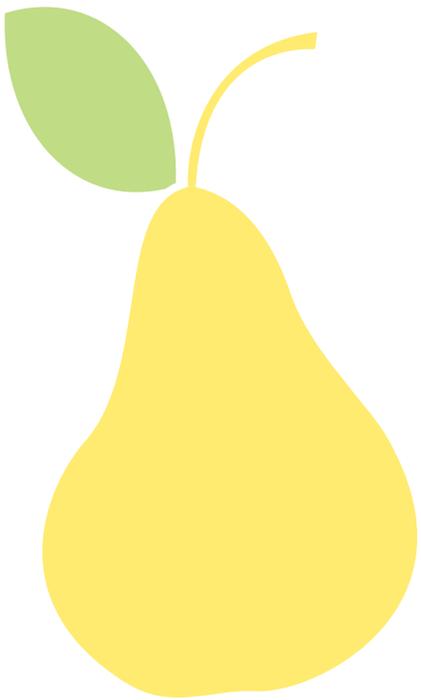




Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children

Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program







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**U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
*Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the
Child and Adult Care Food Program. Alexandria, VA, December 2012.***

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Improving child nutrition is the focal point of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), Public Law 111-296. The legislation authorizes funding and sets policy for the United States Department of Agriculture's core child nutrition programs: the National School Lunch Program; the School Breakfast Program; the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC); the Summer Food Service Program; and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The HHFKA allows the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) an opportunity to make real reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs by strengthening the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children.

Section 221 of the HHFKA addresses nutrition and wellness goals for meals served through CACFP, and calls for technical assistance to be provided to participating CACFP institutions and family or group day care homes to meet the nutrition requirements and wellness recommendations. The USDA and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) worked together to develop this technical assistance handbook that includes recommendations, guidelines, and best practices that are consistent with USDA and HHS recommendations and requirements for nutrition, active play, screen time, and wellness. USDA and HHS encourage all CACFP providers to help youth adopt healthy eating and active play behaviors to curb the increasing rate of overweight, and prepare children, particularly young children ages 2 to 6 years old, to attain their educational potential.

This handbook is a first step in assisting providers to make changes in their child care policies and practices that will impact children in their care. These positive changes are possible only through the collaborative efforts of many agencies, organizations, and individuals who are dedicated to improving the health of the Nation's children. *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* was developed by representatives from the following agencies:



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This publication may be viewed and downloaded from the Internet at

<http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>



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Provide Healthy Food and Activity Choices Every Day

As a child care provider, you help create a healthier generation by taking steps to prevent obesity and encouraging healthy habits that last a lifetime. Whether you work in a large child care center or provide child care in your home, you help children learn about healthy food choices and being physically active.

Studies show that about one in five children are overweight or obese by the time they reach their 6th birthday¹ and over half of obese children become overweight at or before age 2.² Diseases and health issues that were once mainly seen in adults are now becoming more common in children and adolescents with excess body fat.³

There are ways to help children in your care develop healthy habits. The meals and snacks you serve should provide nutrients children need to be healthy, without too much sodium, solid fats, and added sugars. You can lower the risk of foodborne illness by making sure that the food is safe to eat, and the areas where food is prepared and served are clean. You provide opportunities for active play that include more movement and less time in front of a television or computer screen. The USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), which serves millions of children across the United States,⁴ provides a great opportunity to give children the best start when it comes to healthy eating and physical activity.

Good nutrition and physical activity work together to promote healthy growth and development. While you may not have all the answers, helping young children learn to make good food and activity choices is one of the greatest lifelong gifts you can give them. The good news is that the tips in this handbook give you specific ways to support children and their families in the four important areas of providing healthy food, following food safety practices, encouraging active play, and limiting screen time.

The tip sheets in this handbook cover fruits, vegetables, dry beans and peas, meat and meat alternates, whole grains, milk and other dairy, sodium, fats and oils, added sugars, water, food safety, providing opportunities for active play, encouraging active play, written policies and practices that promote active play, and the importance of limiting screen time. The tip sheets include recommendations to improve the meals you serve in your child care program and, along with other online resources, can help you choose the best foods and activities for the children in your care.

Note: Throughout this handbook, the term *child care* includes early care and education and day care. The term *active play* means physical activity, which includes all types of physical movement.

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 2. Harrington, J.W., Nguyen, V.Q., Paulson, J.F., et al., (2010). Identifying the “Tipping Point” Age for Overweight Pediatric Patients, *Clinical Pediatrics*, 49(7), 638-643.
 3. U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*. 7th Edition, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 2010.
 4. Child and Adult Care Food Program. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/care/>

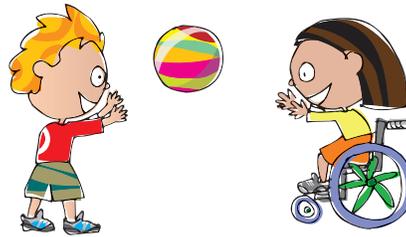


How to Use This Handbook

Tip Sheets

This handbook contains tip sheets on nutrition, active play, and screen time. These tip sheets can be used together or one at a time. They can be used as part of trainings for child care providers and staff, or as a handy resource when planning meals for children ages 2 to 6 years old. They offer practical information to help you plan and prepare meals, provide opportunities for active play, and encourage children to adopt healthy behaviors.

- ▶ **The nutrition tip sheets present strategies for purchasing, preparing, and offering meals** consistent with CACFP meal service requirements and recommendations from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Many of the nutrition tip sheets include ways to ensure foods are prepared and served safely to children. A separate tip sheet is also included in the handbook to provide general and practical tips on food safety.



- ▶ **The active play and screen time tip sheets present recommendations for young children, encouraging physical activity, reducing screen time,** and adopting written policies and practices on physical activity that are consistent with guidelines from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education, 3rd Edition*. These tip sheets offer strategies for adding more opportunities for active play to the child care program.

Each tip sheet focuses on a specific topic and includes ideas for improving the nutrition and wellness of children in child care. These tip sheets also include Web links for resources that provide more information and ideas. Take a look at each tip sheet's *How Can I Put This Information Into Practice* practical application section. Think about how you can apply the tips to your child care program. For example, review your child care menu and look for ways to apply the tips. Can you plan specific menu items that include dry beans and peas, or serve and talk about a different “fruit of the week”?

Each of the nutrition, physical activity, and screen time recommendations has an explanation of why it is important. These explanations can help you understand and adopt best practices in nutrition and wellness. You might want to share some of these explanations with families, perhaps on your menus or as you talk with them about their child's day. When families and providers model these healthy behaviors, children will be more accepting of the foods prepared and served, as well as the activities available for active play during child care.

Symbols Used in the Tip Sheets

Many of the nutrition tip sheets include a section on making sure foods are safe to eat. A caution symbol next to a food indicates that it may cause an allergic reaction or pose a choking hazard. A crediting symbol next to a food calls attention to information about crediting foods within the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal.



This symbol means the food may cause an allergic reaction in some children.



This symbol means the food may cause children under 4 years old to choke.



This symbol appears next to tips for crediting foods within CACFP meals and snacks.

Best Practices: CACFP Success Stories

This section shares the best practices and successful tips of nine CACFP child care programs from across the United States. They include stories from various parts of the country and diverse communities. These child care programs have tried new and exciting ways to improve the food that they serve children and the activities that they plan. Each story is unique, yet practical and applicable for many providers. Together, these stories provide inspiration for anyone who wants to create healthy environments for children and child care programs everywhere.

Appendices

Appendix A includes information about choking hazards for children under the age of 4 years. Child care providers can use these tips to reduce the risk of choking in their day care homes and centers.

Appendix B includes information about common food allergies, as well as information on what child care providers should do if a child in their care has a food allergy.

Additional Resources

This section includes additional resources on active play, child care policies and practices, nutrition, food safety, choking hazards, food allergies, and screen time. These resources include tool kits, checklists, child care self-assessment tools, wellness policy resources, ideas for child care activities, nutrition education materials, gardening education resources, nutrition program information, food safety materials, and national guidelines and recommendations reports pertaining to wellness in child care.