

## **Best Practices in Child Care regarding Nutrition and Physical Activity**

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Why is there a concern about the diet of children today?

- Obesity in young children
  - 21% of preschoolers (kids between 2 and 5) are considered obese
  - In 2008, Washington State had 14.4% of low income 2-5 year olds considered as obese
  - Long term health risks include Type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke/heart disease, higher health costs, quality of life issues
  - Short term health risks include premature puberty, sleep apnea, asthma, bone/joint issues, social discrimination, depression, low self-esteem and possibility of more risk for eating disorders.

Why does child care play such an important part in long term health?

- 75% of young children currently attend some type of child care or preschool.
  - Children consume up to three quarters of their daily calories and nutrients in childcare.
  - Most children in child care do not get the recommended amount of physical activity every day.

What can providers do to turn this around?

To promote a healthy weight in children, focus on the following:

- Infant feeding practices
- Nutrition
- Mealtime socialization
- Screen time limits and physical activity

Infant feeding practices

- encourage breast feeding
- practice cue feeding
- No TV, computer, or media for babies under 2
- Provide many opportunities for activity across the day

Nutrition

- Expose children to a wide variety of foods
  - Who is cooking tonight? Put your kids on the schedule.
  - Can you do anything to facilitate this in school?
    - guidelines for parents on what to bring and how much,
    - organize more donations,

- potluck,
  - take turns bringing things in,
  - silly names for new foods, and
  - why not?
- Eat at home most often
- Limit high-calorie, highly processed foods
- Limit sugar-sweetened beverages including juice
- Strive for 5-a-day fruits and vegetables
- Serve a 3-component breakfast to all kids
- 1% milk to kids over 2; whole milk for kids under 2
  - Some kids drink too much milk, too much dairy every day; it fills them up and they don't eat balanced.
- Limit juice to  $\leq 2, 4$  oz. glasses a week
- Limit high fat, sugar, and sodium foods
- Serve a fruit and/or vegetable at snack
- Provide nutrition/education guidance to parents

#### Mealtime Environment:

- Eat together often
- Model healthy eating habits (for preschoolers and up)
- Help children self-regulate (infancy and up)
- Avoid using food for rewards or punishment (all ages)
- Depends on work, activity level.
- Eating together as a family, start early, 2-3 times a week. Studies show children who eat as a family have less trouble as teenagers, do better in school, experience family connectedness. Ok if it's breakfast, as long as you're together. Cooking together is great, too. Start early, easier when they are younger to establish the habit, then as they are older it will be in place. It gets harder.
- Environment/setting/tone is important

#### Division of Responsibility during Eating

- Adults decide what, when, where a child will eat
- Kids decide if, what, and how much he or she will eat

#### Screen Time Limits

- Active Bodies, Active Minds – [www.waabam.org](http://www.waabam.org)
- King County Overweight Prevention Initiative – [www.kingcounty.gov/health/reduceTV](http://www.kingcounty.gov/health/reduceTV)

#### Physical Activity

- Follow activity guidelines for children birth to five years of age

Sesame Street Books – training through c-shel (Coalition of safety and health in early learning) –  
Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) grant

City: establish something beyond the WAC's for best practices to strive for.

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) kid-tailored organic boxes from Terra Organics, stipend for target area.

Suggestions:

- Have guidelines for what to bring for snack, meals, etc.
- You can add a produce box to try new produce as a group.
- Part of circle time each child's family brings in a cultural dish or something unusual to try.
- Try serving family style, what you take you get to try, can't put it back.
- Cook in your program.
- Grow herbs in your play yard.
- Activities tasting, smelling foods, rating them, ranking them, etc. New foods to love. Science experiments.

Handouts:

Best Practices for Nutrition, Physical Activity & Screen Media in Child Care Settings. University of Washington Center for Public Health Nutrition. [www.cphn.org](http://www.cphn.org)

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years of Age: Recommendations from the National Association for Sport and Physical Activity. [www.OPTforFitKids.org](http://www.OPTforFitKids.org)

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) Dietary Guidelines from the USDA

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