



little bites, big steps

nutrition and fitness for young children



A Guide to Nutrition and Fitness for Young Children



little bites, big steps

Your child is growing up and he knows what tastes good to him. Sometimes, he will want the foods that are good for him. Sometimes he won't. He will often choose to sit and play at the computer or watch TV instead of being active. His best guide in choosing healthy foods and activity is YOU!

You can guide him by:

- Example
- Providing healthy foods at home
- Setting limits and rules for when, where and what food is offered to your child
- Insisting that TV, video games and computer time are balanced by active time

Remember:

- Obesity in children is now considered an epidemic by the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Activity and eating habits directly affect children's:
 - o Growth
 - o Brain development
 - o Emotions
 - o Bones and teeth
 - o School performance
 - o Ability to develop friendships

nutrition



Feeding Your Child Children's Tableware

Children's small mouths and hands don't always work well with adult utensils. The size of an adult plate with food can often overwhelm small children and make them less likely to eat. We also tend to put more food on a child's plate if it is large.

- Buy child-sized utensils for children under age four.
- Plastic spoons and forks are often a better size for small hands.
- Use smaller plates, such as salad plates, for young children. They can also help adults control their own portion size.
- Toddlers can learn to use small knives that are not sharp. Plastic knives are a good choice for helping them learn to spread things on bread.
- Smaller glasses with weighted bottoms are best for toddlers.



Family-Style Dining

Family-style dining means that you and your family sit down together at your table for a meal.

Why family-style dining?

Children who eat most of their meals with their families:

- Do better in school
- Learn social skills such as talking to others and sharing
- Learn problem solving
- Are closer to their families
- Are less affected by negative peer influence
- Learn manners by watching and listening to family members
- Are less likely to become involved in drugs and alcohol
- Eat healthier
- Tend to have lower levels of stress
- Develop self-help skills, independence and confidence

Family-style dining is a time for families to be together, to talk, laugh and share.

family

Family-Style Dining Dos and Don'ts

Place a check mark by each "Do."

Make an X through each "Don't."

Watching television

Letting your child help cook

Letting your child help set the table

Using easy meals or frozen meals

Talking about your child's day

Fussing at your child

Modeling good eating habits

Forcing children to eat a certain food

Keeping mealtime pleasant

Talking about current events and ideas

Insisting that everyone stay at the table until all are finished

Having serving dishes on the table

Allowing children to serve themselves



Food Challenges

- **Food jag:** a child only wants one food for a period of time and often will refuse all others
- **Picky eater:** only eats certain foods or small amounts of foods
- **Grazing:** a child will eat small amounts all day long—toddlers often do this and it is normal for them

What about my child's appetite?

Children's appetites will vary for many reasons.

- Those who are in a growth spurt are hungrier and need more food.
- Toddlers eat much less than older children.
- Appetite can also be influenced by things and people around the child.
- If your child says he is not hungry, accept that.
- If your child is not hungry at mealtime, be sure that he has not been eating during the hour before the meal. Then, serve him very small portions and ask him to sit with the family, but don't insist that he eat.
- Infants should be given their bottle or breast until they act uninterested. Offer again when the baby acts hungry.

Tips for working with eating issues

Serve a variety of foods:

- Foods in shapes, with dips, calling them funny names
- Finger foods
- Small portions
- Not too hot or cold
- Different flavors and textures

challenges



Food Challenges

Picky Eaters

- Offer a variety of food, the same you serve everyone else.
- Give your child enough time to eat.
- If he does not eat it, remove the plate without commenting or fussing, but save the food to offer as a snack later, or offer another healthy snack.
- Stay positive and avoid calling your child a picky eater.
- Serve food in a divided plate.
- Watch what your children eat over several days. Their food intake usually balances.

Introducing New Foods

- Give new foods when a child is hungry.
- Serve a favorite food with a new food.
- Offer a new food at least 10-15 times without pressure.
- Relax and calm down before mealtime.
- Don't use food as a bribe or punishment.

challenges



Ways to Eat Healthy

Make Substitutions!

Instead of:	Try this:
Ice cream	Yogurt
Chips	Baked pretzels, celery or carrots
Saltine crackers	Whole wheat crackers
Hamburger meat	Lean meats, such as chicken and lean beef
Regular yogurt	Non-fat yogurt
Bagels	English muffins
White bread	Whole wheat bread

What about sugar-free?

Artificial sweeteners are now available in a variety of drinks, snacks, candy, cookies, ice cream and other foods, and parents are using them as an alternative to sugar. These foods are a better choice than high-sugar items such as sodas, sugared drinks and snacks, but consider the following:

- There are no studies on the long-term effects of artificial sweeteners on children.
- Learning to enjoy the taste of naturally sweet foods like fruit is a better choice.
- If children get used to the sweet taste of artificially sweetened products, they'll want them more than other foods.
- Products containing artificial sweeteners are sometimes higher in fat and calories. (Something has to give the food flavor!)
- Most pediatricians advise to avoid giving artificial sweeteners to children under age two.

eat healthy



Eating at Home

We are so busy today. It can be very hard to always cook, and sometimes fast food seems like the best way to feed our families. But fast food is often high in fat and calories and low in many nutrients children need.

Eating at Home

- Use whole wheat pitas, bread, tortillas or pizza crust.
- Add vegetables to stews, sauces, casseroles and soups.
- Reduce fat, sugar and sodium.
- When using oil, choose olive or vegetable oil and use as little as possible.
- Choose low-fat or fat-free dressings and margarines.
- Read labels and don't choose foods with sugar, corn syrup or fats as one of the first listed ingredients.
- Choose foods lower in fat.
- Choose fresh vegetables when possible, then frozen.
- Canned fruits should be canned in juice instead of syrup.
- Let your child help! He can wash food, carry ingredients, stir and help in many ways.
- Cook a large amount of ground beef – or chicken cut into chunks and baked or sautéed – to use for meals during the week.

Menu Ideas:

- **Mini pizzas** – Use refrigerator biscuits or English muffin halves and let your child spread tomato sauce or spaghetti sauce on them. Top with mozzarella cheese and toast until the cheese melts. Serve with vegetable soup for a quick and easy meal.
- **Cheese toast and veggies** – Toast bread and then put on it cooked broccoli, cauliflower, tomato or another vegetable that is soft. Cover with cheese and put under broiler until the cheese melts.
- **Whole wheat pasta and sauce** – Pasta is easy and quick. Just boil pasta in water until it is tender. Cover with your child's favorite spaghetti, cheese or other sauce. Add lean ground beef or sautéed chicken chunks.
- **Tacos** – Use whole wheat tortillas and cooked ground beef or pinto beans with cut up tomatoes, cheese and lettuce, with a fruit salad or apple and orange slices, for a quick meal.
- **Beans and rice** – Cook enriched instant rice and warm canned beans. Mix and serve with frozen vegetables.
- **Stir fry** – Buy frozen stir-fry vegetables and cook them in a skillet with cooked ground beef or chicken.

home



Eating Out

- Limit eating out to once or twice a week.
- Freeze meals ahead of time and have simple and quick-to-prepare items, such as salads and frozen chicken breasts, on hand.
- Talk to children before going out about what foods they can and cannot order.
- Give children choices of healthier foods offered at fast food restaurants, such as salads, apple sauce and fruit, instead of French fries. Offer broiled chicken or even half of a hamburger instead of a whole hamburger.
- When eating pizza, choose the kind with cheese and vegetables, and whole wheat crusts when possible.
- Make eating at home fun, too. Have easy dishes such as vegetables and dip with cheese, or fruit and peanut butter.
- Order low-fat milk instead of sodas or milk shakes.
- Sodas should be only an occasional drink for children and should be caffeine-free.
- Ask for a nutrition guide from fast food restaurants, or look them up on the Internet.

Healthy Eating Commitment

Three things I have learned in this workshop that I will do in the coming weeks to create a healthier lifestyle for my child:

1.

2.

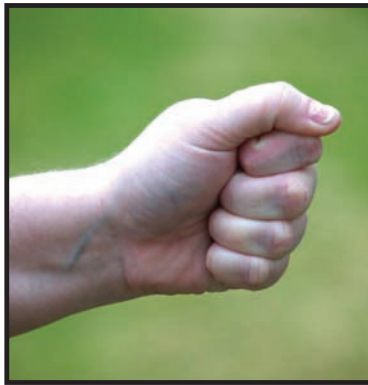
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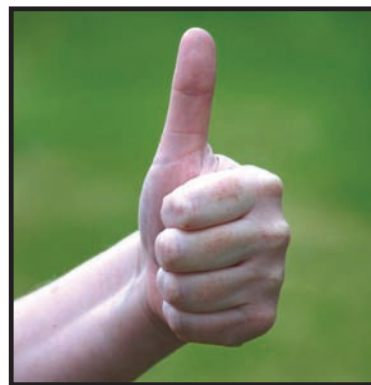
What and How Much Do I Feed My Child?

Serving Sizes

- One cup (eight ounces) of food is the size of a large handful or a small adult fist.
- One tablespoon (tbsp.) is about the size of the tip of your thumb (from the last crease).
- One teaspoon (tsp.) is about the size of the tip of your little finger (from the last crease).
- One ounce of cheese is the size of a thumb.
- Three ounces of meat is the size of the palm of a woman's hand.



Small adult fist



Tip of your thumb

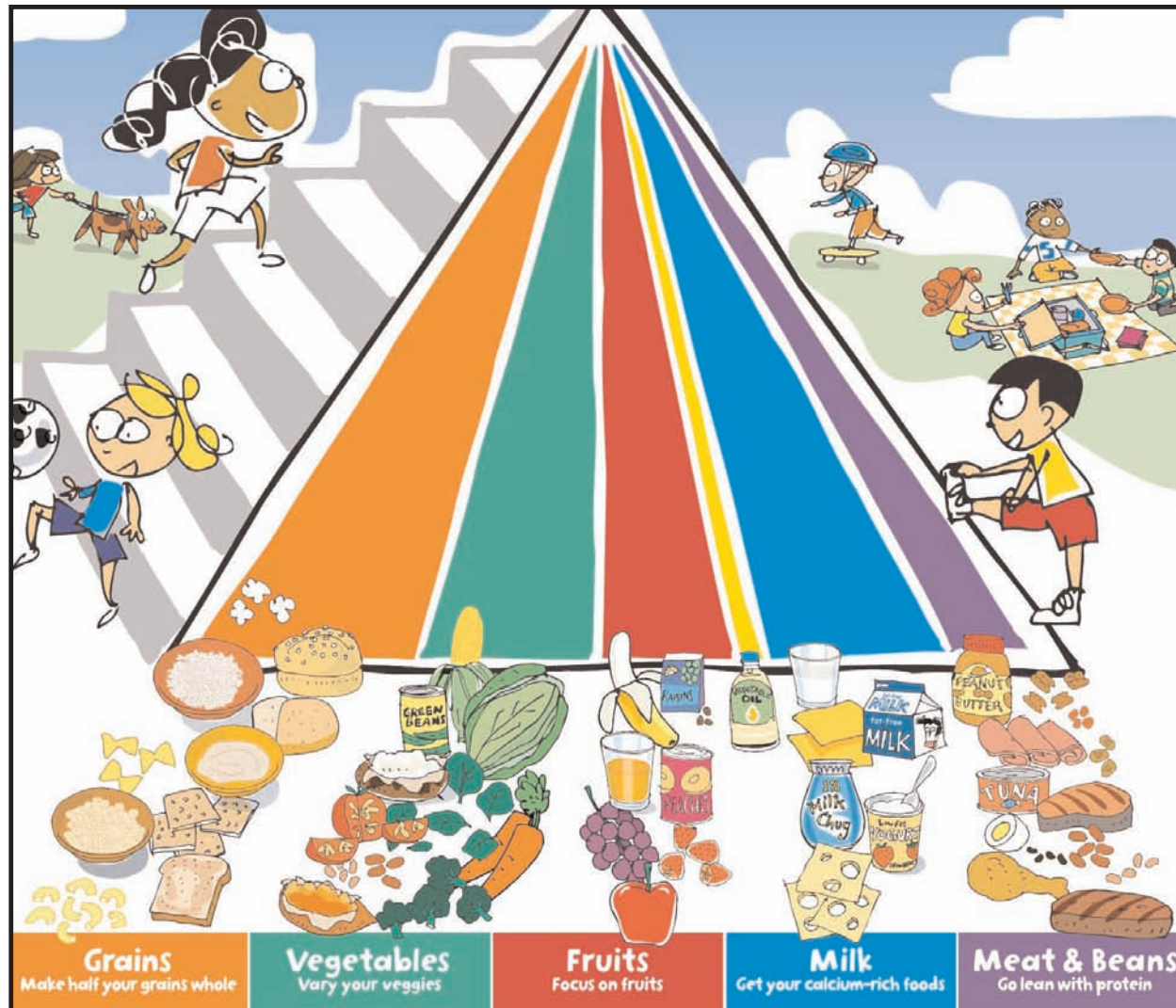


Tip of your little finger



Palm of a woman's hand

Food Pyramid



Food Guide Brainstorm!

For each category, list or draw foods that are healthy for your child.
You can list combination foods, such as burritos, by putting each part into a separate category.

<p>Grains</p>	<p>Vegetables</p>	<p>Fruits</p>
<p>Milk</p>	<p>Meat and Beans</p>	<p>Fats and Oils</p>



Menu Planning

	1-2 year olds	3-5 year olds	Daily Servings	Food Bank
Grains	1/2 ounce 1/2 slice of bread 1/4 cup dry cereal 1/4 cup pasta or rice	1/2 ounce 1/2 slice of bread 1/3 cup dry cereal 1/4 cup pasta or rice	6-11	whole wheat bread, pasta, rice
Vegetables	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	3-5	green beans, broccoli, carrots
Fruits	1/4 cup	1/2 cup	2-4	banana, applesauce, strawberries
Milk/Dairy Products	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	2-3	skim milk, cottage cheese, cheese slices, low-fat yogurt
Meat, Eggs and Beans	1 ounce of meat 1/4 cup of beans 1/2 egg	1 1/2 ounce of meat 3/8 cup of beans 3/4 egg 3 tbsp. peanut butter	2	egg, refried beans, chicken leg, hamburger patty

Remember, some foods contain more than one food group and are combination foods, such as: burritos, sandwiches and cereal with milk.

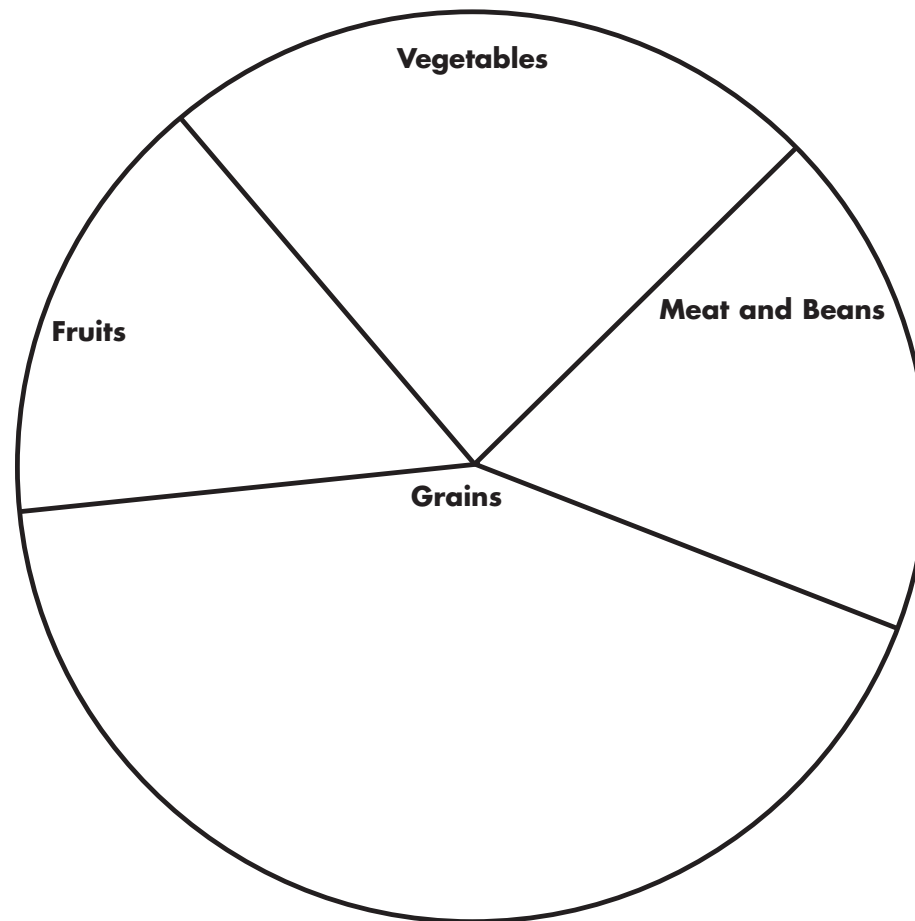
These sizes are suggestions. Parents can provide about this much food and children can decide how much they will eat.

Based on: United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service. Child and Adult Care Food Program Meals Patterns.



Menu Planning

Use this page to design your meal for a toddler. Draw a line on the milk to indicate the appropriate amount of milk for your meal.
Then list or draw on the plate foods that you could serve your child. Be sure to write in the serving size.



Reading Food Labels

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- **Serving Size:** Usually for an adult.
- **Calories:** Choose foods which are low in calories per serving.
- **Fat:** Foods should be low in saturated fat (less than three grams)
- **Trans Fats:** Such as partially hydrogenated vegetable oil should be avoided.
- **Nutrients:** These are vitamins and minerals such as vitamin C, calcium and iron.
- **Ingredients:** Food labels are required to list ingredients in order of their amount in the food. This means a food contains the largest amount of the first ingredient and the smallest amount of the last ingredient. If sugar or corn syrup is first, the food should be used sparingly.

Avoid:

- Foods that have no nutrients.

Choose:

- Foods that contain plenty of protein, fiber and vitamins, and have less than 30 percent of fat.

labels

Read and Compare

Place a check mark in the column of the cereal that best fits the statement below.

	Cereal #1	Cereal #2	Cereal #3	Cereal #4
Fewest calories per serving				
Fewest grams of fat per serving				
No trans fat				
Sugar (or words that end in -ose) is not one of the first three ingredients listed				
Largest amount of nutrients per serving				

Which one will you choose to serve your child? _____

compare

Tips for Parents of Infants

Babies are born with a natural ability to regulate the amount of food they need. They will give you cues when they are hungry, such as crying or rooting. When they are full, they will turn away from the bottle or breast and begin to play or act uninterested. Pay attention to these cues. Listen to your baby about when to feed or stop feeding!

Benefits of breastfeeding

- It's the only food a baby needs for the first four to six months.
- Fewer stomach problems.
- Decreased chance of becoming overweight.
- Fewer allergy problems.
- Protection against illnesses and diseases.
- Easy for a baby to digest.
- Babies bond with mothers and receive touching.
- It helps brain and cognitive development.
- It tastes different with every meal, so babies will more readily try new foods.
- It is always available at the right temperature.

What about the bottle?

- Never dilute formula.
- Serve no cow's milk the first year.
- Use the bottle only for formula during the first four to six months.
- Do not serve juice in bottles, as it may cause tooth decay.
- Hold your baby while feeding with a bottle.
- Putting your baby to bed with a bottle may cause dental, sleep and medical problems.
- Use the bottle for food – not to calm. Comfort by holding and cuddling.
- Don't force your baby to finish a bottle.
- If you can't breastfeed, use the formula the doctor recommends.



- Breastfeed whenever possible.
- Babies will take varying amounts of food at each meal, so don't worry.
- Give only breast milk for the first six months.

Feeding Your Infant

Teaching baby to eat solid foods

- Starting food and cereal early does NOT help babies sleep through the night, so wait until four to six months.
- Start with soft foods.
- Give very tiny bites first.
- Start with cereal, then try a variety of foods, starting with vegetables, meats and then fruits.
- Avoid raisins, nuts, grapes, hot dogs or hard raw fruits unless they are cut into very small pieces.
- Use tiny spoons coated with plastic.
- Baby will usually eat less than a tablespoon to begin with.
- Remember that baby will push his food out of his mouth often, as the tongue learns to work with and swallow food.
- Offer teething biscuits or foods such as Cheerios that become soft in the mouth.
- Let baby feed himself, even when he makes a mess.
- During the first year, the baby's weight triples.
- Make your own baby food by pureeing vegetables, fruits and meats and freezing them in an ice tray.

Introducing new drinks

- Babies don't need extra water. Their milk gives them enough liquid, and extra water can be harmful.
- Serve no juice until at least six months, then give only four to six ounces per day of 100 percent juice – and only from a cup.
- Introduce drinking from a cup at around eight or nine months.
- Stop formula at one year and give whole cow's milk or soy if allergic.

Introducing new foods

- Introduce solid foods between four and six months of age only if the doctor recommends it.
- Give infants new foods one at a time. Wait five to seven days after introducing a new food before trying another new one.
- Allow a few days between new foods.
- Serve no adult foods (spicy food, gravies, fried food). These may lead to food allergies and provide too many calories with little nutrition.
- Introduce dairy products after 12 months of age.
- Introduce eggs after 24 months of age.
- Introduce peanuts, tree nuts, fish and seafood after 36 months of age.

Food allergies

- Food allergies in infants may take a day or two to show up.
- Allergy symptoms are usually fussiness, rash, diarrhea or stomach pain.
- Food allergies are not permanent; the baby's system may just need more time to be ready for that food.
- If a baby shows a food allergy or a food doesn't agree with him, wait a few weeks and try again.



Feeding Toddlers and Preschoolers

Toddlers

- Toddlers have smaller appetites than babies.
- A full serving of food for a toddler is only one or two tablespoons.
- Don't force toddlers to eat more, and don't force them to stay at the table when they're through.
- Toddlers often refuse food they liked as infants. Just keep offering them, and some day they may eat them.
- When a child only eats one or two foods, don't offer them at every meal. Offer a variety of foods to maintain balance.
- Provide structure by setting a routine for snack and mealtimes.
- Children's blood sugar often dips in late morning or just before dinner, so offer a small snack of a fruit or vegetable.
- Cut foods into interesting shapes.
- Toddlers often graze – eating only a little bit several times a day. This is normal; just be sure these foods are healthy ones.

Preschoolers

- Preschoolers have periods when they eat more, and then times when they eat less. It is part of their growth, so don't worry!
- Help your child learn to control impulses. When he sees a cookie, explain that he can have one after dinner.
- Allow children to only take small portions at first, then allow more if they are still hungry.
- Allow small portions of higher fat foods and snacks, such as chips, every now and then.
- Too much restriction of foods can backfire.



Infant Serving Sizes

	0-3 months	4-6 months	6-9 months	10-12 months
Formula or breast milk	18-32 oz.	28-40 oz.	24-36 oz.	18-30 oz.
Bread, cereal, rice or pasta	None	None	1-2 1/2 cup servings, including mashed potatoes, pasta, rice, breads, crackers, toast, rolls, soft muffins	3-4 1/2-cup servings
Fruits	None	None	1/2 -1 cup	1/2-1 cup
Vegetables	None	None	1/2 -1 cup	1/2-1 cup
Plain yogurt	None	None	1-2 tbsp. per day	1-2 tbsp. per day
Proteins: meat, poultry, fish, beans, peas, eggs, peanut butter	None	None	1-2 tbsp., pureed	1/4-1/2 cup
Juice	None	None	1/4-1/2 cup	1/2 cup

Formula or breast milk: These are guidelines only. Each baby is different. Remember that if your baby is having several wet diapers a day and seems comfortable, he is probably getting plenty of breast milk. Sometimes babies will hit a growth spurt during which they will nurse for longer periods of time. This is the way that your milk supply is built up and baby should be allowed to nurse a reasonable amount of time. Cow's milk should NOT be given to infants and give only whole milk to children from ages one to two.

Cereals and other starchy foods: Use infant cereals when first providing cereal, as they are fortified with iron. Iron stores the baby is born with tend to become lower around six months. Some doctors may recommend beginning cereals at four or five months. It is best to ask your pediatrician what she would prefer.

Juices: Juices are not necessary for infants and should be used sparingly. Notice that these serving sizes are for the whole day!

Water: Infants usually get the water they need from their formula or breast milk. For infants up to five months of age, give fluids other than breast milk or formula only if recommended by the pediatrician. Do not use products such as Pedialyte® unless directed by the physician. For ages six to twelve months, offer fluids whenever the baby shows interest.



Snacks and Drinks

Choosing Appropriate Snacks

Directions: List the snacks that your group has received in the first column. Use the nutritional labels on the snacks to determine the amounts of sugar, fat, calories and fiber for each snack.

Snack	Sugar	Fat	Calories	Fiber

Which one would you choose to serve to your children? _____



Healthy Snacks

- Yogurt parfait with low-fat yogurt and fruit
- Fruit smoothie made in a blender with fresh fruit, yogurt and juice
- Melon cubes with a slice of turkey
- Banana slices with peanut butter
- Mud and Dirt: A cup of low-fat pudding with crushed graham crackers mixed in
- Sandwiches made with meats or peanut butter
- Hard-boiled egg with a slice of whole wheat bread
- Crunchy vegetable sticks (carrots, celery) with low-fat ranch dip
- Ants on a Log: Peanut butter on celery with raisins
- Sliced tomato with mozzarella cheese
- Hummus and pita wedges
- "Light" microwave popcorn with grated parmesan cheese (for children three years or older)
- Small slice of leftover pizza
- Mini pizzas: Half an English muffin covered by a tablespoon of tomato sauce and topped with mozzarella cheese
- Whole wheat tortilla with salsa

Other snack ideas I want to try:

snacks



Snack Solutions

Choosing and Buying Snacks

- Buy only healthy snacks, such as fruits and vegetables.
- Before you go shopping, tell your children what behavior you expect and what, if any, snack they can expect.
- Take snacks with you when you go to appointments or shopping.
- Provide snacks that are easy to eat.
- Use snacks to provide the food groups your children are missing during meals.
- Make snacks small, then give seconds if the child asks for more.
- Decide what snacks you will allow, and when. Tell your child the rules and stick to them.

Tips for Snack Time

- Give children a choice of two or three items for a snack.
- Make snacks a routine and scheduled time.
- Snacks are great until one to two hours before dinner.
- Snacks are for hunger, not for rewards or emotional soothing.
- Ask yourself, is your child really hungry like he says he is, or is he thirsty or in need of attention?
- Head off crying or tantrums by giving the child phrases to use, such as "I am hungry" or "I don't like this."
- Avoid bribes to get children to eat their snack.
- If they do not want what you offer, tell them it is okay because they will have a meal soon, and don't give in to whining.
- Take time to teach your child when and where and why snacks are appropriate.
- Allow your child to help you prepare the snack. Children are more likely to eat a snack they helped prepare.
- Be consistent with your children. If you have said that they are not allowed to have a certain food, stick to it.

solutions



Facts About Drinks

Water

- Water is the most important nutrient for the body.
- You can live much longer without food than without water.
- The body is mostly water, and it uses water up quickly.
- All liquids are not equal-some drinks take liquid away.
- Water is the drink of choice for healthy toddlers and preschoolers.

Juice

- Too much juice can lead to diarrhea and tooth decay.
- Juice is mainly a natural sugar. It tells a child's brain she is full and can spoil her appetite.
- Juice does not have the same nutrients as whole fruit.
- Children should have no more than six ounces of juice per day.
- Many juices are really sugar-sweetened drinks with only a small portion of juice or none at all. The label must say "100% juice" for it to have no added sugar.

Sports drinks

- Have lots of sugar (carbohydrates) and calories.
- Have acids that may erode the teeth.
- Are really just another type of soft drink.
- Use them only when a child has been doing continual hard exercise for 90 minutes or more.

Soda and sugar-sweetened drinks

- There is a direct link between sugar-sweetened drinks and childhood obesity.
- Sodas have nothing but calories from sugar.
- Drinks with caffeine tend to dehydrate and are linked to inattention, hyperactivity and sleeplessness in young children.
- Caffeine is also addictive.

Electrolyte replacement drinks

- Such as Pedialyte® (for infants and toddlers) are for children with certain health problems and should not be used unless recommended by the child's doctor.

drinks

Which Drink Is Best?

Directions: Use the nutritional labels on the drinks to determine the amounts of sugar, fat, calories, fiber and nutrients for each drink.

Drink	Sugar	Fat	Calories	Fiber	Nutrients
100% Orange Juice					
Orange Drink					
Orange Soda					

Which one will you choose to serve to your child? _____



Milk

- Milk is critical for strong bones and teeth.
- Whole milk is very high in fat and can increase calories.
- Skim milk has all the nutrients of whole milk with no fat and fewer calories.
- Toddlers and preschoolers need two cups of milk per day. Too little milk or too much milk can cause health problems.

Age	Milk	Amount
Under 12 months	Breast milk or formula only	Varies
Age 1-2 years	Whole milk only	2 cups per day only
2 years and up	Skim or 1% milk only	2 cups per day only

Milk Allergies

- Consult a doctor or nutritionist for a child's diet.
- Alternative sources of calcium and vitamin D:
 - Calcium fortified juices
 - Calcium fortified breads
 - Other products fortified with calcium and vitamin D
 - Soy
 - Sardines
 - Figs
 - Rhubarb
 - Nuts
 - Oranges
 - Beans

milk

Energy Balance

Keep energy balance

- Give small portions of higher fat foods and larger portions of fruits and vegetables.
- Teach children to recognize when they are full by asking whether they are hungry or thirsty before you give them a snack.
- Substitute more nutritious lower fat foods for others.
- Prepare nutritious snacks ahead of time to take with you when you leave home.
- Limit TV, computer and video game time to less than two hours per day.
- Make sure your child is active for a minimum of one hour (total) throughout the day.
- Ask your children to help you clean house and let them sweep, pick up and dust.
- Let your child have higher fat and higher calorie meals and snacks on days when his activity is high, such as days when he plays soccer, and lower fat/lower calorie meals on days when his activity is lower.

Diets

- Diets can be dangerous for young children's growth and development.
- Diets can damage brain development, create lifetime health problems and cause bones and teeth to form improperly.
- Only a doctor should ever put a child on a diet, and then it should be supervised very carefully.
- Instead of dieting, provide foods that are lower in fat and that are the appropriate portion size.
- As your child grows, his height will increase while his weight stays the same until he is at a weight normal for his height and age.

**Remember that you decide what (types of food and portions), where and when food is offered.
Your child decides how much he will eat!**

energy balance



Calories

What is a calorie?

- Calories come from the food we eat.
- Calories are used up by our body as energy.
- The more active you are, the more calories you burn.
- Games such as tag for 30 minutes will burn around 100 calories.
- When we don't use up all the calories we take in, they are stored in the body as fat.

Using Calories

- When you take in more calories than you use up, you gain weight.
- When you take in fewer calories than you use up, you lose weight.
- The goal is balance: using up all the calories you take in, but not more.

Total calories needed for one day:

- Toddlers (1-3 years): 1000 - 1400 calories
- Preschoolers (4-6 years): 1200 - 1800 calories
- In general, less than 30 percent of daily calories should come from fat for children 2 years of age.
- Calorie intake varies based on a child's age, sex and activity level.
- For more information, go to www.mypyramid.gov.

calories



What about school?

Tips for parents

- Tell teachers if your child has any food issues.
- Inform teachers in writing of your cultural and religious food preferences.
- Be flexible in working with changes to meal and snack routines.
- Set a meeting with the teacher if there are concerns about the nutritional practices of the school's program.
- Understand that preferences regarding eating and food may not be accommodated if they interfere with teaching or cause difficulties with other children.
- Alert teachers about any food allergies the child has.

Tips for teachers

- Inform parents about any changes in eating patterns.
- Follow parental requests concerning their child when possible.
- Tell the parent if a request – such as bottle feeding a two-year-old or serving only one food to their child – cannot be honored and why.
- Post food allergies or health concerns related to food so that substitutes and others can see them when preparing meals.
- Honor cultural practices regarding food for children.
- Give positive input regarding nutritious, appropriate meals for children.
- Explain how family-style dining works with young children, and point out its benefits to parents or caregivers.

school



Energy Balance BINGO

A fun fruit or veggie snack	A healthy substitute for ice cream	A healthy snack to take with you
Something active that a child can do instead of TV, computer and video games	FREE SPACE	One way to help children be active
A way to get your family active after dinner	A way to involve your children in preparing snacks or meals	An example of equipment or toys you can have at home to encourage activity (such as a bike)

One new thing I will do this week to help my child maintain Energy Balance:



Activity and Fitness for Young Children

Active Children

The benefits of exercise and energy balance for children

Exercise:

- Helps children build healthy bones
- Decreases blood pressure
- Can reduce depression and anxiety
- Can improve fitness and weight in obese children
- Is related to higher self-esteem
- Can lessen symptoms of diseases, such as asthma and cardiovascular problems, in children
- Improves cognitive function
- Improves social skills through group sports and activities

Active children:

- are healthier
- are emotionally and socially more capable
- maintain a healthy weight

Promoting Children's Activity

Infants:

- Should explore their world and develop skills by interacting with caregivers and by moving
- Need to be put in safe places where they can move and should not be restricted for long periods

Toddlers:

- Need at least a total of 90 minutes per day of active play throughout the day

Preschoolers:

- Need at least a total of two hours per day of active play throughout the day

active child



Screen Time

Television, radio, video games, computers, videos and CDs are all entertainment media that are found in most young children's homes today. Are these used as tools or as babysitters for children? Much research has indicated that there is a relationship between TV, computers and video games and children's obesity. Children who are continually involved with technology are typically children who eat more and move less. Research indicates that children who watch TV while eating may become less aware of when they are hungry or full.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that there should be no television or computer time for children under age two, and no more than two hours per day for those over two.

View-Read-Do model*

- **VIEW** a children's show with your child that involves movement, and move with them.
- **READ** a related book and act out what the characters do. Stop in the middle and encourage them to get up and pretend.
- **DO** something fun and active that is related to the show. If you're viewing a show about the ocean, pretend the children are fish, and have them swim through the water!

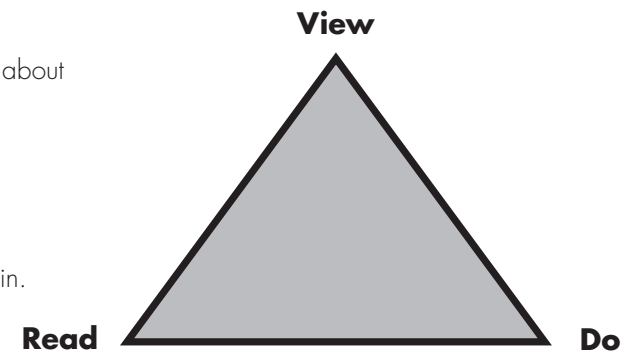
Computers and video games

- Limit the amount of time your child can spend on the computer.
- Set a timer for 10 minutes. When it goes off, set it for 10 minutes and tell your child he now must walk, run, dance or play with balls, until the timer goes off again.

Radio and CDs

- Take time to play your favorite music and dance with your child.
- Hand out scarves, rattles or pots and spoons, and play them to the beat of the music.

**This information is recommended by the Ready To Learn Department of PBS.*



screen time



Your Child's Screen Time

Think about how much time, on an average day, your child spends in front of a screen watching television, playing video games, or on the computer. Color in each block of time that your child spends using media. Then, place a check mark in the blocks of time that your child is active. Calculate the total amount of screen time your child has each day and the total amount of activity.

Morning		Afternoon		Evening	
6:00-7:00 am		12:00-1:00 pm		6:00-7:00 pm	
7:00-8:00 am		1:00-2:00 pm		7:00-8:00 pm	
8:00-9:00 am		2:00-3:00 pm		8:00-9:00 pm	
9:00-10:00 am		3:00-4:00 pm		9:00-10:00 pm	
10:00-11:00 am		4:00-5:00 pm		10:00-11:00 pm	
11:00-12:00 pm		5:00-6:00 pm		11:00 pm-12:00 am	

Total Hours of Screen Time: _____

Total Hours of Activity: _____



Move!

Tips for movement with children

When children are very active for a total of one hour a day, it can:

- Prevent obesity
- Increase school performance
- Enhance brain development and cognitive functioning
- Assist bone growth
- Improve social and emotional development

How do you get children to move?

- Turn off the TV, computer and video games.
- Require that children go out and play or play active games at home.
- Take them to the park.
- Provide room at home for rolling on the floor and dancing.
- Walk with them.
- Make activity a daily routine for the whole family.

move!



Activity Ideas for Infants



- Place babies on a blanket on the floor and give them some tummy time.
- Tummy time should not be immediately after eating.
- Allow babies lots of time on the floor to turn over, crawl and later walk.
- Limit the time in baby swings and infant seats.
- Play active games, such as rolling a ball, or crawling with your baby.
- Attach bells or rattles to Velcro® or elastic and put on your baby's foot to encourage kicking.
- Place a mobile above your baby so that he will just touch the figures on it when his arms are raised.
- Follow a crawling baby around, and then crawl in front of the baby to play "Follow the Leader."
- Place a blanket over a toy and encourage the baby to get it.
- Place a toy just out of reach and encourage the baby to crawl or scoot to it.
- Play "Peek-a-Boo."
- Dance while holding the baby. Soon, the baby will be moving to the music without you.

infants



Activity Ideas for Toddlers

- Buy balls of different sizes.
- Set up obstacle courses with pillows.
- Play "Hide and Seek."
- Turn on music and dance with your child.
- Plan a family walk for most nights.
- Go to the park together.
- Provide children's videos that encourage movement.
- Toddlers need 90 minutes of physical activity each day.
- Toddlers and preschoolers should not sit still for longer than 60 minutes at a time.
- Tiptoe, walk, hop, run and jump with your toddler.
- Play "Follow the Leader" around the house.
- Practice walking like different animals.
- Dance, dance, dance!
- Make an inexpensive balance beam by using a piece of lumber. Choose one that is wider than a 2" x 4" and put it on the ground for toddlers to walk across. As they get better change to a 2" x 4" to give them more challenge.
- Provide push toys that the toddler can walk and push at the same time.

toddlers



Activity Ideas for Preschoolers

- Dance, dance, dance!
- Play "Hide and Seek."
- Play "Red Light, Green Light." (When you say "green light" and turn away from the child, he can run. When you turn around quickly and say "red light," he must stop.)
- Play "Simon Says." Be sure to say active things such as "touch your toes" or "hop up and down."
- Walk while your child rides his bike.
- Blow bubbles for the child to chase, then let him blow the bubbles.
- Make a mud puddle by running water outside in an area with dirt and let your child jump, splash and play.
- Give two paper plates or pieces of paper to your child and let him skate around your uncarpeted rooms to music.
- Blow up balloons, and together, you and your child must keep them from falling to the ground while not holding them.
- Cut off the top of a gallon milk jug and cover the edges in electric tape so they're not sharp. Then toss tennis balls to your child and let him try to catch them in the jug.
- Play "Follow the Leader."
- Jump rope with your child.
- Remember the old nursery rhymes with movement such as "London Bridge" and "Ring Around the Rosie?" Children love the rhythms and movement, and the songs prepare children for reading as well.

preschoolers



Notes:

notes

Web Sites on Nutrition and Fitness for Children

- **5 a day!** <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>
This site has information, games and activities for adults and children on the importance of eating five fruits and vegetables a day, and tips for making this a part of your daily food intake.
- **Eat Smart Play Hard:** <http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardkids/>
Sponsored by the USDA, this site takes children to games, activities and information on activity and nutrition. There are e-cards, coloring sheets, songs, treasure hunts for the grocery store, video clips, online games and much more.
- **Food Pyramid for Kids!** <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/index.html>
This site has information about the newest Food Pyramid for children. It teaches about the Pyramid using games, activities and downloadable materials.
- **Dole 5 a day:** http://www.dole5aday.com/Kids/K_Index.jsp
This bilingual site has games, songs, rap videos, recipes and activities to encourage children to eat five vegetables and fruits a day.
- **Nutrition Explorations:** <http://www.nutritionexplorations.com/kids/activities-main.asp>
This site from the National Dairy Council offers lots of information for children and adults including great games and activities.

web sites

Web Sites on Nutrition and Fitness for Parents and Caregivers

- **American Academy of Pediatrics:** <http://www.aap.org/healthtopics/physact.cfm>
This list of sites for parents emphasizes the importance of physical activity for children.
- **Family Day:** <http://www.casafamilyday.org/>
The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse with many other organizations sponsor Family Day in which families are encouraged to eat together as a family.
- **Kids Health:** <http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/>
This site is sponsored by the Nemours Foundation and has a wealth of information on feeding young children and common problems parents encounter.
- **NAEYC:** <http://www.naeyc.org>
The National Association for the Education of Young Children has many resources for parents and teachers on nutrition and fitness for children.
- **The Food and Nutrition Information Center:** http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?tax_level=18info_center=A
Sponsored by the USDA, this site provides information on nutrition and fitness for children and adults. You can find information and tips on helping your child live a healthy lifestyle.
- **Cooking with Children:** <http://www.pbs.org/parents/parenthelpers/cooking.html>
PBS gives you ideas and guidelines on cooking with your children. You will also find games and ideas related to preschoolers and cooking.
- **Nutrition Café:** http://www.exhibits.pacsci.org/nutrition/nutrition_cafe.html
Plan a meal for your child and – based on your child’s age and sex – find out how many calories and nutrition content the meal provides.
- **Gerber:** <http://www.gerber.com/home>
Gerber offers nutrition information and ideas for parents of infants and toddlers.
- **Virtual Cafeteria:** <http://studentnutrition.cfbisd.edu/content/story.aspx?type=customcontent&sid=1034036>
Sponsored by a Texas school district, you can choose foods and put them on a child’s tray to see the total calories and nutritional value. The district provides menus by school but you can easily use it to look at what your child is eating.

Books for Children on Nutrition and Fitness for Children

Gregory, the Terrible Eater by Mitchell Sharmat, Ariane Dewey (Illustrator), Jose Aruego (Illustrator), 1984.

Ages: Three and over. The book tells the story of a little goat who is a picky eater, and his parents.

Eat Healthy, Feel Great by William Sears, Martha Sears, Christie Watts Kelly, Renee W. Andriani (Illustrator), 2002.

Ages: Preschool and older. This book has recipes and information on healthy eating for parents and children to enjoy together.

Physical Fitness by Dr. Alvin Silverstein, Laura Silverstein Nunn, Virginia B. Silverstein 2002.

Babar's Yoga for Elephants (Babar Series) by Laurent de Brunhoff, 2002.

Ages: Three and over. This book teaches children yoga basics in a fun, interactive format.

What's for Lunch? by Ann Garrett and Stephanie Peterson, 1999.

Ages: Three and over. This book explores what people eat for lunch around the world.

The following board books for infants and toddlers explore snacks from many different cultures. They have colorful pictures and provide words for the food in the appropriate language.

First Book of Sushi (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2001.

Yum Yum Dim Sum (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2003.

Hola Jalapeno (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2002.

Let's Nosh (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2002.

Mangia! Mangia! (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2005.

A Little Bit of Soul Food (World Snacks) by Amy Wilson Sanger, 2004.

books

Books on Nutrition and Fitness for Parents and Caregivers

The Family Nutrition Book: Everything You Need to Know About Feeding Your Children From Birth through Adolescence, by William Sears, 1999, Little, Brown.

The Yale Guide to Children's Nutrition by William Tamborlane (paperback) Yale University Press.

Healthy Foods, Healthy Kids: A Complete Guide to Nutrition for Children from Birth to Six Year Olds by Elizabeth Ward (paperback), Adams Media.

First Meals: The Complete Cookbook and Nutrition Guide, by Annabel Karmel, 2004, DK Publishing.

Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family, by Ellyn Satter, 2006, Keley Press.

365 Activities for Fitness, Food, and Fun for the Whole Family, by Julia Sweet, 2001, McGraw-Hill.

Little Bites, Big Steps

A recent study from the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute showed that parents and kids who received nutrition education developed healthier habits and made better choices than their peers. Eating and exercise habits are formed early in a child's life. Understanding how to help children develop these healthy habits will help you build a great foundation for your child or the children in your care before they develop habits and behaviors that lead to poor health and obesity.

Little Bites, Big Steps is the latest in a series of parent and caregiver education workshops and resources from Ready for Life, designed to give adults the tools they need to raise children who are socially and emotionally ready to succeed in school and life.

Little Bites, Big Steps identifies basic concepts of healthful eating and exercise habits for infants through age five, emphasizing parental and caregiver influence on behavior and choices while focusing on five target areas:

- * Feeding your child
- * Serving sizes and portion control
- * Drinks and snacks
- * Energy balance
- * Movement and exercise

Offering five complete one-hour training modules for parents and caregivers, *little bites, big steps* is an interactive, video-supported workshop experience that helps adults understand the role they play in providing nutrition and fitness for their children.

For more information about other curriculum materials and training opportunities, contact Ready for Life, 3000 Harry Hines Boulevard, Dallas, Texas 75201 or visit our website at www.readyforlife.org.

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