

A TRAINING MANUAL FOR

PARENTS

TEACHERS AND

FOOD SERVICE STAFF

Physical Activity and Nutrition

for Alaska's
Head Start Kids



Physical Activity and Nutrition

for Alaska's Head Start Kids

A training manual for parents, teachers, and food service staff

June 2007



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We couldn't have done it without you.

This training manual was prepared by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. It was produced with support from the Alaska Head Start Collaboration Office within the Department of Education and Early Development.

We would like to thank the Alaska Head Start Directors, members of the Alaska Head Start Association, and the following individuals for their contributions to this project.

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Suggested Citation:

Fink K, Peterson E, Stevens R. *Physical Activity and Nutrition for Alaska's Head Start Kids: A Training Manual for Parents, Teachers, and Food Service Staff.* Anchorage, AK: Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Division of Public Health, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 2007.

Dear Alaskan:

The primary mission of the Head Start program is to prepare children for school success through the provision of comprehensive child development services. This training manual focuses on physical activity and nutrition, which are two critical components of a comprehensive child development program.

On the surface, physical activity and nutrition may seem to have little to do with school readiness. However, both are essential. Children who engage in regular physical activity and are properly nourished are more likely to improve their school performance because they are more alert and engaged in classroom activities, more able to concentrate, and less likely to misbehave.

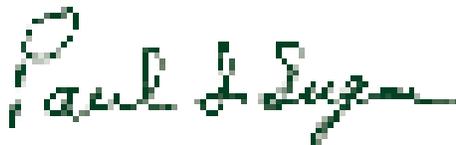
In addition to preparing children to succeed in school, physical activity and good nutrition provide lifelong health benefits. They contribute to good cardiovascular health, strong bones and muscles, and they keep the brain active and healthy.

Despite the many benefits of physical activity and good nutrition, too many Alaskan children today grow up without developing positive physical activity and nutrition habits. They consume more sugar, fat, and calories than they can expend, and spend more time looking at screens than playing outside. As a result, children are at a greater risk for obesity and many other chronic, lifelong health problems than ever before.

Head Start programs are in a position to make a tremendous contribution to child health and school readiness through the promotion of physical activity and good nutrition. Head Start staff see children nearly every day. They share meals with children and can use mealtime to promote healthy eating and teach about healthy foods. They have classroom time set aside to help children develop important motor skills, such as throwing, jumping, and catching. They can also design lesson plans that incorporate physical activity and nutrition concepts and model healthy behavior.

In addition to activities carried out in the classroom, Head Start staff members interact with parents and caregivers on a regular basis. They have opportunities to share information on healthy eating and physical activity with parents, and to encourage parents to reinforce healthy behaviors at home.

The materials in this training manual are designed to give Head Start staff suggestions and activities they can use to educate, encourage, and inspire parents and children to eat well and be physically active. By doing so, children will not only be healthy, they will be ready for school and on the road to living a healthy life.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Sugar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Paul Sugar

Head Start Collaboration Director

Alaska Department of Education
& Early Development

For more than 40 years, Head Start has played a significant role in improving the physical and social health of our nation's children and families. Head Start has been a leader and powerful influence in setting standards for all early childhood care and education providers. Although health related issues have varied throughout the years, Head Start has always addressed relevant health issues accurately and in a timely manner. Head Start is currently challenged with becoming an early childhood care and education role model for addressing the childhood overweight epidemic.

This epidemic of childhood overweight is affecting the nation's boys and girls as toddlers, preschoolers, and adolescents. Over the past three decades, the rate of overweight has more than doubled for preschool children ages 2 to 5 years and adolescents ages 12 to 19 years, and it has more than tripled for children ages 6 to 11 years. All socioeconomic strata and all ethnic groups have shown an increased prevalence of overweight.

Society has changed dramatically in the two decades over which the overweight epidemic has developed. Many of these changes, such as both parents working outside the home, longer work hours by both parents, supersizing of food and beverage portions, intensified marketing of foods to young children, increased reliance

Executive Summary

and acceptance of prepared foods, and more meals eaten outside the home, together with changes in the physical design and safety of communities affect what children eat, where they eat, how much they eat, and the amount of energy they expend.

The opportunity is here for Alaska's Head Starts to tip the scale back towards a healthy childhood weight. Head Start can provide student and family education, improve the classroom nutrition and physical activity environment, and adopt nutrition and physical activity policies that enhance the current requirements of the Head Start Performance Standards and Other Regulations. The intent of these actions is to initiate, support, and sustain the societal and lifestyle changes that can reverse the trend of overweight among our children and youth.

This Physical Activity and Nutrition Training Manual is designed to provide Alaskan Head Start parents, teachers, and food service staff with tools they can use to become leaders in reversing the epidemic of childhood overweight.

SECTION one

TRAINING FOR HEAD START STAFF

Section One of the Training Manual is designed for supervisors or coordinators and can be used to train teachers, family advocates, home visitors, and other Head Start staff. This section contains three modules that address childhood overweight, physical activity and nutrition. The first module, *Weight Matters*, provides an overview of childhood overweight, its associated health risks, basic skills on interpreting Body Mass Index (BMI), and information to help staff accurately discuss a healthy childhood weight with parents.

Nutrition in the Classroom encourages improvements in the classroom environment by addressing classroom design, introduction of new foods, support of healthy eating habits, and provision of consistent, accurate nutrition messages to parents.

Physical Activity in the Classroom focuses on the classroom environment by addressing classroom design and ways to create active classrooms.

SECTION

two

TRAINING FOR PARENTS

Section two consists of three modules designed to guide Head Start parents. Childrens' attitudes about nutrition and physical activity are nurtured by engaged and skillful parents that model and encourage fun, life-long habits.

Setting the Table for Meals Together encourages families to eat more meals together. Children who eat meals together have greater word acquisition, eat a more nutritious diet, are less likely to use drugs and alcohol, and, as teens, communicate more openly with their families and get better grades. *Making Healthy Food Choices* provides information on "how to" select healthy foods to improve health and achieve and maintain a healthy weight by following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 and MyPyramid recommendations.

Physical Activity at Home helps parents understand the importance of both structured activity and free play. Structured activity is important so children learn how to move in all kinds of ways. Free play helps develop a child's imagination, creativity, body awareness and sense of space and dimension.

SECTION

three

TRAINING FOR FOOD SERVICE STAFF

This section contains two modules for training menu planners and food service staff.

Serving Healthy Food will help weave together the Head Start Performance Standards, the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, MyPyramid and health organization nutrition recommendations enabling Head Starts to serve wholesome nutritious foods.

Serving Traditional Foods is designed to help Head Start centers wishing to serve donated traditional Alaska Native foods. Serving traditional Native foods in the Head Start classroom provides good nutrition and addresses the cultural and ethnic food preferences of many of the children. This module provides a brief overview of the nutritional benefits of Alaska traditional foods, how to determine if the Head Start center has the capacity to prepare traditional foods, ways to involve the community in the donation of Alaska traditional foods to the Head Start, and the Alaska Department of Conservation Alaska Food Code regulations surrounding the use of Alaska traditional foods.

A CALL TO ACTION

Clearly, Head Start alone cannot address all the reasons for the increased prevalence of childhood overweight. However, organizations such as Head Starts and individuals such as Head Start families across the state can begin to make positive changes. In the long-term, Alaska can become a state where proper nutrition and physical activity support energy balance and a healthy weight is the standard. Head Start's leadership is necessary to help early childhood care and education develop nutrition and physical activity standards and programs that result in sustained societal and lifestyle changes that promote a healthy weight among Alaska's children and youth.

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SECTION
one

TRAINING FOR HEAD START

MODULE 1

Weight Matters



To better understand childhood overweight, this section will explain how *overweight* and *at risk of overweight* is determined in children. It will show the increasing number of children who are becoming overweight every year and show that many overweight children do not grow out of it just by getting older.



The causes and health concerns of overweight will be addressed and some of the areas where Head Starts can make a difference will be highlighted. There will also be information to help Head Start staff interpret growth charts and share growth chart information with parents.

Body Mass Index, or BMI, is a number calculated from a person's weight and height. BMI is a good indicator of

body fatness in most people. BMI does not measure body fat directly, but research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat.

MORE ON BMI CHARTING

BMI is calculated by taking weight in kilograms and dividing it by height in meters squared. Adults can also use a chart (Figure 1a) and find height in feet and inches along the top row and weight in pounds along the left column. The number where the column and row meet is an approximation of BMI. For those over the age of 20, a BMI less than 18.5 is considered underweight; a BMI between 18.5–24.9 is considered normal weight; a BMI between 25.0–29.9 is considered overweight; and a BMI greater than or equal to 30 is considered obese.

However, BMI alone is not a diagnostic tool. To determine if an individual is overweight or obese, a health-care provider might evaluate the individual's diet, physical activity and family history, as well as collecting skin fold thickness measurements, and conducting other health screenings.

HEIGHT IN INCHES

	5'	5'1"	5'2"	5'3"	5'4"	5'5"	5'6"	5'7"	5'8"	5'9"	5'10"	5'11"	6'0"	6'1"	6'2"	6'3"	6'4"
100	20	19	18	18	17	17	17	16	15	15	14	14	14	13	13	12	12
105	21	20	19	19	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14	13	13	13
110	21	21	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	15	14	14	13
115	22	22	21	20	20	19	19	18	17	17	16	16	16	15	15	14	14
120	23	23	22	21	21	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	15	15	15
125	24	24	23	22	21	21	20	20	19	18	18	17	17	16	16	16	15
130	25	25	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19	18	18	17	17	16	16
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150	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	23	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19	18
155	30	29	28	27	27	26	25	24	24	23	22	22	21	20	20	19	19
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190	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	27	26	26	25	24	24	23
195	38	37	36	35	33	32	31	31	30	29	28	27	26	26	25	24	24
200	39	38	37	35	34	33	32	32	30	30	29	28	27	26	26	25	24
205	40	39	37	36	35	34	33	33	31	30	29	29	28	27	26	26	25
210	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26	26
215	42	41	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	28	28	27	26
220	43	42	40	39	38	37	36	34	33	32	32	31	30	29	28	27	27
225	44	43	41	40	39	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	31	30	29	28	27
230	45	43	42	41	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	30	29	28
235	46	44	43	42	40	39	38	36	36	35	34	33	32	31	30	29	29
240	47	45	44	42	41	40	39	37	36	35	34	33	33	32	31	30	29
245	48	46	45	43	42	41	40	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	31	30
250	49	47	46	44	43	42	40	39	38	37	36	35	34	33	32	31	30

FIGURE 1a: Understanding BMI
Body Mass Index

- 18 OR LESS UNDERWEIGHT (BLUE)
- 24 OR LESS NORMAL (GREEN)
- 25-29 OVERWEIGHT (YELLOW)
- 30 AND OVER OBESE (ORANGE)

THE FED'S VIEW
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/index.htm

For population assessment, calculating BMI is one of the best methods of evaluating overweight and obesity trends over time. Calculation requires only height and weight. It is inexpensive and easy to use for clinicians and for the general public. The use of BMI allows people to compare their own weight status to that of the general population. Research has shown that BMI correlates to direct measures of body fat, such as underwater weighing and more advanced measures of body fat.^{1,2}

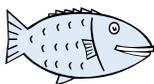


Assessing BMI in Children

BMI is calculated the same way for children and adults; however BMI for children is plotted on a growth chart. The growth chart is age- and sex-specific because the amount of body fat changes with age and the amount of body fat differs between girls and boys. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, BMI-for-age growth charts take into account these differences.

The CDC uses the terms *obese* and *overweight* to describe adults. When referring to children the CDC recommends the terms *at risk of overweight* and *overweight*.

UNDERSTANDING PERCENTILES



DIVE IN DEEPER

partners.hss.state.ak.us/takeheart/pdf_files/BMI%20Chart.pdf

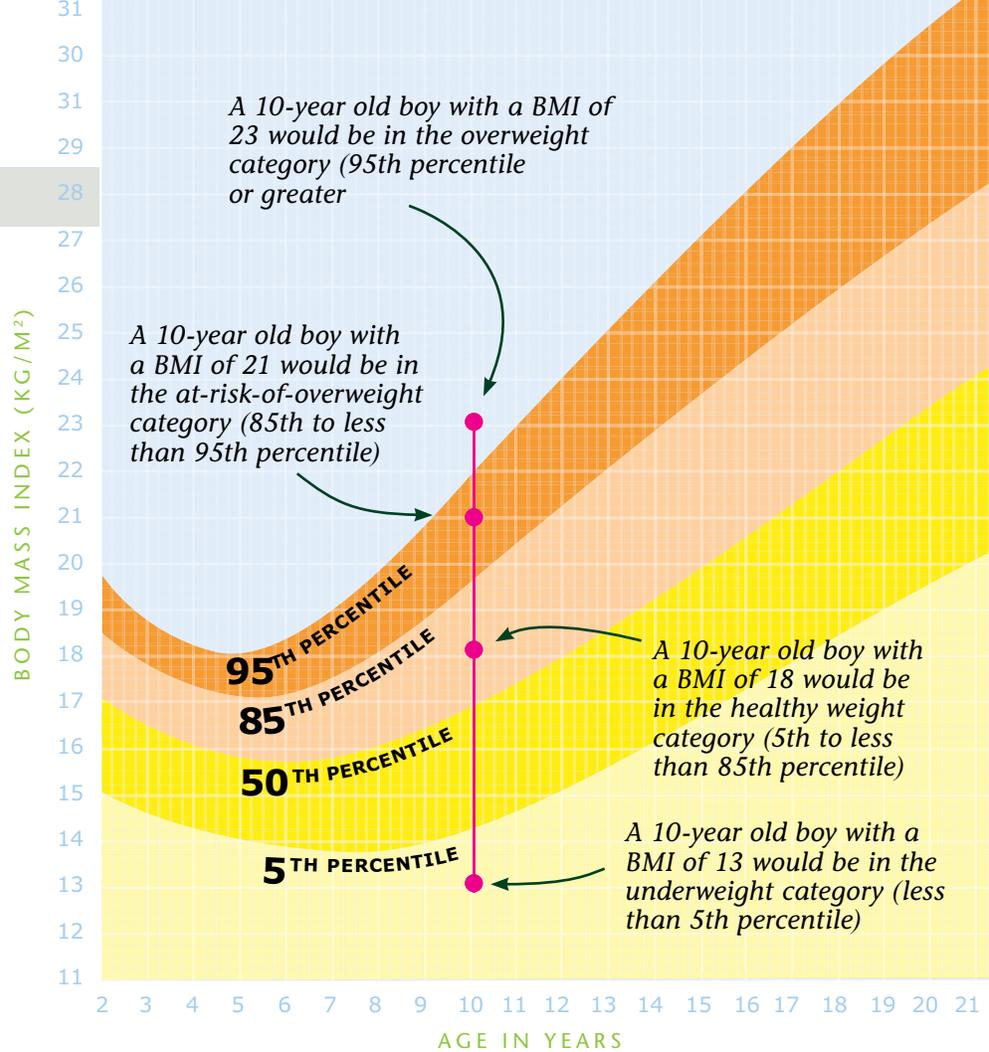


FIGURE 1b: BMI for Boys 2–21 Years

In Figure 1b, the growth chart shows BMI percentiles for boys age 2 to 20 years. A 10-year-old boy is used for an example.

The 10-year-old boy in the blue shaded area has a BMI of 23, which is above the 95TH percentile. This boy would be in the overweight category. The 10-year-old boy in the dark orange shaded area has a BMI of 21 which is above the 85TH percentile, but below the 95TH percentile.

This boy would be in the at risk of overweight category. The 10-year-old boy in the light orange shaded area has a BMI of 18 which is above the 5TH percentile but below the 85TH percentile. This boy would be in the healthy weight category. The 10-year-old boy in the light yellow shaded area has a BMI of 13 which is below the 5TH percentile. This boy would be in the underweight category.

OUR SOURCE FOR FIGURE 1B CHART

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/childrens_BMI/about_childrens_BMI.htm

MORE ON GROWTH CHARTS

www.cdc.gov/growthcharts/

The easiest way to explain percentiles is to use Figure 1b. The 10-year-old boy with a BMI of 18 is plotted on the 75th percentile line. This means that 75 percent of children the same age in the United States have the same or smaller BMI than him and 25 percent have a higher BMI.

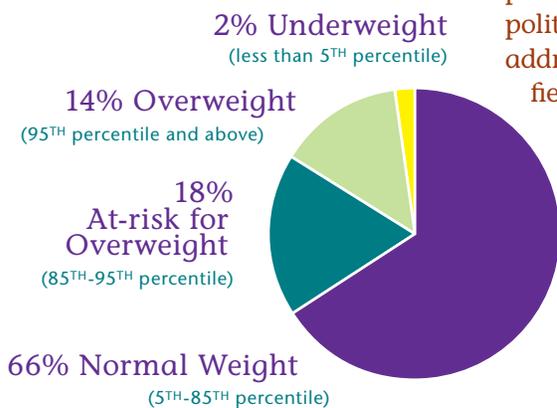
State of Overweight Among Children

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It is extremely important to address nutrition and physical activity to promote a healthy weight in the early child care setting because research suggests children are becoming overweight or at risk of overweight during their toddler and preschool years. Head Start staff have the opportunity to teach children and families good healthy habits to prevent weight gain in early childhood.

FIGURE 1c: Anchorage School District BMI Status

Kindergarten and First Grade Students: 1998–2003



OUR SOURCES FOR THIS CHART

Figure 1c shows the weight status of Anchorage School District kindergartners and first graders. Eighteen percent are at risk of overweight and 14 percent are overweight. When overweight and at risk of overweight are combined, 32 percent of students are above a normal weight.³ This suggests that weight gain occurs during the toddler and preschool years emphasizing the importance of nutrition and physical activity in the Head Start setting.

Currently there is no available Alaska statewide information about overweight preschoolers, so we must look at national information. Figure 1d is from the 2004 National Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance Survey report. The figure shows the percent of overweight children aged 2–5 years by race and ethnicity. As shown, there has been a steady increase in weight since 1995 for the total population as well as for the American Indian/Alaska Native population.⁴

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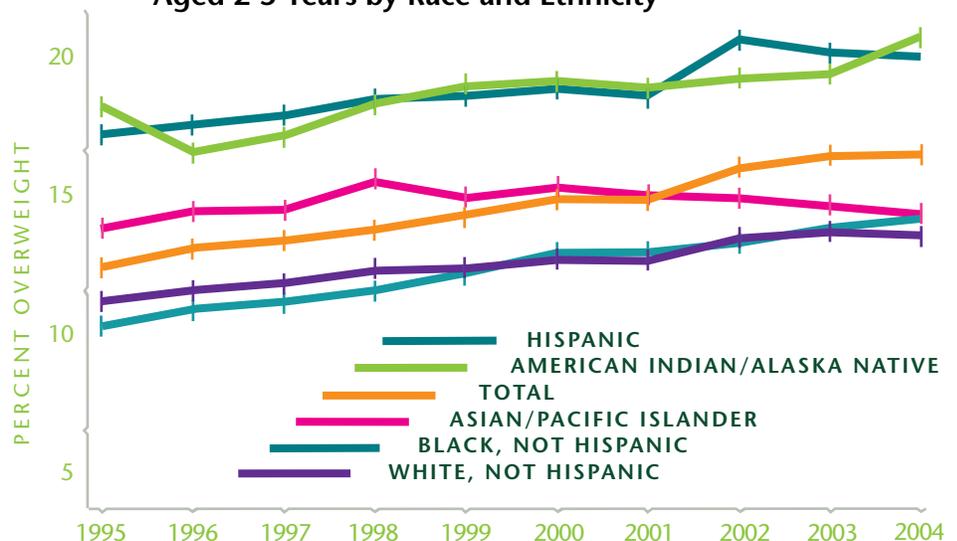
Various unpublished reports and health provider testimony suggest that Alaska's preschoolers are following a similar trend in the increasing numbers of overweight children. Health professionals, public health specialists, and political leaders are working to address the issue and have identified schools and preschools as a target area. After parents, schools and preschools have the greatest influence on a child.

Parents do not always recognize that their child is overweight. In one study, parents with overweight children were asked if their child was overweight, normal weight, or underweight. Only 27 percent of the parents accurately described their female child as overweight and 14 percent accurately described their male child as overweight.⁵

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When talking with parents about their child's weight it is very important to consider the parent's view of their child. If parents are not correctly identifying their own child as overweight, they are very unlikely to listen to advice about good nutrition and physical activity if they feel overweight is the underlying topic. Therefore it is very important that health professionals and early childhood educators discuss childhood overweight in a manner that increases understanding and provides solutions. Those solutions are to encourage healthy, lifelong diet and physical activity habits in children to promote healthy growth, prevent disease and increase physical coordination and strength.

FIGURE 1d: Overweight Among U.S. Children Aged 2-5 Years by Race and Ethnicity



OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

2004 National Pediatric Nutrition and Surveillance Survey

Peterson E, Utermohle C, Green T, & Middaugh J. Prevalence of Overweight Among Anchorage Children: A Study of Anchorage School District Data: 1998-2003. Bulletin Vol. 8(9), November 10, 2004. Section of Epidemiology, Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services, State of Alaska, Anchorage, Alaska. Available at www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/rr2004_09.pdf

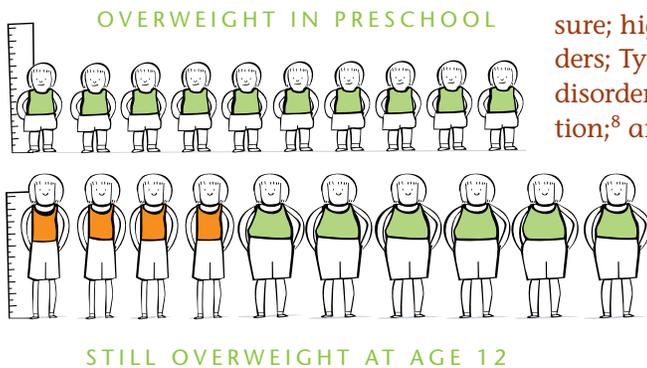
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Studies have shown that overweight children do not always “grow out of it.” Children who are at risk of overweight and overweight in early childhood have an increased chances of being an overweight or obese adult.

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A study from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development showed that six of 10 overweight preschoolers were still overweight at age 12 (Figure 1e). The study also showed that eight of 10 overweight elementary children were still overweight at age 12.

FIGURE 1e: Preschoolers Overweight by 12



DETAILS OF THE NICHD STUDY

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT (NICHD)
www.nichd.nih.gov/od/secc/index.htm

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Health Concerns and Causes of Overweight

Parents want their children to lead healthy, productive, disease-free lives. Head Start staff can help families and children understand that good nutrition and physical activity can help achieve these goals.

The current and future health of a child can be affected if a child is overweight. Overweight and at risk of overweight children have an increased risk of: high blood pressure; high cholesterol; joint disorders; Type 2 diabetes; psychosocial disorders; facing social discrimination;⁸ and becoming obese as an adult.^{6,7} These diseases in adults can increase the risk for: early death; heart disease; diabetes; arthritis; gallbladder disease; and certain types of cancer.

The increased risk for poor health in childhood because of overweight and at risk of overweight threatens to make this generation of American children the first to have a shorter life span than their parents.⁹

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The causes of overweight and obesity are very complex and a single answer will not resolve the issue. Each of the levels of influence and factors listed in Figure 1f play a role in the amount of physical activity the individual chooses and the food selections made. Head Starts are in the perfect position to influence many of these factors.

At the individual level, Head Starts can provide education to increase nutrition knowledge to both families and children and can model healthy eating behaviors. At the home level, Head Starts can provide education on the importance of family meals, feeding practices including reasonable portion sizes, and encouragement on decreasing TV and screen time. At the community and organizational level, Head Starts can provide parent and child care provider training and education and serve healthy foods at the Head Start. At the environmental and policy level, Head Start staff and parents can leverage their power to recreate societal and cultural norms and influence policy at the local, state and national level.

In one study, growth data from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care and Youth Development were analyzed. Height and weight of participating children in the study were measured at seven different ages: 24, 36, 54 months and 7, 9, 11 and 12 years.

Children who were ever above average weight (greater than the 85th percentile) one time at ages 24, 36, or 54 months during the preschool ages were more than five times as likely to be overweight at age 12 than those who were below the 85th percentile for BMI at all three of the preschool ages. During the elementary school period, ages 7, 9, and 11 years, the more times a child was overweight, the greater the odds of being overweight at age 12 years compared to a child who was never overweight. A child who was overweight once while at elementary school was 25 times more likely to be overweight at 12, compared to a child who was never overweight while at elementary school.⁶

Another study chose to use the term obese instead of overweight to describe children above the 95th percentile. This research examined the relationship between obesity in childhood and obesity in adulthood by reviewing the epidemiologic literature published between 1970 and July 1992. For all studies and across all ages, the risk of adult obesity was at least twice as high for obese children as for nonobese children. The risk of adult obesity was greater for children who were at higher levels of obesity and for children who were obese at older ages.⁷

FIGURE 1f: Levels and Factors Influencing Nutrition and Physical Activity



Interpreting GrowthCharts



Head Start staff are required by Head Start Performance Standard 1304.23 to work together with the child's family to identify nutritional needs, including height and weight information. Many Head Starts plot each child's height and weight information on a growth chart. For children over the age of 2, the CDC BMI age- and sex-specific charts should be used. These charts can be shared with parents to help lead staff into discussions about food, nutrition and physical activity with the family. However, the growth chart needs to be presented properly. As noted before, almost 75 percent of parents with overweight children do not consider their child overweight.⁵

Discussing weight issues with parents must be done carefully and with an emphasis on the importance of good nutrition and regular physical activity as an investment in their child's current and future health.

Changing Alaskans' food knowledge and societal norms will be difficult and take time. However, parents are more easily influenced because of their desire to provide for their children. The goal is to have families make food choices for their children as an investment in their child's current and future health.



Changing Alaskans' physical activity knowledge and participation will also be difficult and take time. Many Americans spend more time watching TV and on the computer than being physically active. Head Starts can help address these issues by providing physical activity education to children and to parents. Children and families can benefit from participating in physical activities, receiving quick and easy physical activity ideas, and education about being physically active in small indoor spaces, as a family, and during all seasons of the year.



Most experts agree that the factors influencing a child's weight are parents/family, businesses/worksites, community programs, media, the health system and the child care provider setting (Figure 1g). Head Start can play a role in the solution. Over 3,500 children in 105 Alaska communities spent time in Head Start during 2004, underscoring the important role Head Start staff play in helping children and families make healthier choices. Head Start provides the perfect environment to educate, influence and teach children and parents about good nutrition and physical activity.



Healthy Children

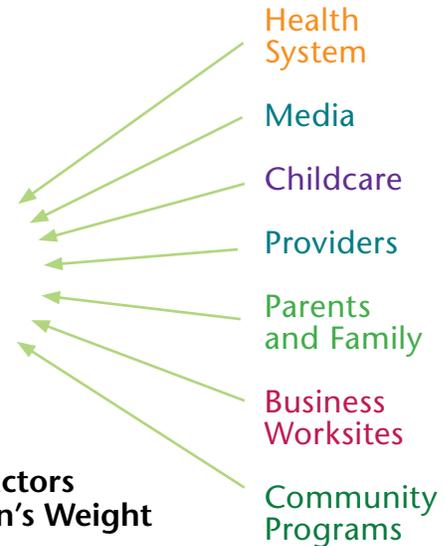


FIGURE 1g: Factors Affecting Children's Weight

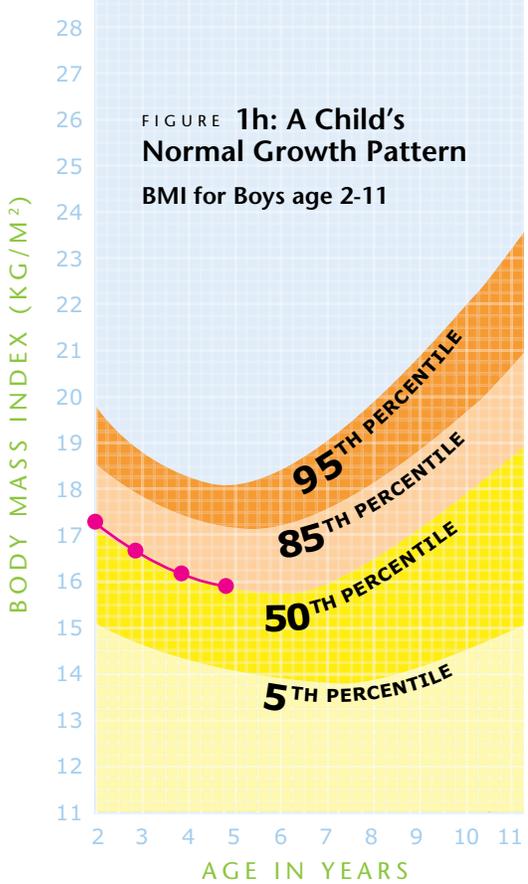


FIGURE 1h: A Child's Normal Growth Pattern
BMI for Boys age 2-11

Growth charts are not just used to determine overweight but are used to follow a child's pattern of growth. Plotting a child's BMI on a growth chart at different ages in their Head Start career and following the growth curve is important. Over time, a child's growth curve gives a general picture of how the child is developing physically. Overall growth patterns can be tracked by comparing BMI to national averages for children of the same age and gender, and to measurements from previous ages.

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MODULE ONE

When tracking a child's growth, it is more important that the child is growing at a steady, appropriate rate than that he or she hits a specific number on the chart. Figure 1h shows a child following a normal growth pattern. This child is at the 50th percentile for his weight, and has been at the 50th percentile the last three years. The child is following the expected curve of growth and therefore he is likely growing normally.

SLIDE 18
MODULE ONE

Weighing and measuring children takes time and effort and so it is important that the measurements provide useful information for staff and families and are beneficial to the children. One key part of making sure information is useful is to ensure that height and weight measurements are accurate. Children should be weighed and measured properly so that they are put into the right weight category and their growth patterns show correct information.

To demonstrate how critical accurate measurements are, here is an example of a 5½ year old boy. The boy weighs 41.5 pounds and is 43 inches tall. Using those measurements, the boy has a BMI of 15.8 and a BMI-for-age at the 50th percentile, which is in the healthy weight range. If the boy was inaccurately weighed at 42.25 pounds, a mere ¾ of a pound different, the boy's BMI would be 16.3 and BMI-for-age in the 75th percentile. Although this boy would remain in the healthy weight category, his growth chart would show an increase in BMI and might cause unnecessary concern among teachers and his family.

To make sure that height and weight measurements are accurate, Head Start staff should use the same equipment each time a measurement is made. They should also use the same technique for measuring children. Training on how to take height and weight measurements should be provided, with a refresher course each year.

SLIDE 19
MODULE ONE

If the a Head Start child had the growth pattern shown in Figure 1i, Head Start staff would want to double check that the BMI was calculated correctly, that the age was calculated correctly, and that the BMI and age were plotted correctly. If these three checks are correct, the next step would be to re-weigh and measure the child and plot the new information. If the child is truly showing a pattern of weight gain as shown in Figure 1i, Head Start staff should talk to the child's parents and explain the purpose of the growth chart, explain the pattern of concern and refer the child to a health care professional to be evaluated.

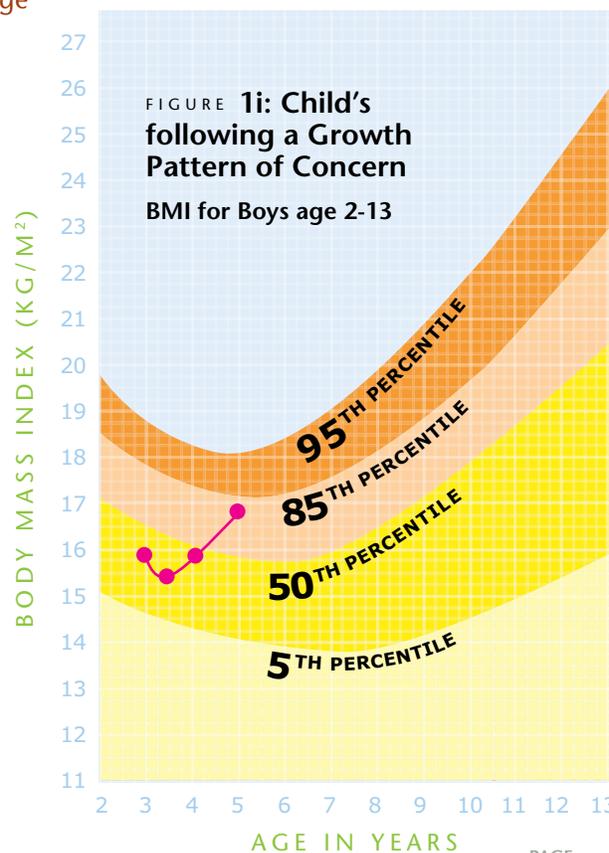


FIGURE 1i: Child's following a Growth Pattern of Concern
BMI for Boys age 2-13



The pattern of growth shown in Figure 1i is of concern because the child had been at the 75TH percentile for a year and then moved above the 85TH percentile. In this case, the pattern of growth for the child is what is important, not the actual BMI. As shown in Figure 1i, the child's BMI at age 3 is very similar to his BMI at age 4½. The change in the percentile is what causes concern about the child's growth.



The child in Figure 1j has only one BMI plotted on the growth chart. The boy is at the 95TH percentile indicating he is overweight. However, the child's health provider is the only one that should diagnosis a child as overweight. Since Head Start staff cannot make a medical diagnosis of overweight it can be difficult for staff to talk to parents about the growth charts of children above the 85TH percentile. If used correctly, however, the growth charts can be used to talk about a child's health without upsetting parents.

Head Start staff members work with the child every day and know the child's body shape, about the child's eating and activity habits, and about the family. Therefore, staff can use the growth charts with families to help open a discussion about

healthy weight, healthy eating and active play. When discussing the growth charts, staff should clearly explain to the parents what the growth charts measure and what the percentiles mean. They should ask parents about their perception of their child's weight. This provides the opportunity to ask the parents if the child's health care provider has talked to them. If the family has not talked with a health care provider about their child's weight, Head Start staff should refer the family to a provider. In the meantime, Head Start staff should offer to provide local resources and information about healthier eating and physical activity.

GETTING A FULL DIAGNOSIS

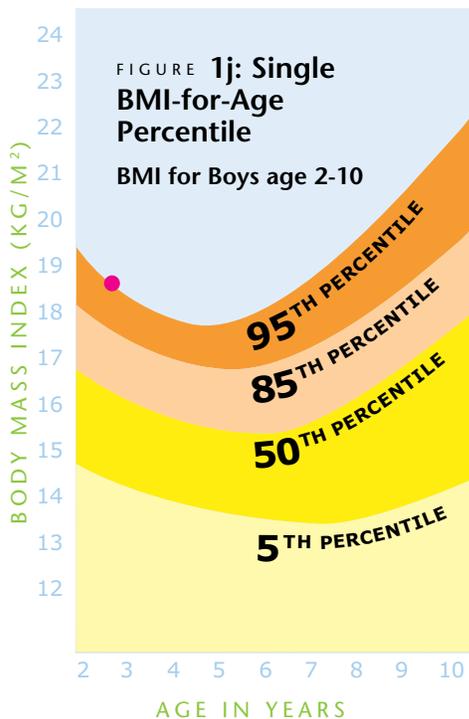
What Head Starts Can Do

To address the issue of childhood overweight, Head Starts should find ways to increase the level of education on physical activity and nutrition given to parents and children, continue to serve healthy foods, and increase the amount of active play in the classroom. These improvements can be made without impacting the other Head Start requirements. Physical activity and nutrition education can be used to teach science, literacy, math or any of the other domains of learning.



INSPIRE YOUR KIDS TO EAT WELL AND STAY FIT

health.gov/DietaryGuidelines
www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/bmi/childrens_BMI/children_tips.htm



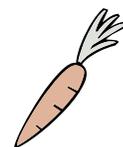
BMI alone is not a diagnostic tool. For example, a child may have a high BMI for age and sex, but to determine if excess fat is a problem, a health care provider would need to decide. It is important for the child to be seen by a health care provider because there are various health concerns associated with weight gain. The provider will evaluate height and weight independently using the CDC 2 to 20 years Weight-for-age and Stature-for-age growth charts to determine if changes in weight or height had a greater impact on the BMI. A health care provider may also check skin fold thickness measurements, evaluated the diet, physical activity, family history, and perform other appropriate health screenings. The goal for overweight children and adolescents is to reduce the rate of weight gain while allowing normal growth and development.

The following materials in this training manual will provide information to Head Start staff on improving the food environment and improving physical activity in the Head Start classroom. There are also materials to be used by Head Start staff to encourage parents to increase the number of meals eaten together, improve the selection of healthy snacks and meals, and increase the amount of physical activity at home. The last section of the manual is designed to help food service staff plan, prepare and serve nutritious meals for Head Start



children and addresses the use of traditional food use in Alaska's Head Starts. This information is valuable for all staff members so that food service staff menu planning decisions are understood and supported by all Head Start staff.

Although the material is divided into sections for classroom staff, parents, and food service staff the information in each module can be used by all Head Start staff interested in learning more about the importance of good nutrition and active play for preschool children.



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Nutrition in the Classroom

To help prevent the development of childhood overweight and chronic diseases, it is important that healthful eating habits are established early in life. Children learn about foods through formal education, first-hand experiences, hands-on approaches, observation, and what is served to them. Therefore, a variety of healthy eating teaching strategies, behavior modeling, and education opportunities need to be presented to children everyday.

The preschool years are a critical time to introduce and encourage healthy nutrition because early exposure to healthful foods helps children establish good eating habits that carry into adulthood. Children establish food preferences and dietary habits during the first six years of life.¹

It is essential to introduce a variety of healthy foods to children at an early age.

In the previous module, the causes and health concerns regarding childhood overweight were introduced. This module will suggest ways to support healthy eating in the classroom, support our choosy and slow eaters, link classroom activities to nutrition, provide parents with nutrition information, address food served at celebrations, and provide tips for incorporating nutrition into everyday classroom experiences.



Supporting Healthy Eating

Head Start staff have the privilege of eating meals and snacks with children every day. This time is a great opportunity for staff to talk about food and model healthy eating behaviors. There are also many developmental and socialization benefits to children when meals and snacks are eaten together with their classmates and with adults. For these reasons, children should be encouraged to participate with the social and educational interactions of the meal or snack, even if they choose not to eat.

Socialization skills are practiced when children ask for food to be passed, assist each other, talk to each other and adults at the table, and practice their manners. Motor skills are developed when children serve themselves because they practice lifting, pouring, scooping, and aiming. Head Start classrooms should be equipped with furniture and eating utensils that enable children to eat, to serve, and to pass food without difficulty. Eating together should also include nutritional benefits and education.

Eating together at the Head Start table is a time when children develop some of their food preferences. Head Start meals provide the opportunity for children to become familiar with flavors, smells, textures and a variety of foods (PS 1305.23(c)(1)). Head Start staff should encourage children to help with meal service by setting the table and cleaning their own dishes by putting them in the dish pan (PS 1305.23(c)(7)).



Children should be verbally encouraged to serve themselves, and containers and scoops sized for children should be provided. Children who serve themselves and are properly supported by adults can learn to serve themselves reasonable portion sizes and learn how to self-regulate their food intake. This supports the division of responsibility concept for feeding children.

Ellyn Satter, a child nutrition expert, pioneered the concept of the division of responsibility for feeding children. She reminds us that caregivers and parents are responsible for the what, when and where children are fed. Children are responsible for how much they choose to eat and whether they choose to eat.

Based on the division of responsibility theory, Ms. Satter discourages power struggles relating to food. She notes that struggles have the potential to set children up for a lifetime of dysfunctional eating. Caregivers trying to control the amount of food children consume can override the child's natural ability to regulate intake. Repeated prompts to eat, using food as a reward or punishment, restricting non-nutritious foods, or using other forms of manipulation to control a child's food intake may promote a lifetime of overeating or refusals to eat (PS 1305.23(c)(2)).²

Head Start staff members need to understand this division of responsibility to help children develop healthy eating habits.





Positive role models can have great influence on children eating food and forming healthy eating habits. Children learn about foods through formal education, first-hand experiences, hands-on approaches and observation.^{3,4} When staff eat the same foods as children, and serve as role models, they are sending the message “do as I do” not “do as I say.”

Since children are influenced by the foods they see staff eating, staff should not eat or drink foods in front of the children that are not on the daily menu (PS 1305.23(c)(4)). Staff should also avoid negative facial expressions, body language or verbal cues in regard to the food being served. Staff should also be careful to limit children seeing them eat high fat, especially sweet or salty snacks, or sugary beverages in the classroom and the community.

THE PROVEN POWER OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Providing children and adults a positive message about what is healthy results in better eating habits.

In one study, families were either counseled on increasing fruit and vegetable intake or decreasing fat and sugar intake. Those counseled to eat more fruit and vegetables ate a healthier diet than those told not to eat fat and sugar.⁵ Therefore, encouraging healthy foods consumption is preferred over telling children what not to eat.



When eating meals with children, staff should talk with them about the foods served and the health benefits of the food. For example, staff can use positive messages like “steamed carrots are my favorite orange vegetable” and “I eat carrots to help me see better.” These simple statements reinforce the learning of colors, the categorization of vegetables, and the knowledge that carrots are important for vision. A child’s decision to eat foods will be influenced by what adults eat and by what he or she are encouraged to eat by adults.



Supporting the Slow and Choosy Eater

Preschool-age children go through a normal developmental phase called “neophobia,” or fear of new things, such as new foods. This stage is often called the “picky eating” or “choosy eater” stage. Research by childhood nutrition experts note that it can take up to a dozen times before a food becomes familiar to a child. To help preschoolers overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods a variety of foods should be consistently offered.¹ Eventually food will become familiar to the child and this will lead to more healthful eating habits.



In one study, families with obese parents and non-obese children were randomized to groups in which parents were provided a comprehensive behavioral weight-control program and were encouraged to increase fruit and vegetable intake or to decrease intake of high-fat/high-sugar foods. Child materials targeted the same dietary changes as their parents without caloric restriction.

Both groups received the same basic information, but the groups differed in the behaviors targeted for change. In the group that increased fruit and vegetable consumption, the goal was to increase intake of fruits and vegetables to reach at least two servings of fruits and three servings of vegetables per day. Participants in the decreased fat and sugar group were provided guidance to reach a goal of no more than 10 servings of high-fat/high-sugar foods per week.

The group counseled to increase fruit and vegetable decreased their intake of fat and sugar even though nutrition education did not address sugar and fat. Parents in the increased fruit and vegetable group showed significantly greater decreases in the percentage of overweight than parents in the decreased high-fat/high-sugar group. Education about how to eat healthy was more likely to lead to improved diets than education about what not to eat, as measured by increases in fruit and vegetables and decreases in fat and sugar.⁵

And, just like children overcome their fear of going down the slide at the playground, they will also overcome their fear of new foods. Thus, the more times the food is introduced the less likely the child will be afraid and the more likely the food will eventually be eaten.



Food jags in children, when children only want to eat one food, are common. Food jags rarely last long enough to be harmful. Children who are energetic and growing are probably eating enough. The strategies for addressing choosy eaters can also be used to get children through the food jag phase.

Head Start staff can help children overcome their choosy eating by allowing them to explore and taste new foods. During Head Start meals and snacks, sit the choosy eater with adventurous eaters so they can observe and learn



to accept new foods. Suggest the choosy child try a very small serving, 1-2 tablespoons, of the food and praise the child for tasting instead of talking about what a choosy eater the child is. When a child says he is full or finished, let the child stop eating even if there is still food left on his plate. If there is a child in the class that always throws food away, work with that child individually to select more reasonable portion sizes.

Acceptance of new foods takes time. Children need to learn and become familiar with food by smelling, examining its texture, looking at it, and experimenting with it. Staff should be careful not to discourage this behavior by calling it “playing with your food” or referring to it in a negative way. Rather, staff can help children explore new foods by teaching about flavors, textures and colors.



Canned pineapple is tangy, carrots are crunchy, broccoli is green, milk is smooth and white.

Eating food also takes time. Some children will be slow eaters and should be allowed to eat their meal at their own pace. Research in adults suggests that slower eaters are less likely to be obese.⁶

A staff member or volunteer should stay with the child until she is done eating. It might help to sit slower eaters together and identify a staff member that will stay at the table with the children until finished. To allow slower eaters time to eat, schedule activities after meals that do not require group participation and cause the child to rush (PS 1305.23(c)(3)).

Classroom Nutrition Education

Integrating nutrition and physical activity into all curricula and domains of learning provides children with repeated exposure to information and principles for healthy living. Repeated exposure and experience with nutrition education and physical activity will influence children in a positive way. Incorporation also tends to “normalize” healthy eating and lifestyles for children. Children will begin to understand that nutrition and activity are a regular and essential part of each day, thus reinforcing a lifetime of healthy eating and physical activity habits.



To improve the acceptance of new foods, staff can teach a lesson before meal time about the new food. For example, if the new food is pineapple, a book about characters in Hawaii eating pineapple could be read at circle time. Children could be asked if they have ever have eaten fresh or canned pineapple, if pineapple is a fruit or a vegetable, if they think pineapple grows in Alaska, and if anyone would like to try eating pineapple at lunch? Taste tests can be conducted of fresh versus canned pineapple to promote sensory exploration of new foods. Using circle time to set the stage for lunch will improve familiarity and curiosity about the foods served at lunch.





Circle time can also be used to teach children about ethnic or traditional foods before serving. For Alaska Native foods, an elder or fisherman can tell the story of fishing. Fishing gear such as nets and poles and a filleting demonstration can be shown to the children. To introduce and teach about ethnic foods and cultures spend a whole week to build up anticipation and end the week with a cultural meal.



On the first day introduce traditional-style clothing and place some in the dramatic play area. Have the children make decorations using traditional styles. The next day, play traditional music, practice dance steps, and play with musical instruments. The next day, read a book about traditional foods, show pictures from a cookbook, and talk about the foods. Then, practice making a food. For Mexican culture, roll out tortillas, for Italian use the pasta maker, or for Native Alaskan sort and wash blueberries. On the last day, the children will be excited to eat the new foods.

Another way to introduce children to new foods is to let them help prepare the food.

Classroom staff and food service staff will need to plan and work together to set up the classroom for these events. Smaller groups of children can also help with food preparation in the kitchen. When helping in the kitchen, food service staff need to assure children are properly supervised around hot stoves and sharp knives in addition to following proper sanitation regulations. In the kitchen, children can help measure and stir ingredients. Children will be curious about how food changes when cooked. Show children how food looks, smells, and tastes before and after it is cooked. For example, broccoli changes shades of green and is no longer crunchy, pasta noodles do not smell much before cooking, and toast becomes brown and crunchy.

PLAY WITH YOUR FOOD

Pea Salad

- 4 cups cooked peas
(two 10-ounce packages frozen peas)
- ¾ cup finely chopped onion
- ½ cup finely chopped radish
- ¾ teaspoon crumbled dried tarragon
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1½ tablespoons white-wine vinegar
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper



In a bowl toss together the peas, the scallion, the radish, the tarragon, the oil, the vinegar, salt and pepper to taste until the salad is combined well.

Serve chilled. Makes eight ½ cup servings.

Blueberry Compote

- ¼ cup water
- ¼ cup 100% apple juice
- 2 cups blueberries (10 oz)
- 1 tablespoons lemon juice

Boil water and 100% apple juice in a 1-quart heavy saucepan, uncovered, 5 minutes. Stir in blueberries and simmer, stirring occasionally, until blueberries begin to burst, 3 to 5 minutes. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice.

Serve warm or chilled on whole wheat pancakes or French toast. Makes about 1½ cups.

Vegetable Puppets

The ideal stage for a vegetable puppet show is, naturally, the dining table. The puppeteer hides below, holding the puppets above the edge.

Materials suggested:

- Large carrots • Popsicle sticks • Parsley
- Peanut butter (or cream cheese if students have peanut allergies) • Raisins or olives
- Celery • Green beans

To make a vegetable puppet, place a popsicle stick into the bottom of the fat end of a peeled carrot. Using peanut butter, or cream cheese if students have peanut allergies, as glue, affix raisins or olives for eyes and a nose, a slice of celery for the mouth, and parsley sprigs for the hair. For the arms and legs, cut green beans in half and affix with generous amounts of peanut butter or cream cheese. The puppets can be eaten as a snack when served with a glass of milk.

A small but growing number of students have severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. Before providing foods made with peanuts, peanut butter or other nuts as a snack, make sure there are no food allergy restrictions (PS 1305.23(c)(6)).



Food preparation and demonstrations in the classroom are a wonderful way to increase familiarity and introduce new healthy foods to children. This will also increase understanding of cooking and begin



to develop some skills and interest in food preparation. Generally, preschoolers are able to mix or stir food, make sandwiches, spread soft spreads, tear greens, help to pour and measure, set the table, and help clean up.

Children could help make a cold green pea salad using thawed frozen peas. With assistance the children could measure the peas, chopped onion, chopped radish, oil, vinegar, salt and pepper, and stir it all together. Or children could make fruit compote from blueberries picked during a field trip. The blueberry compote can be eaten with pancakes the next day.

Meal preparation can be used to teach numbers, colors, textures, patterns and sequencing. While preparing, ask children questions such as “what shape are peas,” “what color are blueberries,” and “are peas crunchy or soft?” Helping prepare the food will increase the child’s interest in eating the food. (See previous page for recipe.)

Gregory, the Terrible Eater
Mitchell Sharmat

Bread and Jam for Frances
Russell Hoban

The Carrot Seed
Ruth Krauss

Eating the Alphabet:
Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z Lois Ehlert

Growing Vegetable Soup
Lois Ehlert

Green Eggs and Ham Dr. Seuss

The Very Hungry Caterpillar
Eric Carle

Stone Soup
Marcia Brown

Bread, Bread, Bread:
(Foods of the World) Ann Morris

Lunch
Denise Fleming

Pancakes, Pancakes! Eric Carle

We Like to Nurse Chia Martin

Picky Nicky Cathy East Dubowski

Walter the Baker Eric Carle

Peanut Butter and Jelly:
A Play Rhyme Nadine Westcott

Children are curious about food. Allowing children to play with food provides children the opportunity to see it, smell it, touch it and test it before eating. Use food items in edible art projects, such as making flowers or faces from fruit and vegetable pieces. Making vegetable snack puppets helps children experiment with vegetables. Almost any fresh, thawed frozen, or canned vegetables can be used.

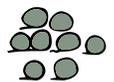


Display and read children’s books which relate to and present a positive view of healthy eating and physical activity. Children love listening to stories at circle time. Select books and activities to help weave a theme through the entire day or week. For example, if a book about baking is read, teach the children about yeast breads. They can even help knead dough as a classroom activity.



Teaching children about food sources can increase a child’s curiosity and acceptance of food.

Along with books and explanation of foods, consider growing edible plants in the classroom. Many plants can be started from seeds indoors in wax-lined Dixie cups or in plastic four or six-pack plant containers. When possible, provide opportunities to learn gardening and growing of fruits and vegetables by having a garden at the center or by participating in a community garden.



VEGETABLE PUPPETS INSPIRED BY
familyfun.go.com/arts-and-crafts/cutpaste/feature/famf38foodart/famf38foodart3.html

READ IT! READ IT! for Early Childhood Educators.
Books for reading with your preschooler, as well as music, puppets and other giggly fun!
lexicon.ci.anchorage.ak.us/guides/kids/booklists/storypackets/index.html

Alaska may not have many traditional orchards or farms, however most areas have a local gardener or person with farm animals. Ask your local gardener or farm animal owner if your class can take a field trip to his or her place. For gardens, visit several times throughout the year to help the children understand the progression of the plant growth cycle. Integrate the learning of the garden or farm field trips into the curriculum by teaching why certain foods grow in Alaska's climate. Watch the farm animal owner milk his or her cow or collect eggs from nests. When possible match the foods seen at the garden or farm with foods served in the Head Start classroom that week.



There are many opportunities in Alaska to teach about local and traditional food sources. Field trips can be taken to pick wild foods such as blueberries, fiddleheads, or beach asparagus. Invite a local hunter to share a story about fishing or hunting, talk about gun safety, and teach children how to butcher an animal. If Department of Conservation Alaska Food Code regulations are followed, the blueberries, fiddleheads, beach asparagus and meat can be prepared and served to the children as a meal.

Designing and decorating the classroom can support nutrition education. The creative play area can be stocked with models of healthy food, cooking utensils and empty boxes or containers of healthy food. The classroom walls can be decorated with posters showing good food. Pictures of vegetables can be used to help teach letters and numbers, name tags can be made with the child's favorite fruit, placemats can depict a plate with reasonable child-sized portions.



Parent Nutrition Education

A clever idea to educate parents, improve nutrition at home and establish healthy habits is to assign Head Start children "homework" that promotes good eating and physical activity. On the weekend "homework" could be: eat five servings of fruits and vegetables over the weekend; be active for at least 30 minutes each day; help your parent in the kitchen; sleep more than eight hours on Saturday night; and eat breakfast each morning.

Teachers must be careful to assign homework that is attainable for the children. Homeless children may be unable to help in the kitchen, some children may not have breakfast foods at home, and some may not have access to canned, frozen or fresh fruits and vegetables. However, adjust the homework to meet the needs of the children in your classroom.

Head Start menus and newsletters are an excellent way to inform parents about the nutrition education learned in the classroom (PS 1305.23(d)). Newsletters can include healthy recipes that emphasize foods provided to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients since a large percentage of Head Start families are eligible for the WIC program. The recipes found on the state of Alaska WIC Web site use WIC ingredients and ingredients common to Alaska.



Classroom menus can be written to emphasize nutrition messages such as "low-fat milk," "whole wheat rolls," and "vitamin A-rich sweet potatoes." Adding nutrition information to menus and newsletters will help educate families and provide them with useful information.

Celebrations

Head Starts can help promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from food to the event. Replace food with a variety of activities, games and crafts that children enjoy. If food is served, make it count with healthy choices and as part of the regular meal or snack. Head Starts can take advantage of classroom celebrations and serve food that tastes good, is nutritious, and provides a consistent healthy food message. Centers should have established food policy or nutrition guidance regarding celebrations available to parents and community members that help plan Head Start events.



ALASKA'S FOOD CODE

SECTION ONE: 18 AAC 31.205: *Traditional wild game meat, seafood, plants, and other food donated to an institution or a nonprofit program.*
SECTION TWO: 18 AAC 31.210: *Prohibited food.*



The policy or nutrition guidance regarding celebrations should include information about why the policy is important. Party planners can be reminded that healthy kids learn better and that Head Start wants to provide consistent messages about healthy behaviors. The policy should support the classroom lessons students are learning about health instead of contradicting them. Healthy celebrations promote positive lifestyle choices to reduce children’s health risks and improve learning. The excitement children feel from the event may help improve their acceptance of healthy foods.



Development and adoption of the celebration policy should involve parents, community members, Head Start staff and food service staff (PS 1305.23(b)(4)). In general, the policy should discourage celebrating with especially high sugar foods such as soda pop, candy bars and cakes. The policy should address food with trans fats and high fat foods such as fried or highly processed foods. Communities have been supportive of no smoking and weapon policies at the Head Start. With the proper information, parents and communities will support a healthy celebration policy too.



Establish Healthy Eating Habits

Head Start staff have the opportunity to help children establish healthful eating habits early in life by increasing exposure to foods through a variety of teaching and support strategies. Providing children with hands-on experiences, formal education, healthy modeling of eating, proper support, consistent messages, and educating parents will help children develop good eating habits that carry into adulthood. Establishment of healthy eating habits is critical to prevent and reduce the incidence of childhood overweight and associated chronic diseases.

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RECIPES, MENUS AND MORE!

THE STATE OF ALASKA WIC

hss.state.ak.us/ocs/nutri/WIC/recipes/default.htm

THE AMERICAN DIABETES ASSOCIATION

vgs.diabetes.org/recipe/index.jsp

THE AMERICAN DIETETICS ASSOCIATION

eatright.org/ada/files/Healthy_Eating_Recipes.pdf

THE AMERICAN HEART ASSOCIATION

americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=1200010

PROVIDENCE HEALTH SYSTEMS IN ALASKA

providence.org/alaska/library/whatscookin.htm

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=2&tax_subject=230&topic_id=1191&placement_default=0

Physical Activity in the Classroom

Why Promote Physical Activity?

One of the primary reasons for promoting physical activity in the preschool setting is that regular physical activity, combined with a balanced diet, can help prevent overweight among kids.

As discussed in Module One, childhood overweight is on the rise in the United States. Much of the focus around childhood overweight is on the foods kids eat. Some individuals think that kids today are heavier because they eat more junk food than in past years. While that may be true, fast food and soda are not the only reason kids are gaining weight. A study done in 2003 showed that kids are only eating 1 percent more calories than they did 20 years ago, but they are 13 percent more inactive. Therefore, while we need to improve the foods kids eat, we can't forget that they also need to move!

Module One gives background information on childhood overweight. The material in this module will focus on how to promote physical activity in the Head Start classroom.

What is Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any bodily movement, produced by muscles, that burns energy. So...any kind of moving counts as physical activity!

Physical activity doesn't just mean jogging or push-ups.... in reality, many things that kids consider "having fun," such as swimming, playing tag, or riding a bike count as physical activity.

Moderate intensity physical activities are those that get your heart beating fast. Things like walking, bike riding, or mowing the lawn are examples of moderate physical activity. Vigorous physical activities are things that really make you sweat. Running, aerobics, or shoveling snow might fall into this category.

Physical Activity Recommendations

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that all children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week to maintain good health.²

However, if your child is overweight or at-risk for overweight, increasing physical activity alone may not produce significant weight loss. Increased activity along with improved nutrition over a period of months will be necessary for noticeable changes in body fat.

All children need both planned activity and free play. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that preschool children should get at least one hour of structured AND unstructured physical activity each day. While one hour of physical activity may help overall health, two or more hours are needed to develop the motor and social skills that children need to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity.

In addition to being physically active, children should not remain inactive for more than an hour at a time. The only time kids should be not moving for more than an hour straight is when they are sleeping!

It is important that children develop skills in the basic movement forms like running, skipping, hopping, and throwing early on so that they can use those skills as a stepping stone for more complex skills.

Safety should be the highest priority in areas where kids are active. Make sure any play area where kids are playing is free from sharp objects or other dangerous situations. Take a look around playgrounds before students go out for play time to make sure the equipment is working and there are no unsafe items on the playground.



Studies have shown that children enrolled in child care settings with educated staff who value physical activity get more daily physical activity. Your encouragement and role-modeling, along with positive feedback when students accomplish a new physical feat will go a long way in helping our young children develop a love of movement!



Structured activity involves making a specific time to be active, and planning certain kinds of things to do during that time. Teaching children how to move in all kinds of ways will help them enjoy physical activity. To make sure your students are exposed to all kinds of movement you may want to plan specific physical activities to help them.

Young children should learn to jump, hop, skip, kick and throw. Schedule two or three 10-15 minute physical activity breaks each day to help students practice these activities. Structured physical activity is typically adult-driven. The child's activity is directed and encouraged by a supervisory adult.

While structured physical activity is valuable, it is important for children to have time to play. Free play helps develop a child's imagination, creativity, body awareness and sense of space and dimension. Children learn about the world by moving around in it and exploring its wonder! Find safe places outdoors where children play. If the weather is bad, provide soft objects like balls and bean bags for children to play with indoors.



Examples of unstructured physical activity include a game of tag, climbing in a tree fort, pushing a friend on the swing, playing hide-and-go-seek, bike riding through the neighborhood, or kicking a soccer ball around the yard.

- Unstructured physical activity is typically child-driven. The child directs his/her own activity and play.
- Unstructured activity is usually sporadic, characterized by a lot of start/stop activity.



A team effort will be needed to help children meet physical activity recommendations. Head Starts should not be expected to provide all the physical activity kids need. Parents should be encouraged to be active with their children and to enroll them in activity-based teams and events in the community. Local governments provide information to parents on how to be active through parks and recreation programs.

The fact remains, though, that children spend a large part of their day in the school setting. All schools should strive to provide an "activity-friendly" environment where physical activity is modeled and encouraged while inactivity is minimized.

"With the exception of the home, school is probably the only other place with the structure, influence, resources and access to make a significant and sustained difference in terms of fostering a healthy weight."³

Head Start Physical Activity Requirements



Federal and state guidelines are already in place to guide Head Start classrooms toward physical activity. Federal Head Start Performance Standards contain requirements around the promotion of physical development among students. In addition to federal requirements, the state of Alaska is one of only two states to require physical activity time in child care settings.

Child care centers receiving federal funds are required to provide time and space (both indoor and outdoor) as well as equipment and adult guidance for active play and movement that supports the development of both gross and fine motor skills of all students including those with special needs. Head Start Performance Standard 1304.21(a)(5)(i) states that, "in center-based settings, grantee and delegate agencies must promote each child's physical development by providing sufficient time, indoor and outdoor space, equipment, materials, and adult guidance for active play and movement that support the development of gross motor skills." Performance Standard 1304.21(a)(5)(ii) makes similar provisions for the development of fine motor skills, and Performance Standard 1304.21(a)(5)(iii) requires that physical activity opportunities be accessible to all children, including those with special needs.





Alaska and Massachusetts are the only two states to mandate physical activity in child care settings. Alaska is the only state to specify the number of active minutes required during the preschool day. Alaska Statute AAC62.420 requires “a minimum of 20 minutes of vigorous physical activity for every three hours the facility is open between the hours of 7 a.m. and 7 p.m.”



Head Start Child Outcomes Framework

The Head Start Child Outcomes Framework is intended to guide Head Start programs in their ongoing assessment of the progress and accomplishments of children and in their efforts to analyze and use data on child outcomes in program self-assessment and continuous improvement.

The Framework is composed of eight general Domains, 27 Domain Elements and 100 examples of more specific Indicators of children’s skills, abilities, knowledge and behaviors. The Domains, Elements and Indicators are presented as a framework of building blocks that are important for school success. The Framework should guide agencies in selecting, developing, or adapting an instrument or set of tools for ongoing assessment of children’s progress.

The Physical Health and Development Domain contains goals for student achievement in both fine and gross motor skills. Head Start students are expected to develop fine motor skills like dexterity and control needed to use tools such as a scissors, paper punch, stapler and hammer. Students should also increase hand-eye coordination in building with blocks, putting together puzzles and stringing beads.

Head Start students should show increasing levels of proficiency, control, and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching and galloping. In addition, they should demonstrate increasing ability to throw, catch, kick, bounce balls, and use the slide and swings.



The Head Start Framework also calls for progression in physical growth, strength, stamina and flexibility. Students should participate actively in games, outdoor play and other forms of exercise that enhance physical fitness.

How to Promote Physical Activity in Head Start



Activity-friendly schools incorporate physical activity wherever possible. Students should be able to be active during traditional times like recess, but also during instructional time. Activity-friendly preschools look to integrate movement into academic instruction. Since kids learn better when they are moving, teaching reading and math concepts through movement not only improves learning but also helps students get more movement time.

Activity-friendly preschools incorporate fun physical activity breaks and active field trips into the curriculum. They also have staff that understand and value the importance of physical activity and act as active role models.



The classroom environment has an impact on student activity levels.

Every classroom should have a designated activity area that is free from objects like chairs, shelves, and tables. Having this open space will allow students to participate in both structured and unstructured physical activities.

One way to promote physical activity in the classroom is to provide equipment and other manipulative objects that children can use to play or invent active games. Toys like foam balls, hula hoop, and bean bags invite play and imaginative movement!



Children don’t have to be sitting quietly in desks to learn. Quite to the contrary, kids learn better when they are up and moving. Take advantage of the enhanced brain function during physical activity and harness children’s love of moving by incorporating academic concepts into fun physical activities!

Teaching through movement as opposed to fighting an uphill battle of getting kids to sit still not only saves you time and stress, but helps make moving the norm, not the exception.

Sample Activities

An example of how to integrate academic concepts into a fun physical activity is called “Alphabet, Vegetable, and Chicken Noodle Parachute Soup.” It’s a fun way to teach kids about letters of the alphabet, healthy foods and cooking principles. See handout.



Sample Activities

Remember, children should not be inactive for more than an hour at a time unless they are sleeping. To make sure students are getting enough movement throughout the day, schedule in a few short activity breaks of about 5-10 minutes in duration.

Move students to your designated activity area and give them a chance to practice the “skill of the week.”



One activity break is called “Jump the River.” The purpose of this activity is to give children the opportunity to practice the skills of jumping and landing while emphasizing swinging the arms when jumping, and landing in a balanced position without falling. All you need is something for kids to jump over (jump rope, hoop, tape lines on the floor). Provide at least one object to jump over per child. Before beginning the activity scatter the jump ropes or hoops throughout the space so they lie flat on the floor.

Explain to the children that they are taking a walk in the woods and may need to cross a stream or river. Ask children to walk throughout the space and when they come to a river (rope, hoop, or tape line on floor) they need to jump over the river without getting their feet wet. Children should work independently of their classmates during this activity.

To assist children in learning the fundamentals of jumping, teachers should initially ask children to take off on two feet and to swing their arms forward when they jump. When landing, children should land on two feet spreading their feet about shoulder width apart so they have a wide base of support when they land. After landing children should proceed to and jump over the next river. Emphasis should be placed on landing on both feet at the same time without falling

over. Give children plenty of time to move throughout the space and jump over all the rivers. For safety reasons, suggest that children not get closer than two giant steps from each other, especially when they are swinging their arms to take off and when landing.

After three to five minutes of jumping, children may need a brief rest period (30 to 60 seconds) before they continue the activity.

MIX IT UP

JUMP ON IN



MORE WAYS TO HELP KIDS LEARN TO MOVE
www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/pe.lessonplans.html
gameskidsplay.net

Vary the activity by asking children to see how high they can jump and how far they can jump when traveling over the river. Emphasize landing on balance without falling over. More experienced children may like the challenge of clapping their hands as they fly through the air, or turning in the air before they land. Whatever the variation, teachers and children should not lose sight of the main objective of landing in a balanced position.

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 1995) has developed benchmarks in this area suggesting that by the time a child completes kindergarten he/she should be able to jump and land while being under control. This suggests that children this age should be able to jump in different directions both on the ground and off of low obstacles, and to stay on balance and not fall when landing. Participating in activities such as “Jump the River” will provide children with opportunities for skill practice. Teachers can use this time to observe children’s jumping and landing skills and record their progression toward reaching benchmarks in this area.

Teachers may also want to integrate this idea with a book they read to children about rivers or ways people travel.



Activity doesn't always have to be on a playground! Kids learn about the world by moving through it and experiencing new places, people, and things. For a little variety during "recess" time, consider planning an educational field trip to a nearby park, harbor, field, or salmon stream. Talk about the kinds of plants, trees and animals you see. Talk with people working in the community and have them show the kids what they do!

Local trails and beaches are a great place to get physical activity and learn at the same time. Find different shaped rocks, colored plants and animals. Talk about outdoor safety and dressing appropriately for the weather. Whatever you decide to do, it will be a learning opportunity and will get kids up and moving.

We all know that Alaska winters can be very cold, but don't let that stop your activity! Kids love to be outside when there is snow on the ground, and often don't even notice the chill in the air. As long as kids are dressed properly, provide and encourage cold weather activity.



Use snowy winter days to do physical activities like sledding, skiing, skating and snowman building. All of these activities are fun and are good energy burners. Kids will be doing healthy physical activity without even knowing it! Read the book "Recess at 20 Below" to your students to help them get excited about cold weather outdoor activities.

When the weather is just too cold or wet and you are forced indoors, find creative ways to keep kids moving. One way to do that is to adapt typical outdoor sports so they can be played indoors. For instance, you could play a game of "Socker" using a rolled-up sock as a ball and walls as goals!



Other fun indoor activities include having a treasure hunt, obstacle course, sit-up/push-up contests, or pretend "ice skating" with sock feet on a linoleum floor. Another fun idea is to play music and create a new dance!

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

More experienced children may want the challenge of taking off from one foot and landing on two feet, or jumping off of one foot and landing on one foot. The focus should still be the same—swing arms when jumping and land without falling.

INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



Get Outside

Every Head Start classroom should have access to a safe place for children to play outdoors. Ideally, this play area will have a variety of equipment like slides, climbing structures, swings, etc. If you don't have immediate access to a playground, consider using the playground of a nearby school or park. If those options are not available, consider forming a volunteer parent/community group to design and build a simple play area near your classroom.

Children with special needs who are not movement restricted should have little difficulty participating in this activity. Children who have movement restrictions can still participate but may need assistance. For example, teachers may need to hold the child's hand to help his or her land on his or her feet without falling. Children in wheelchairs or those who have severe movement restrictions will require a modified activity.

Do not feel limited to only jumping over hoops or jump ropes. This can be a great classroom integration activity and can have many variations. For example, ask children to draw or paint their own rivers on large sheets of paper. Make sure they draw fish, trees and other objects in and alongside their river. Tape children's drawings to the floor and pretend that the class is going on a trip. When children reach the different rivers scattered throughout the room they must swing their arms and jump over the river, landing on the other side without falling over.

If you don't have enough space to do group activities consider using community physical activity facilities. Some schools have covered play areas you may be able to use.



Keep Moving!



As a teacher, remember that it is very important for kids to move as much as possible. Because children have a natural love of moving, your only job is to make sure that they stay safe and have fun doing it! Make sure that your students have time to play freely each day, but plan time during the day for structured physical activity as well.

Finding places to be active in Alaska is as easy as looking out the window. Take advantage of local trails, beaches and mountains to keep your students active and healthy. When the weather is so bad that it's not safe to be outdoors, think about using community facilities or just be creative in the classroom. Either way, try to give your students positive experiences with physical activity so that they will continue to be active and enjoy a long, healthy life.

MODULE THREE REFERENCES

- 1 Sutherland, et.al. Presentation to Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology. April, 2003.
- 2 DHHS, USDA (United States Department of Agriculture). Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 2005.
- 3 National Association of State Boards of Education. The State Education Standard. December, 2004.

Setting the Table for Meals Together

The following module will present information on the importance of eating meals together. It will describe the benefits of eating meals together, including: the nutritional benefits of eating meals together, how to develop a routine to eat meals together, tips for handling the choosy eater; and techniques to engage children in eating meals together.



Eating Together

Sharing meal time together provides a sense of family. Parents have the opportunity to share family values, culture and ethnic heritage. Children have the opportunity to learn. The food served reinforces cultural and ethnic learning.



Eating moose, fish, or other traditional foods places value on those foods and provides the perfect opportunity to share stories about adventures in hunting, catching, gathering and preparing the foods. Serving foods that reflect your family's culture such as traditional Alaska Native, Mexican, Asian, or Pacific Islander is a perfect way to instill cultural and ethnic heritage in children.

The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse, CASA, at Columbia University surveyed teenage children and parents. CASA reported that both parents and children noted that regular meals eaten together enabled healthy communication, increased daily family connections and enabled parents to monitor their children's moods, behaviors and whereabouts.¹ Children growing up eating meals with their parents on a regular basis may communicate better in the adolescent years.



It is not surprising that mealtime conversations increase children's vocabularies. Mealtimes present opportunities for children and parents to engage in lively discussion which include stories about past events, plans for the future and explanations of how the world works. In addition, meal times provide the time to talk about food, nutrition and healthy eating. The words used in these types of conversations are not usually found in children's storybooks. Increasing a child's vocabulary improves reading and writing skills.



FIGURE 4a: Percentage of Teens Who Get Mostly A's and B's in school¹

TABLE TALK

MORE ABOUT FAMILY

www.casacolumbia.org/Absolutenm/articlefiles/380-2005_family_dinners_ii_final.pdf

Mealtime conversations have been shown to generate a larger amount of sophisticated word usage than other activities such as toy play or storybook reading.² Improved child vocabulary outcomes were most strongly connected to mealtime conversations and information book reading.³



Research has shown that eating meals together serves as a “protective factor” in the lives of teens. Eating meals together increases teenagers’ well-being and decreases teenagers risk of drug and alcohol use. Research shows that children who eat dinner together have better social skills and the more dinners teens reported eating together with their family, the better their grades.¹ See figure 4a.

Setting the table and eating together when children are toddlers and preschoolers will help establish a dinner routine that can be continued when the children become teens.



Children learn by watching adults. Therefore, it is important that adults encourage and model healthy eating and behaviors. Adults should sit with children at the table, eat the same or similar foods as the children and enjoy the foods they are eating by talking about how food is good for the body.

Adults should help children select moderate portion sizes, encourage children to taste new foods and let children know it is OK to stop eating when they feel full. If children see adults eating fruits, vegetables and other healthy foods they will also choose to eat those healthy foods.



Meals Together = Healthier Diet

Project EAT findings suggest children who eat meals as a family have a healthier diet, including an increase in fruit and vegetable intake. Eating fruits and vegetables is a great way for children to get the nutrients they need to be healthy and grow strong.

High fruit and vegetable intakes have been shown to decrease the risk of many diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Experts recommend preschoolers eat 2½–3½ cups (5–7 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. Children who eat fruits and vegetables are likely to continue eating them for a lifetime.

THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC)

www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/5aday/index.htm

THE 2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/document

THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

www.5aday.org/pdfs/research/health_benefits.pdf

MORE MATTERS

PROJECT EAT

The University of Minnesota conducts Project EAT: Eating Among Teens. Project EAT is designed to investigate the factors influencing eating habits of adolescents, to determine if youth are meeting national dietary recommendations and to explore dieting and physical activity patterns among youth. Project EAT studied the frequency of family meals and associations with dietary intake in 4,746 middle and high school students. As the number of family meals per week went up consumption of fruits, vegetables, grains and calcium-rich foods increased, while soft drink consumption went down. Protein, energy, calcium, iron, folate, fiber and vitamin A, C, E and B6 consumption also increased as the number of family meals increased.⁴

In a comparison of children aged 9-14 who ate family dinners most days to those who ate family dinners never or only a few days a week, children who ate meals together more often had a more healthful diet, including more fruits and vegetables, less fried food, less soft drinks; less saturated and trans fat; and more fiber, calcium, folate, iron and vitamins.⁵ These studies suggest that the presence of family meals in an adolescent’s life results in a more healthful eating pattern.

The research regarding the health benefits of eating fruits and vegetables shows a connection between fruit and vegetable consumption and disease prevention. Fruits and vegetables are complex foods and provide a variety of nutrients such as vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytonutrients, fiber and some nutrients which have not even been researched. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals eat 5–11 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

The 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends a range of 2½–6½ cups (5–13 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. The guidelines also recommend choosing from all five vegetable subgroups: dark green, orange, legumes (beans), starchy vegetables and others. Since preschoolers need fewer calories than adults, the recommendation is 2½–3½ cups (5–7 servings) of fruits and vegetables each day. It is clear that the scientific community agrees that more matters when eating fruits and vegetables.

Studies suggest that the presence of family meals results in increased calcium intake. Calcium is a mineral that is needed for building healthy, strong, bones and teeth. It is important that children get enough calcium everyday to build bone strength and prevent bone disease such as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis results in brittle bones that break easily. Bone diseases usually afflict older adults but may be prevented by adequate calcium intake during the growing years.



In Southeast Alaska, good calcium sources include all canned salmon, leather chiton, ribbon seaweed, beach asparagus and kelp with herring eggs.⁶ In the Yukon Kuskokwim–Delta region calcium-rich foods include all canned salmon, blackfish, needlefish, bone marrow, fish head soup, smelt, tomcod and whitefish liver.⁷



Studies suggest that the presence of family meals results in children drinking less soda pop and eating less fried food.⁵ Meals eaten at home generally include fewer fried foods than meals eaten away from home; thus children will consume less fat and saturated fat. Soda pop has no nutrients, just calories. Soda pop also contains a great deal of sugar that can cause cavities. For these reasons, nutritionists recommend that preschoolers avoid soda pop.

Choosy Eaters



Preschool-age children go through a normal developmental phase called “neophobia,” or fear of new things, such as new foods. This stage is mistakenly called “picky eater” or “choosy eater.” To help preschoolers overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods, a variety of foods should be consistently offered to preschool children. This will eventually lead to more healthful eating habits.⁸

And, just like children overcome their fear of going down the slide at the playground, they will also overcome their fear of new foods.

Food jags in children (when children only want to eat one food) are common. Food jags rarely last long enough to be harmful. Children who are energetic and growing are probably eating enough. The strategies for addressing choosy eaters can also be used to get children through the food jag phase.



Even though it may be frustrating, repeatedly offer healthy foods to children, even foods that have been rejected before. Research by childhood nutrition experts shows that it can take up to a dozen times before a food becomes familiar to a child. So, continue to offer a variety of healthy foods to preschoolers to help overcome the natural tendency to reject new foods. The more times the food is introduced the more likely the food will become familiar.

Encourage children to try each food. Do not talk about what a choosy eater a child is in front of the child. Children believe and become what their parents and caregivers say. Children benefit when parents praise them for their accomplishments and are patient and understanding.

Preschoolers should eat 2–3 servings of low-fat dairy each day plus eat a variety of other calcium rich foods. The best sources of calcium are dairy products such as low fat milk, cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese. However, dark green leafy vegetables, canned salmon and small fish with edible bones are also good calcium sources.



GOT CALCIUM?
SUGAR-FREE

Cavity Free Kids is an oral health curriculum for Head Start programs with many classroom and parent education units that discuss sugar.

Calcium is a mineral that the body needs for numerous functions, including building and maintaining bones and teeth, blood clotting, sending nerve impulses and regulating the heart's rhythm. Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) give recommendations on how much calcium should be consumed each day. For 1–3 year olds, 500 milligrams of calcium a day is recommended. The recommendation for 4–8 year olds is 800 milligrams of calcium a day.

One cup low-fat milk has about 300 milligrams of calcium, eight ounces of yogurt has about 275 milligrams and three ounces of canned salmon has 180 milligrams. Therefore, preschool aged children should eat 2–3 servings of dairy each day plus a variety of other calcium rich foods.

When dealing with a food jag, serve a small serving of the favored food along with healthy foods. This way the child still gets his or her favored food but may be hungry enough to eat something else too. When introducing a child to a new food, serve one- or two- tablespoon portions. This way the child will not feel overwhelmed by the food. Don't give up!

Research conducted through the Department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at Colorado State University has noted that children need up to eight to twelve exposures to a food before they will try it willingly.



Allow children to explore and taste foods. It may seem like children play with their food but children may just be exploring. Children will smell food, examine its texture, look at it and eventually taste! Do not rush children to eat. Trying new foods takes time. Do not use food to reward, bribe or punish children. Children will learn that food jags and refusal to eat foods gives them control.

Scheduling Mealtime

Just like most things in life that get done, make eating together a priority on a regular basis. Although dinner or breakfast is the most likely meal of choice, lunch could be the selected meal depending on family schedules.

Families should think about how many meals a week they are eating together. With a little effort most families should be able to add one more to the list. One meal together is better than none, six meals together are better than five. Set a meal schedule of which meals will be eaten together, establish a time and who is responsible for planning, cooking and organizing the meal.

Once the schedule is set, require that permission is received for absence from meals to help establish the value of eating together. Attempt to re-schedule the meal before allowing the absence.

Even the best set plans encounter conflict. Being flexible with mealtime or location will increase the chances of eating together. If adults or older children have events or a meeting to attend, adjust the meal time. Eat your meal together a little earlier or later than planned. Toddlers and preschoolers may need a healthy snack if meal-times are later than usual.

For example, the family could eat a meal together picnic style before a play or sporting event. Pack a picnic of sandwiches and cold salads!



Sometimes children will not be interested in eating together. They will say they are not hungry and

do not want to eat because they would rather play with toys, the pet, or friends. However, to maintain consistency in the family or children's life, children should participate in mealtime even if they choose not to eat.

It is also important to consistently reinforce meal time behavior. Behaviors that can be reinforced include using the words "please" and "thank you," requesting permission before leaving the table and taking dishes to the sink.

Planning, cooking and organizing meals does not need to be one person's responsibility. Determining the division of responsibility helps all family members feel they have an important role in the meal. Today, most people feel short on time, so keep mealtime preparations simple, easy and nutritious.

Share meal tasks such as preparation and cooking with all family members. Children of all ages can help plan and shop for meals. Involve children in meal tasks from planning, preparations and cooking. Even toddlers and preschoolers can help in meal planning and preparation.



FOSTERING GOOD HABITS



Teachers and caregivers can help children overcome their choosy eating by allowing them to explore and taste new foods. With the rise in childhood overweight, it is important that we establish healthful eating habits early in life. The preschool years are a critical time to introduce and encourage healthy nutrition because early exposure to healthful foods helps children establish good eating habits that carry into adulthood.⁹

Children establish food preferences and dietary habits during the first six years of life.⁹ Additionally, children's eating behaviors, food preferences and willingness to try new foods are influenced by the people around them. Parents and other caregivers influence children's eating practices in several ways. They control availability and accessibility of foods, determine how and when meals are served, model eating behaviors and establish good manners and etiquette around food.^{10, 11} Thus, it is important to educate teachers about nutrition and share practical strategies for encouraging preschoolers to try new foods.

Involve Children

Having toddlers and preschoolers help with meal preparation will help raise their interest in the foods that are served, will provide practice of fine motor skills and will provide time for interaction with other family members. Toddlers can carry unbreakable dishes to the table, wash fruits and vegetables and wipe down the table top.

Children feel important when they are given tasks so let children help even if working alone is faster. Children and parents working together in the kitchen allows for bonding time and lets children practice skills.

Preschoolers will be able to mix or stir foods, make sandwiches, spread soft spreads, tear lettuce, help to pour and measure and set the table. Ask your child what he or she would like to do to help you. Children will come up their own ideas from picking flowers to making placemats for the table.



Engage Children

Once a meal time schedule is set and the meal is cooked, strive to make meal times pleasurable, enjoyable and engaging for children. Create a relaxed setting for meals by removing non-food items from the table, even if things are just set on the floor temporarily, by turning off the TV, setting a policy about not answering the phone during meal time and putting pets outside or in another room.

Before sitting down for a meal, give a five-minute warning and ensure everyone washes his or her hands!

Serve food that children can eat without help. Toddlers and preschoolers will be at different ability levels. They do not require different foods, just food in a different form. Children will also benefit from child size or smaller size forks, spoons and knives. Place foods into easy to lift containers and allow children to serve themselves. This will improve fine motor skills, reinforce self-efficacy and allow children to self-regulate portion sizes.



Toddlers will be able to hold a cup by the handle, pour liquids from a small pitcher, use a fork and chew most foods. Toddlers generally need an adult or older sibling to cut up foods such as meat and vegetables into bite-size pieces.

Preschoolers will likely be able to use a knife and fork, drink from a cup and have an increased ability to feed themselves. Preschoolers may be able to cut up some foods but may still require help for meat and tougher foods.

Eating meals together means that adults and children sit and eat together. Eating and talking with children during mealtime allows adults to model good eating behaviors and provides opportunities to talk about food tradition and cultures. Talking about the texture, taste and color of foods allows children to explore all five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) right at the dinner table!

During the meal, set a good example with respect, listening and patience. Talk about events, news and funny things that happened during the day or week.

Sometimes having ideas for conversation starters and games helps

engage children in mealtime discussions. Have each family member bring an object to the table and talk about it, just like show and tell in school. Tell stories about pictures in an old family photo. Pick events and family members from the past who younger family members might not know.





TONGUE TWISTERS TO TWY

Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Spread it thick, say it quick!
Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Spread it thicker, say it quicker!
Yellow butter, purple jelly, red jam, black bread. Don't eat with your mouth full!

Chester Cheetah chews a chunk of cheap cheddar cheese. Bake big batches of bitter brown bread.

Play word and memory games. For example, in the Food Alphabet game, one person names a food and the next person names a food that begins with the last letter of the first food's name. Preschoolers will need help with this game. To include them, they could start each round by naming a food.

Fill a container with questions. Pick out a question and have everyone answer it. Add some imaginary questions and "what if" questions to spice up the conversation. Play Simon says at the table. This may work to get a child to try a new food!



After the meal team up for fast clean-up. Take turns selecting the music for easier cleanup. Allow the lead cleanup person to play the music. Preschoolers will be able to help clear the table, dry dishes, place some dishes in the bottom rack of the dishwasher and wipe the table clean. Children learn teamwork skills by helping with family chores.

MODULE FOUR REFERENCES

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Making Healthy Food Choices

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Parents want to do what is best for their child. Parents protect children from unintentional injuries by strapping their children into car seats, fitting them with bike helmets, storing poisons out of reach, installing safety locks on drawers and locking up their guns. Parents also protect children from infectious diseases such as measles, mumps and rubella by immunizing their children. The “how to” of protecting children from unintentional injuries and infectious diseases is clear to parents and the benefits are valued. Parents value the benefits of serving children healthy food but the “how to” is often less clear.

This module will give parents information on “how to” select healthy food to improve health and prevent excess weight gain. First, the module will reinforce to parents why serving healthy foods to children is important. This will be followed by an explanation of selecting healthy food based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid. There will be shopping tips, including information on reading the food label and advice about using sales, coupons and unit prices to stretch food dollars. Parents will be given information on planning meals by making a shopping list, purchasing in bulk and menu planning. Lastly, a review of how to select healthy food will be provided.

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Providing healthy food to preschoolers during the formative years is important in helping them establish healthy food preferences, habits and portion control. Good nutrition also results in healthy growth and prevents children from excessive weight gain.

It seems simple enough to set children up for a lifetime of good health by introducing preschoolers to a variety of nutritious foods, providing meals on a regular schedule and eating meals together. However, parents are flooded with nutrition messages every day through marketing at the grocery store, in the newspaper, in magazines and on television. These nutrition messages are often conflicting, sometimes complicated and difficult to translate into useful information. The material in this section is designed to provide accurate, useful information that parents can use to make healthy food choices for preschoolers.

Healthy Weight

It is important to understand the health risks associated with children being overweight. Overweight and at-risk-for-overweight children have an increased risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol, joint disorders, Type 2 diabetes, psychosocial disorders, social discrimination and becoming obese as an adult. These diseases in adults can increase the risk for early death, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, gallbladder disease and certain types of cancer.¹ (Figure 5a). Healthy eating can reduce the risk of children becoming overweight.

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FIGURE 5a: Health Risks of Overweight Children

Overweight children are at increased risk for:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Joint disorders
- Type 2 diabetes
- Psychosocial disorders
- Social discrimination
- Adult obesity

For more information on childhood overweight see module one. The remaining material in this module will focus on helping children develop healthy eating habits in their preschool years.

HOW WE CAN HELP YOUR FAMILY

Head Start Performance Standards require that grantee and delegate agencies address nutrition elements in their programs. The information in this module will help agencies comply with Performance Standard 1304.23 (d), which states that, “Parent education activities must include opportunities to assist families with food preparation and nutritional skills.” It will also facilitate compliance with Performance Standards 1304.40 (f)(3)(i)&(ii), which require that “Grantee and delegate agencies must ensure that the nutrition education program includes, at a minimum: (i) Nutrition education in the selection and preparation of foods to meet family needs and in the management of food budgets; and (ii) Parent discussions with program staff about the nutritional status of their child.”

Dietary Guidelines

The nutrition recommendations in the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans are co-published by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Dietary Guidelines provide science-based nutrition recommendations for the general American public age 2 years and older. To make the Dietary Guidelines easier to understand, the USDA designed MyPyramid (Figure 5b).



FIGURE 5b
USDA MyPyramid

Although the Dietary Guidelines and MyPyramid make national nutrition recommendations, other organizations make specific disease prevention recommendations. For example the American Heart Association has a dietary recommendation that adults eat two servings of fish a week to prevent heart disease.² The Produce for Better Health Foundation recommends a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.³



2005 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS
healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines
MyPyramid.com

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends delaying the introduction of 100% percent juice until at least 6 months of age and limiting to no more than 4–6 ounces of 100 percent juice each day served from a cup.⁴ Additional dietary recommendation will be shared while introducing MyPyramid.

MyPyramid sorts similar foods into six food groups and provides advice about selecting foods. The six MyPyramid food groups are: (1) Grains; (2) Milk; (3) Meat and Beans; (4) Oils (5) Vegetables; and (6) Fruit. These categories will be explained in the next sections.



Eat Whole Grains

MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 3–5 ounce equivalents of grain each day.



MyPyramid grains group foods are pilot bread, rice, bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals and tortillas. In general, one slice of bread, one cup of ready-to-eat cereal, or ½ cup of cooked rice, cooked pasta, or cooked cereal can be considered as one-ounce equivalent from the grains group (Figure 5c).

FIGURE 5c: Grain Servings Sizes

1 ounce of grain equivalent =	
1 slice	whole grain bread
1 cup	ready-to-eat cereal
½ cup	cooked rice
½ cup	cooked pasta
½ cup	cooked cereal

The Dietary Guidelines state that at least half of all the grains eaten should be whole grains. Whole grains are high in nutrition and fiber. Eating foods rich in fiber as part of a healthy diet reduces the risk of heart disease, may reduce constipation and may help with weight management. Fiber rich whole grains help provide a feeling of fullness with fewer calories. Selecting whole grains foods can be accomplished by reading labels and ingredient lists.

WHOLE VS. REFINED

Grains are divided into two subgroups, whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain the entire grain kernel; the bran, germ and endosperm. Examples include whole wheat flour, bulgur (cracked wheat), oatmeal, whole cornmeal and brown rice. Refined grains have been milled, a process that removes the bran and germ. This is done to give grains a finer texture and improve their shelf life, but it also removes dietary fiber, iron and many B vitamins. Some examples of refined grain products are white flour, degermed cornmeal, white bread and white rice.

Eat Lean Meat and More Beans

The foods in the MyPyramid Meat and Bean food group are together because they supply similar nutrients such as protein and B-vitamins. Foods include poultry, game birds, game meat, beef, pork, lamb and veal as well as eggs, beans, peas and nuts. Turkey, chicken and game birds, such as ptarmigan and duck, are a good source of protein. Game meat, such as moose, caribou and deer are a good source of lean protein that preschoolers enjoy. Fish and sea mammals are also part of the Meat and Bean food group.

the nutrition that non-processed meats offer. Examples of these meats are: chicken nuggets, bologna, corn dogs, frankfurters, hot dogs and many luncheon meats.

Meat and poultry should be prepared using low fat methods such as trimming all visible fat and removing skin. Cook meat and poultry by broiling, poaching, roasting, stewing, steaming, stir frying, or using the crock pot.

The MyPyramid Meat and Bean food group includes fish and sea mammals. Salmon, halibut, whitefish, herring and all locally caught fish are all low in fat, great sources of heart healthy fatty acids and high in nutrition. Sea mammals, such as sea lion, whale and seal are rich in nutrients and are healthy food choices in Alaska. Fish is an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including young children.

Many parents have heard about high mercury levels in fish and are cautious about serving it to their children. The state of Alaska will soon publish up-to-date consumption guidelines for young children and women of childbearing age. These guidelines offer suggestions specific to each type and size of fish. Good news! All five species of Alaska wild salmon have very low mercury levels.

Parents will be able to access the new guidelines on the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health web site or by calling 907-269-8000.

ALASKA FISH CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO ME AND MY KIDS?
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

Consumers must read labels when selecting whole grain products. Color is not an indication of a whole grain food. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Also, foods marketed as multi-grain, stone-ground, 100 percent wheat, cracked wheat, seven-grain, or bran may not be whole grain. Reading the ingredient list on the package is the only way to know if a food is whole grain.



To eat whole grain foods, select cereals, breads and pasta products that list brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, or wild rice as one of the first three ingredients. The ingredients are listed in the order of quantity. If a whole grain ingredient is listed first, second or even third, it is most likely a whole grain food. The Nutrition Facts label can help too. Foods with a higher percent Daily Value for fiber are more likely whole grains foods (Figure 5d).

In restaurants, eat whole grains by asking for brown rice instead of steamed rice, whole grain pizza crust instead of white, or whole grain toast instead of sourdough. Some restaurants may not have whole grains currently available but will begin to offer whole grains if enough customers make the request.



FIGURE 5d: Nutrition Facts Showing Percent Daily Value of Fiber

The Dietary Guidelines recommend selecting meat and poultry that are lean, low fat, or fat free. Many common meats are high in fat, salt and lack

CEREAL FLAKES

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3/4 Cup (27g)	
Servings Per Container 10	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 5
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat .5g	
Saturated Fat 0g	0
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0
Sodium 190mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	12%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.



It is important that children get enough calcium everyday to build bone strength or density to prevent bone disease such as osteoporosis. Osteoporosis results in brittle bones that break easily. It usually afflicts older adults but may be prevented by adequate calcium intake during the growing years.

To ensure adequate calcium intake, the Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) for 1–3 year olds is 500 milligrams of calcium a day and is 800 milligrams of calcium a day for 4–8 year olds.⁷ This amount translates into 2–3 servings of calcium rich dairy each day plus a variety of other calcium rich foods. The calcium RDI for adults is higher. One cup low-fat milk has about 300 milligrams of calcium, eight ounces of low fat yogurt has about 275 milligrams and three ounces of canned salmon has 180 milligrams.

Beans, peas and nuts are good source of low-fat and affordable protein. Examples of beans and peas are black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, mature lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, tofu, white beans and peanut butter. Peanuts are not truly a nut and are actually more closely related to beans than nuts.

Nuts and nut butters made from almonds, walnuts, macadamia, pecans and hazelnuts are also in the Meat and Bean food group.



BEANS: VEGGIE OR MEAT

Many Women Infant and Children (WIC) food packages or coupons allow the purchase of dried beans. Beans provide a great low fat, high fiber, delicious and nutritious meal when made into soups, salads and casseroles, or when served as a side dish. Cooking with dried beans takes planning as they cook fastest after being soaked in water for eight or more hours. Beans put to soak in the morning before the school day starts will be ready to cook for a healthy dinner.

GOT CALCIUM?

All fluid milk products and foods made from milk that retain their calcium content are part of the group, while foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream and butter, are not. Whole and 2% milk are among the biggest contributors of saturated fat to Americans' diets. Therefore, experts recommend serving non-fat (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk to children after the age of 2.

Lactose intolerance is the inability to digest significant amounts of lactose, the major sugar found in milk. Lactose intolerance is caused by a shortage of the enzyme lactase, which is produced by the cells that line the small intestine. Lactase breaks down milk sugar into two simpler forms of sugar called glucose and galactose, which are then absorbed into the bloodstream.

People who do not have enough lactase to digest the amount of lactose they consume may feel very uncomfortable when they digest milk products. Common symptoms, which range from mild to severe, include nausea, cramps, bloating, gas and diarrhea. Symptoms begin about 30 minutes to 2 hours after eating or drinking foods containing lactose. The severity of symptoms depends on many factors, including the amount of lactose a person can tolerate and a person's age, ethnicity and digestion rate.



Dry beans and peas fall into both the MyPyramid Vegetables food group and the Meat and Beans food groups. Generally, individuals who regularly eat meat, poultry and fish would count dry beans and peas as vegetables. Individuals who seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish (vegetarians) would count some of the dry beans and peas they eat as a meat.

Low Fat Dairy after Two



Fluid milk, yogurt, cheese and cottage cheese are in the milk food group because they provide similar nutrients. Select fat free or low fat milk and dairy foods for your child after age two. Low fat milk is also called 1%. Fat free milk is called non fat or skim. Reduced fat milk is 2% milk and is not low fat.

Milk and dairy foods provide calcium for strong bones and teeth, protein to build muscles and vitamins A and D for healthy growth. MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 2–3 servings of low-fat dairy each day plus eat a variety of other calcium rich foods. The best sources of calcium are dairy products such as low fat milk, cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese. Reconstituted milk from powdered milk is available in non-fat and low-fat varieties and is nutritionally equal to fluid milk. Dark green leafy vegetables, canned salmon and small fish with edible bones are also good calcium sources.



In Alaska, good calcium sources also include all canned salmon, leather chiton, ribbon seaweed, beach asparagus, kelp with herring eggs,⁵ blackfish, needlefish, bone marrow, fish head soup, smelt, tom cod and whitefish liver.⁶

Some children are unable to drink cow's milk because of lactose intolerance. These children cannot digest the sugar found in milk and foods made with milk. Lactose intolerance should be diagnosed by a health-care provider because its symptoms can be confused with those of other illnesses. Children with lactose intolerance need to eat other calcium rich foods everyday to get the calcium needed for good health.

LACKING LACTOSE

If your child has been diagnosed with lactose intolerance by a health-care provider, offer calcium-rich foods such as lactose-free milk, calcium-fortified soy milk, canned salmon with bones, sardines, collard greens, turnip greens, broccoli and tofu. Some people with lactose intolerance can eat cheese and yogurt because these foods have less lactose. Yogurt, for example, has all of milk's nutrients, but less lactose.



Lactose intolerance can be hard to diagnose based on symptoms alone. People sometimes think they suffer from lactose intolerance because they have the symptoms associated with the disorder, not knowing other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome can cause similar symptoms. A doctor can use tests to diagnose lactose intolerance.

Some causes of lactose intolerance are well-known. Primary lactase deficiency is a condition that develops over time. After about age 2 the body begins to produce less lactase, though most people will not notice symptoms until they are much older. Researchers have identified a genetic link for primary lactose intolerance. Secondary lactase deficiency occurs when injury to the small intestine or certain digestive diseases reduce the amount of lactase a person produces. These diseases include celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and Crohn's disease.

Oils

The familiar food term, oils, is used to describe one MyPyramid food group. Those oils are part of other foods such as peanut butter, sunflower seeds, nuts, olives, most Alaska fish, avocados, salad dressing, vegetable cooking oils and products made with vegetable oils such as mayonnaise. If nuts are served, they should be chopped or ground because of the choking hazard associated with whole nuts.



In addition to MyPyramid and 5-A-Day recommendations, the Produce for Better Health Foundation recently introduced messages around eating “the color way.” These messages encourage eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables. In March of 2007, the CDC launched a new fruit and vegetables campaign. Its message encourages people to eat more fruits and vegetables every day.



The bottom line of all these messages is that fruits and vegetables are good for children and adults. Fruits and vegetables help prevent disease, maintain a healthy weight, support a healthy digestive system and provided the nutrients necessary for children to grow healthy and strong. It is clear the scientific community agrees that more matters when eating fruits and vegetables.

MyPyramid recommends preschool aged children eat 1–1½ cups (2–3 servings) of vegetables every day. In general, 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables or 1 cup of raw leafy greens can be considered 1 cup or 2 servings from the vegetable group.



Preschoolers can easily get 1½ cups (3 servings) of vegetables in a day by eating a ½ ear of steamed corn for lunch, munching on ½ cup carrots and celery sticks as an after school snack and eating moose stew made with vegetables or ½ cup mashed sweet potato for dinner (Figure 5e).

All vegetables, dried beans and peas are a member of the vegetable food group. Vegetables may be canned, frozen or fresh served raw or cooked, dried and may be whole, cut-up, or mashed. Essentially all vegetables are very low in fat and calories. Cook vegetables by steaming, sautéing, roasting, baking, or adding directly to stews, casseroles and tomato sauces.

Active Play

The picture of the person climbing the stairs on the side of the MyPyramid is meant to encourage activity every day. For children activity is active play. To find out more about activities for preschool children, please see the physical activity modules in this training manual.



Eat More Colorful Fruits and Veggies

Learning about fruits and vegetables can be confusing for consumers because of the many existing fruit and vegetable messages. Often fruits and vegetables are grouped together. However, MyPyramid has them in two different food groups. The 1992 Food Pyramid and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend “servings” of fruits and vegetables whereas MyPyramid recommends “cups” of fruit and vegetables. The national 5-A-Day campaign initially recommended five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Later, the campaign began recommending five–nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

FIGURE 5e: Example of Three Servings of Vegetables

Preschooler Eats Three Vegetables Servings Each Day!

½ ear steamed corn for lunch

½ cup carrots and celery sticks as an after school snack

Moose stew made with vegetables for dinner

MYPYRAMID FOR CHILDREN
mypyramid.gov/kids/

MyPyramid organizes vegetables into five subgroups based on their nutrient content. Produce for Better Health organizes vegetables and fruits into five groups by color. Color is an indicator of nutrient content. Both categorizations are scientifically sound but cause consumers to hear several messages about vegetables. However, all health professionals believe that it's important to eat fruits and vegetables.

FIGURE 5f: Example of Three Servings of Fruit

Fruit has its own MyPyramid food group. All canned, frozen, dried, or fresh fruit served raw or cooked are members of the Fruit food group. MyPyramid recommends preschoolers eat 1–1½ cups (2–3 servings) of fruit a day. All fruits are very low in fat and calories.



Alaska parents can help children eat more fruit by serving fresh, canned and frozen fruit to their children as a snack. Parents can easily add dried, fresh, or canned fruit to breakfast cereals or make peanut butter sandwiches with bananas, raisins, or dried blueberries instead of jam. Parents should purchase canned fruit in water or its own juice instead of heavy syrup. Children eating dried fruit should always brush their teeth afterwards to prevent cavities.

A preschooler can easily eat the recommended amount of fruit each day. He would be served ¼ cup dried raisins (counts as ½ cup) added to oatmeal, ½ cup fruit cocktail canned in water for lunch and ½ a banana (counts as ½ cup) for a snack after school (Figure 5f).

Preschooler Eats Three Fruit Servings Each Day!

- ¼ cup dried raisins (counts as ½ cup) added to oatmeal
- ½ cup fruit cocktail canned in water for lunch
- ½ banana (counts as ½ cup) for snack after school



MyPyramid mostly addresses foods by food groups. However, some nutrition recommendations can be applied to all foods. For example, the recommendation to choose foods low in fat applies to all foods. The next section will supplement the nutrition information from MyPyramid by presenting additional recommendations for good health.



Eating fruits and vegetables is a great way for children to get the nutrients they need to be healthy and grow strong. Research has shown that high fruit and vegetable intake decreases the risk of many diseases including heart disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Fruits and vegetables are generally rich in vitamins and minerals and they pack fewer calories per bite than other foods. Fruits and vegetables help individuals maintain healthy weights because when they are eaten, other higher calorie foods are not. Children who eat fruits and vegetables are likely to continue eating them for a lifetime.

In a survey of parents, more than ninety percent knew the correct amount of fruit and vegetables recommended for youngsters. Ninety-three percent of these parents agreed that eating plenty of fruits and vegetables and maintaining a healthy weight are important.⁸



The same parent survey found that despite parent knowledge and belief fewer than 5 percent of preschoolers ate the recommended three servings of vegetables every day. Children with low vegetable intake were at slightly increased risk of the being overweight.⁸

Another study showed that up to 23 percent of 7- to 24-month-olds did not eat any fruit in a given day.⁹

The Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS) found that parents reported french fries as the most commonly consumed vegetable of children 15–18 months old.⁹



However, french fries, potato chips, Tater Tots and hash browns do not count as a vegetable serving. Potatoes can only be considered a vegetable if little fat or sodium is added when cooking. Providing children with a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every single day is important to ensure proper growth and protection from disease.

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However, fruits and vegetables are not created equal. Various colors provide different nutrients. By serving a rainbow of fruits and vegetables throughout the week, children can eat their colors every day to keep them healthy and fit. Remember, canned, frozen and fresh all count toward eating your colors.

Serve children blue- and purple-colored fruits and vegetables such as blueberries, blackberries, huckleberries, purple cabbage, blackberries, purple grapes, plums, raisins, eggplant and purple fleshed potatoes for good health.

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Serve children dark green colored fruits and vegetables such as kelp with her-ring eggs, beach aspara-gus, black seaweed, young fireweed leaves, willow leaves, green apples, broccoli, avocados, green grapes, honeydew, kiwifruit, limes, green pears, artichokes, brussels sprouts, green beans, green cabbage, celery, cucumbers, leafy greens, lettuce, green onion, peas, green peppers, snow peas, sugar snap peas, spin-ach and zucchini for good health.

TURNING YOUR PLATE INTO A PALETTE

5aday.org/html/colorway/colorway_home.php
5aday.gov/benefits/index.html#

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Serve children white-colored fruits and vegetables such as bananas, pears, cauliflower, mushrooms, potatoes, turnips and white corn for good health.

Serve children yellow and orange-colored fruits and vegetables such as salm-on berries, oranges, carrots, yellow apples, apricots, cantaloupe, grape-fruit, lemon, mangoes, nectarines, peaches, pineapples, butternut squash, yellow and orange pep-pers, yellow potatoes, pumpkin, sweet corn and sweet potatoes for good health.

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Serve children red- and pink-colored fruits and vegetables such as high-bush cranberries, raspberries, grapefruit, red potatoes, red apples, cherries, red grapes, red pears, strawberries, watermelon, beets, red peppers, radishes, red onions, red potatoes, rhubarb and tomatoes for good health.

BLUE, GREEN, WHITE,
YELLOW AND RED

Sweetened Foods and Beverages

The Dietary Guidelines say to choose and prepare food and beverages with little added sugar. Sweetened fruit drinks such as soda pop, sports drinks or fruit punches are full of added sugar. A single 12-ounce can of soda provides the equivalent of 10 sugar cubes. There are many sweetened beverages on the market that claim to have health benefits such as hydration or energy. These products are also full of sugar. A 20-ounce energy beverage provides more than 20 sugar cubes (Figure 5g).

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Boosting the level of blue and purple fruits and vegetables in a low-fat diet may help maintain a lower risk of some cancers, improve urinary tract health, increase memory function and encourage healthy aging. Blue/purple fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of some health-promoting phytochemicals (plant chemicals) called anthocyanins and phenolics, currently being studied for their antioxidant and anti-aging benefits.

Adding green fruits and vegetables to a low-fat diet may help maintain a lower risk of some cancers, maintain vision health and grow strong bones and teeth. Green fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of potent phytochemicals called lutein and indoles, which interest researchers because of their potential antioxidant, health-promoting benefits.

Working white fruits and vegetables into a low-fat diet helps maintain heart health, maintain cholesterol levels that are already healthy and reduce the risk of some cancers. White, tan and brown fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of phytochemicals, including alicin, which is of interest to scientists.

Make yellow and orange fruits and vegetables a part of a low-fat diet to help maintain heart health, vision health, promote a healthy immune system and reduce the risk of some cancers. Orange and yellow fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of antioxidants such as vitamin C as well as carotenoids and bioflavonoids, two classes of phytochemicals that scientists are studying for their health-promoting potential.

Be sure to include red in your low-fat diet to help maintain heart health, memory function, reduce the risk of some cancers and promote urinary tract health. The specific phytochemicals in the red group that are being studied for their health-promoting properties include lycopene and anthocyanins.

Consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, particularly carbonated soft drinks, may be a contributor to the epidemic of overweight and obesity. These sugar-sweetened beverages are high in added sugar content, do not provide a feeling of fullness and are usually consumed without thinking about the amount of calories. Only low-fat milk, water, or 4–6 ounces a day of 100 percent fruit juice should be served to preschoolers.

PREVENTING WEIGHT GAIN



FIGURE 5g: 19 Sugar Cubes in a 20 Ounce Soda

For children age 6 months to 6 years, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that consumption of 100 percent juice be limited to 4–6 ounces ($\frac{1}{2}$ – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per day.⁴ Fruit juice offers no nutritional advantage over whole fruit. Whole canned, frozen, or fresh fruit are a better choice than juice because they have fiber and more nutrients. Whole fruit is low in calories, takes time to eat and helps provide the feeling of fullness. Juice is concentrated fruit that becomes high in sugar and does not provide a feeling of fullness. Serve children low-fat milk or water when they are thirsty and no more than 4–6 ounces of 100 percent juice a day. Any juice product with less than 100 percent juice should not be served at all.

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Experts recommend limiting the intake of food and beverages sweetened with sugar. High sugar foods such as candy, chocolate bars, cakes, pies, ice cream, chocolate milk and pre-sweetened cereals such as frosted pops or sugared flakes should only be eaten every so often. Sweetened foods provide few nutrients, are generally high in fat, provide extra calories, may contribute to weight gain and can cause cavities in young children.

Sweetened Foods and Beverages

Many high-sugar foods are easy to identify because they taste sweet. However, sugar is often an ingredient added to many foods. To avoid additional sugar, one must read the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in order of predominance by weight, that is, the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. Sugar has many names, such as high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, brown sugar, invert sugar, corn sweetener, lactose, maltose, dextrose, malt syrup, fructose, molasses, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, sucrose, honey and syrup (Figure 5h).

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Often several names for sugar are listed. For example, the second ingredient is sugar, the fourth ingredient is corn syrup and the sixth ingredient is brown sugar syrup. If these sugars were added together, there might be more sugar than the first ingredient in a product (Figure 5i).

FIGURE 5i: Hidden Sugar in an Ingredient List

Ingredients: Whole grain wheat, **sugar**, salt, **corn syrup**, canola and/or rice bran oil, **brown sugar syrup**, trisodium phosphate, natural flavor.

Ban Trans Fats

Trans fat was created by food manufacturers to make processed foods such as chips, crackers, cookies, chocolate and most snack foods. The use of trans fat is common in the frying oil of restaurants for cooking french fries, fried chicken and other fried menu items. Trans fats increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and may increase the risk of diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases. The Dietary Guidelines recommend keeping trans fat intake as low as possible.

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FIGURE 5h: Sneaky Names for Sugar

High fructose corn syrup	Corn sweetener	Malt syrup	Glucose
Corn syrup	Lactose	Fructose	Sucrose
Brown sugar	Maltose	Molasses	Honey
Invert sugar	Dextrose	Fruit juice concentrates	Syrup

Scientists tried to determine if the intake of sugar-sweetened beverages causes weight gain. Thirty publications (15 cross-sectional, 10 prospective and five experimental) were reviewed. Although the authors noted that more research is needed, they also stated that the public should be discouraged from the consumption of sugary drinks in order to prevent weight gain.¹¹

Since January 2006, the amount of trans fat in a product must be listed on the Nutrition Facts label.

Parents can read the Nutrition Facts to avoid feeding their children foods made with trans fat (Figure 5j). Parents can also avoid ordering fried food from restaurants to stay away from trans fat.

WHY BAN TRANS FAT?

FIGURE 5j: Label showing Trans Fat

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 0mg	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	

A HISTORY LESSON

Just because a food is trans fat-free does not mean it is a healthy food choice.

Trans fat-free potato chips have the same amount of calories, overall fat and do not provide more nutrition than potato chips with trans fat. For example, two trans fat free cookies provide 160 calories, 14 grams of sugar, 60 calories from fat and have sugar listed as the first and fifth ingredients (Figure

LABELING TRANS FAT

www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2003/503_fats.html

FIGURE 5l: MyPyramid-based Shopping List

Grains: Whole grain cold cereal, whole wheat pasta noodles, whole grain bread

Milk: Non fat milk and yogurt, cheddar cheese

Meat & Beans: chicken breast, eggs, dried white beans

Vegetables: Canned Tomatoes, frozen broccoli

Fruit: Fresh apples or oranges, bananas, pears canned in water

For example, a family may write whole grain

breakfast cereal on the list. When selecting the cereal at the grocery store, the shopper would check to see if any cereals are on sale, compare unit prices, check ingredients and read the nutrition facts label. The shopper would purchase the cereal at the best price, with little sugar added, made with whole grains and higher in fiber.

Since most people purchase the same items every shopping trip, creating a master shopping list or keeping shopping lists and just adding items as needed will help save time planning and at the grocery store.

5k). So although these cookies have no trans fat, they are not healthy choices because they are high in fat, high in calories, high in sugar and low in nutrients.

FIGURE 5k: Ingredient List of Trans Fat Free Cookies

Ingredients: sugar, enriched flour, high olei, canola oil and/or palm oil and/or canola oil, cocoa (processed with alkali), high fructose corn syrup, baking soda, cornstarch, salt, soy lecithin (emulsifier), vanillin-an artificial flavor, chocolate.

Smart Shopping

Purchasing healthy foods that cost less is smart shopping. Planning for healthy meals and snacks helps parents serve healthier food, save money and save time spent preparing meals. The first steps in shopping are to make a menu plan and write a shopping list.

The MyPyramid nutrition recommendations can be used to make shopping lists and to help select food. A healthy shopping list will have foods from all food groups, which include grains, low fat milk, meat, beans and canned, frozen and fresh fruits and vegetables (Figure 5l). The shopping list does not have to be specific because some of the food decisions can be made at the store based on cost and label reading.

In the mid 1980's, the predominant fat sources in processed foods in the United States were animal fats, principally beef tallow and lard. When health professionals learned that highly-saturated animal fats were best avoided, the industry started making animal-fat free chips, crackers, cookies, frostings and spreads by using tropical oils. In the late 1980s and into the early 1990s, products on every supermarket shelf proclaimed in bold letters "no animal fats" but contained highly saturated tropical plant fats, which were soon determined to be unhealthy.

At that point, the food industry invented a new kind of fat and the result was "trans" fat. Trans fat was ushered in by food packages proclaiming "no tropical oils!" Trans fat refers to the shape of fatty acid molecules that contain a double bond between adjacent carbons. When the branches of a molecule on either side of that double bond stick out in the same direction, it is called a 'cis' fat; when they stick out in opposite directions, it is called a 'trans' fat. Cis fats predominate in nature. An industrial process called hydrogenization produces predominantly trans fat not found commonly in nature. Thus, "partially hydrogenated oil" on an ingredient list indicates the presence of trans fat.

The science is strong implicating trans fat in raising the risk of serious chronic disease. Trans fat has been shown to raise blood markers of inflammation, adversely affect blood lipid levels and damage the lining of blood vessels. Population studies suggest a strong link between trans fat intake and the risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer. ¹²

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Shoppers can prevent purchase of non-healthy

foods by sticking to the list, not shopping when hungry and shopping without their children. Stores intentionally put many unhealthy foods that children like, such as candy and products with prizes, where kids can see and reach them.

There are many ways to save money when food shopping. Shopping smart means using discount coupons, comparing price tags, purchasing items with the lowest per unit price, selecting store brand food items and buying in bulk. Shopping smart also means buying foods that provide the best nutrition. Purchasing healthy food that costs less is smart shopping!

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For example, the generic brand of shredded wheat is significantly less expensive than the name brand shredded wheat and likely is very similar in ingredients, taste and nutrition. The generic brands are generally the least expensive choices.

Discount coupons can save money if the coupons do not result in the purchase of food items not needed. When cutting coupons only cut out what would be bought normally.

Another way to save money is to buy foods sold in bulk. The food sold in bulk bins is generally less expensive because little to no money was spent to market or package the item.

Comparing per-unit prices can help shoppers save money. The unit prices on the store shelves show the price per ounce, pound, quart, or other amount. Unit prices let you compare brands and sizes to get the best buy (Figure 5m). The unit price is especially helpful when comparing different sized containers.

Since the two 100% Orange Juice are the same except for the size of the container, the less expensive per unit choice would be the 96 ounce 100% Orange Juice.



Many villages and people in the state of Alaska do not have access to a grocery store or a fully stocked grocery store. People in these regions may consider placing large food orders several times a year.

Placing large food orders takes planning, consideration and a substantial outlay of money. Money will be saved in the long run, but purchasing several hundred dollars of food at once is difficult for most families. One way to save money on large food orders is to place the order with other families. Items that can only be purchased by the case can be shared among families and costs for shipping can be split. Placing large orders, especially with other families, takes a great deal of organization and planning, however each family involved will save money and have healthier food choices in the house.

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FIGURE 5m: Buy More, Save More

100% Orange Juice (96 oz.)

UNIT PRICE \$1³³ PER QUART	YOU PAY \$3⁹⁹
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100% Orange Juice (64 oz.)

UNIT PRICE \$1⁴⁸ PER QUART	YOU PAY \$2⁹⁶
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Nutrition Distilled

The recommendations for selecting good healthy foods for preschool aged children also apply to older children and adults. Making good food choices requires quite a bit of information about nutrition. For example, health professionals cannot just say “eat more whole grains” without explaining what whole grains are, why one should eat more whole grains and how to determine if a food is made from whole grains. Therefore, one nutrition recommendations requires a lot of additional information. The information presented has been distilled into the following summary.



- ☑ Choose whole grain food products most of the time.
 - ☑ Serve whole grain rice, bread, pasta and cereals. 
 - ☑ Look for whole grain ingredients listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
 - ☑ Choose foods with a Daily Value for fiber at 5% or more listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
- ☑ Serve lean cuts of meat.
 - ☑ Select fish from Alaskan waters more often.
 - ☑ Choose poultry more often. 
 - ☑ Prepare meat by baking, broiling, or poaching rather than by frying.
 - ☑ Limit the amount of high fat meats, such as bacon, sausage, or bologna, served.
 - ☑ Eat beans more often.
 - ☑ Limit the amount of fried or pre-fried meats or fish served.
- ☑ After the age of two, serve low-fat and non-fat milk. 
 - ☑ Serve other calcium rich foods each day.
- ☑ Provide a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. 
 - ☑ Include fruits and vegetables at every meal and for snacks.
 - ☑ Eat blue, purple, green, white, yellow, orange and red colored fruits and vegetables.
- ☑ Avoid high sugar foods. 
 - ☑ Serve no more than 4-6 ounces of 100% juice each day.
 - ☑ Limit consumption of sugar, including soda pop, sports drinks, candy, sweetened cereals and baked products.
 - ☑ Avoid foods with sugar listed as one of the top three ingredients. 
- ☑ Ban the *Trans Fat*.
 - ☑ Select foods without trans fat listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
 - ☑ Avoid ordering fried food at restaurants.
 - ☑ Remember, foods marketed as trans fat free are not necessarily low in fat, sugar or healthy.
- ☑ Shop Smart. 
 - ☑ Make a menu for the week and a shopping list.
 - ☑ Clip out coupons for foods.
 - ☑ Compare unit prices.

For a parent activity, use the hand-out titled “How Much Sugar is in my Food and Drink?” found in the handout section of this manual. 

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Physical Activity at Home

Why Promote Physical Activity?

One of the primary reasons for promoting physical activity among young children is that regular physical activity, combined with a balanced diet, can help prevent overweight among kids. As discussed in Module 1 of this document, childhood overweight is on the rise in the United States. Module 1, gives background information on childhood overweight and modules 4 and 5 give information on eating healthy at home. The material in this module will focus on physical activity at home.



Physical Activity Recommendations

Health experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that all children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week to maintain good health. Moderate physical activities are those that get your heart beating fast. Things like walking, bike riding, or mowing the lawn are examples of moderate physical activity. However, if your child is overweight or at-risk for overweight, increasing physical activity alone may not produce significant weight loss. Increased activity along with improved nutrition over a period of months will be necessary for noticeable changes in body fat.



All children need both planned activity and free play. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that preschool children get at least one hour of structured AND one hour of unstructured physical activity each day.

In addition, children should not remain inactive for more than an hour at a time. The only time kids should be not moving for more than an hour straight is when they are sleeping!

What Counts as Physical Activity?

Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by muscles that burns energy. So...any kind of moving counts as physical activity! Physical activity doesn't just mean exercises like jogging or push ups.... in reality, many things that kids consider "having fun" such as swimming, playing tag, or riding a bike are physical activities.

Physical activity can be moderate or vigorous. As mentioned earlier, moderate intensity physical activities include Things like walking or bike riding. Vigorous physical activities are things that really make you sweat. Running, aerobics, or shoveling snow might fall into this category.



Structured activity is when you make a specific time to be active and plan certain kinds of things to do during that time. Teaching children how to move in all kinds of ways will help them enjoy physical activity. To make sure your kids are exposed to all kinds of movement you may want to plan specific physical activities to help them.

Young children should learn to jump, hop, skip, kick and throw. Take a little bit of time each day to help your kids learn and practice these activities. Make it fun by playing games that include these movements.



Unstructured Physical Activity

While structured physical activity is valuable, it is important for children to have time to play. Free play helps develop a child's imagination, creativity, body awareness and sense of space and dimension. Children learn about the world by moving around in it and exploring its wonder! Find a safe place near your home where your child can play with friends or siblings. If the weather is bad, provide soft objects like balls and bean bags for your child to play with indoors.

Examples of unstructured physical activity include a game of tag, climbing in a tree fort, pushing a friend on the swing, playing hide-and-go-seek, bike riding through the neighborhood or kicking a soccer ball around the yard.

Activate Your Family

The trick to increasing physical activity is to find things to do that are fun...when kids (and parents for that matter) are having fun, they forget about how hard they are working – because it isn't work, it's play!



Kids naturally love to move. As a parent you know how hard it is to get them to sit still! Use this love of movement to their advantage by encouraging your children to play.

Everyone needs physical activity to be healthy. When families are active together everyone benefits! Kids get to burn off their excess energy and parents enjoy the many health benefits of physical activity. As a parent, you are the role-model for your children...if they see you participate in regular physical activities they will be more likely to participate on their own as they get older. Plus, the extra time spent as a family unit helps build relationships and strong family bonds as well as pass down cultural values.



Try to be active as a family each day. Walk the dog together after dinner or go on a family bike ride to a local park or gym instead of watching T.V. You could assign each family member one night per week to be the "Coach of the Day" whose job is to organize or invent a game that evening!

Also, look for ways to incorporate movement into family events. Celebrate birthdays at the swimming pool or bowling alley. Schedule group games like volleyball, badminton, or touch football for summer family get-togethers. Try sledding, broom ball, or hockey during the winter.

Some of the best family physical activities are right outside your front door! Make use of Alaska's wonderful outdoor opportunities by doing active things like hiking, berry picking, or beach combing.

Get Outside

We all know that Alaskan winters can be very cold, but don't let that stop your activity fun! Kids love to be outside when there is snow on the ground and often don't even notice the chill in the air. As long as kids are dressed properly, provide and encourage cold weather activity.

Use snowy winter days to do physical activities like sledding, skiing, skating and snowman building. All of these activities are fun energy burners....kids will be doing healthy physical activity without even knowing it!

Indoor Fun

When the weather is just too cold or wet and you are forced indoors, find creative ways to keep kids moving. One way to do that is to adapt typical outdoor sports so they can be played indoors. For instance, you could play a game of "Socker" using a rolled-up sock as a ball and living room walls as goals!

Other fun indoor activities include having a treasure hunt, obstacle course, sit-up/push-up contests, arm wrestling contests, or pretend "ice skating" with sock feet on a linoleum floor. Another fun idea is to play music and create a new dance!

Children love animals! Here is an activity that will use your child's love of animals to learn new forms of movement. Simply collect pictures of different animals out of magazines or newspapers, paste the pictures on pieces of cardboard, then have your child imitate the movements of the animals.

If you don't have enough space at home for indoor games, consider using community physical activity facilities. Swimming pools and bowling alleys are great places to be active that often aren't too expensive. Schools often host "Open Gym" night and some schools have covered play areas you may be able to use. In addition, you may be able to walk the hallways of your local high school after school hours. Or, if there is a mall or large store in your town you could go there to walk and window shop.



Keep Kids Moving

Remember – children should not be inactive for more than an hour at a time unless they are sleeping.¹ On a typical week day sleep, school, playing and eating will occupy most of a child's day. However, there will be times during the week and especially on weekends when kids don't have much to do.

To reduce the amount of time your child spends inactive during free time, plan ahead and have several activities available for them to choose from. Playing outdoors, helping with household chores, reading and doing indoor games or crafts are all better options than just sitting around.

Weekends are when kids have the most free time and may tend to be inactive. To help kids get moving on the weekend days, plan a family hike or bike ride, or let them play outside both before and after lunch. Let kids brainstorm activity ideas during the week and make a written schedule for the weekend to post on the refrigerator.



Active Alternatives to Screen-time

Many studies have been done to identify the connection between television watching and childhood overweight. Research shows that as TV time increases, so do rates of overweight in teenagers. It's not clear whether this effect is due to TV taking the place of physical activity, or teens eating more while watching TV, or both.²



In Alaska, nearly 30% of high school students watch more than 3 hours of television on an average school day! Just imagine how many more hours are spent watching T.V. on weekends – not to mention video games and computers.³



Preschool children may have already developed a habit of watching television and playing video games. In our country the average child spends nearly 5 hours each day watching T.V. or playing video/computer games.⁴ The Association of American Pediatrics recommends that kids accumulate 2 hours or less each day of screen time.⁵

Try and curb these habits by setting limits on time spent in front of a screen. One way to monitor time spent watching television is to avoid putting a T.V. in a child's bedroom. Research shows that preschool children with a television in their bedroom watch an additional 4.8 hours of TV or videos every week and are more likely to be overweight than children without a bedroom T.V.⁶ Having young children watch T.V. in the living room allows you to monitor content as well as time spent watching television.

Believe it or not, it is possible to be active and get good activity ideas from watching television! When you and your child do watch T.V., consider watching a sporting event or outdoor recreation show and then go outside and try the activity.



Also, use those annoying commercial breaks to get your own quick workout...try having a family push-up or sit-up contest!

In addition, there are several programs targeted at children that include promotion of healthy behaviors. Sesame Street has regular lessons on healthy eating and Oscar the Grouch even sings the “Worm Workout Song” and encourages everyone watching to bend, twist and crawl along.

There are always times during the day when parents need time to get work done without the “help” of children. Identify these times during your day and plan fun activities that utilize a child’s imagination instead of relying on television or video games to distract them.

The time before the evening meal is usually one of those times. This is the perfect time for kids to play outside or have “clean up time” inside. If weather is bad or children are too young to play outside unsupervised, this can be “play time” when kids can color, play with blocks or Legos, or play board games.

If none of these is appealing to your child, have them join you in the kitchen and “cook” their own meal by combining ingredients you have set out for them in small containers. Or, have kids make their own pizza on a prepackaged crust with simple ingredients like cheese and pepperoni. When kids help in the kitchen they learn food preparation skills, become acquainted with new foods (which may increase the odds of actually trying them) and are decreasing time spent inactive.



Just Move!

As a parent remember that it is very important for kids to move as much as possible. Because children have a natural love of moving, your only job is to make sure that they stay safe and have fun doing it! Make sure that your children have time to play freely each day, but plan time in your schedule for structured activity as well.

Looking for places to be active in Alaska is as easy as looking out your window. Take advantage of local trails, beaches and mountains to keep your family active and healthy. When the weather is so bad that it’s not safe to be outdoors, think about using community facilities or just be creative in your own home. Either way, try to give your children positive experiences with physical activity so that they will continue to be active and enjoy a long, healthy life.



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SECTION three

TRAINING FOR HEAD START

MODULE 7

Serving Healthy Food

Head Start meals and snacks play a significant role in the nutrition of Alaskan preschool age children. Head Starts in Alaska serve over 1,700 children meals and snacks every school day. The meals provide children with a sense of food security and knowledge of healthy eating patterns. Parents trust that meals and snacks served to their children are wholesome and nutritious. To assure that the meals and snacks served support the nutritional needs of children, the meals served should reflect the most current nutritional recommendations.

Head Start meals make a significant nutritional contribution to a child's daily nutrition. Head Start Performance Standards state that each child in a part-day, center-based setting must receive meals and snacks that provide at least 1/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs. They also require that each child in a center-based, full-day program receives meals and snacks that provide 1/2 to 2/3 of the child's daily nutritional needs, depending upon the length of the program day.



The meals served not only nourish the children but teach and develop healthy eating habits. Clearly, it is easier to influence eating behavior at a young age than to change established eating patterns. Head Start is also a perfect place for nutrition education to support the meals and snacks served in the classroom. Head Starts have the responsibility and the ability to provide healthy meals every school day.

The information presented in this module is designed to help food service staff plan menus, make healthy food selections and prepare healthy foods by following the current nutrition recommendations. The information will address primarily one Head Start Performance Standard 1304.23 (b)(1) Nutritional Service (vi) that states:

"For 3- to 5-year-olds in center-based settings or other Head Start group experiences, foods served must be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt."



This module will present information on: selecting whole grains products; offering polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oil-rich fish, legumes and nuts more often; serving low-fat and non-fat milk to children after the age of 2; offering a variety of canned fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables; and reducing trans fat, salt and sugar by making smarter food choices.



Meal Program Guidance

There are several guiding publications to help Head Starts plan menus and select healthy foods for meals. Foremost, Head Starts must follow the Head Start Performance Standards and Other Regulations. Performance Standard 1304.23 (b)(1) Nutritional Service requires Head Start grantees to use funds from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Nutrition Programs. Therefore, all Alaska Head Start grantees must use the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) for financial reimbursement.



The CACFP has regulations for the meals and snacks served in Head Start. Head Starts get reimbursed for the foods served by following the regulations of the program. The CACFP requires that meals and snacks follow a pattern, that certain food components and portions are included, based on the age of the children, are followed for meals and snacks.



Performance Standard 1304.23 (b)(1)(vi) requires that Head Start foods served be high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt. The guidance on how to select foods high in nutrients and low in fat, sugar and salt is provided by the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.



The leading publication for nutrition advice is the science-based 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The Dietary Guidelines provide a broad range of nutritional recommendations that are important for health and the maintenance of a healthy weight. Health organizations such as the American Heart Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the state of Alaska Department of Public Health also provide important science based nutrition advice.

The Dietary Guidelines are used to design the MyPyramid food groups and MyPyramid recommendations. The food group recommendations will be addressed first and then some general nutrition advice on trans fat and sugar will be presented.

The CACFP provides guidance on food components using a modified version of the Four Food Groups. The CACFP has not yet been updated to reflect Dietary Guidelines. The MyPyramid recommendations are based on the Dietary Guidelines which reflect the most current scientific knowledge for food and nutrition.



To provide Head Start children with the healthiest food choices possible, menu planning and food selection will need to be based on the Dietary Guidelines, the MyPyramid recommendations and the nutritional advice of other health organizations. This module for food service staff will help weave together the Head Start Performance Standards, the CACFP requirements, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid and health organization recommendations for good nutrition. Combining the recommendations from these programs will improve the nutrition of foods served to Head Start children.

There are some distinct difference between the MyPyramid recommendations and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) requirements. The CACFP only recognizes four food groups for creditable foods: (1) Bread or Bread Alternate; (2) Fruits and/or Vegetables; (3) Fluid Milk; and (4) Meat or Meat Alternate. The term creditable refers to foods that may be counted towards meeting the CACFP requirements.



The MyPyramid structure recognizes six categories of foods and makes recommendations about selecting foods from these categories. The MyPyramid Grains food group is similar to the CACFP Bread or Bread Alternate. The MyPyramid Milk food group includes most high calcium dairy products; however the CACFP only recognizes fluid milk.

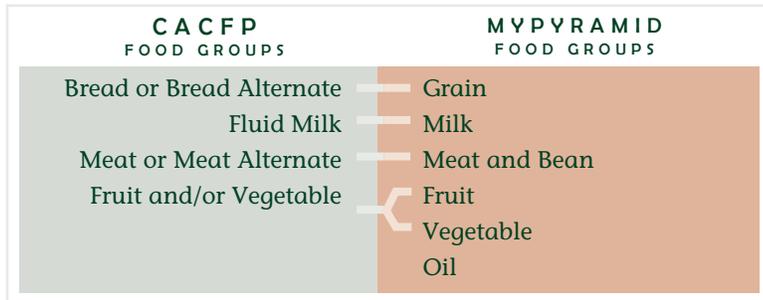
The MyPyramid Meat & Beans food group is similar to the CACFP Meat or Meat Alternate food group; however there are some differences. MyPyramid has separated Fruits and Vegetables into their own food groups whereas the CACFP has only one food group for fruits and vegetables. MyPyramid has a sixth category called Oils; the CACFP does not have a similar category (Figure 7a, next page).

Serve Whole Grains

The foods in the MyPyramid Grains food group and the CACFP Bread or Bread Alternate food group are the same. Examples are pilot bread, bread, pasta, oatmeal, breakfast cereals, tortillas and grits. The CACFP requires that bread or bread alternates are enriched or fortified and encourages the use of whole grain products. The key Dietary Guidelines recommendations for children are to consume whole grain products often, with at least half of the grains being whole grains.



FIGURE 7a: Two Perspectives on Food Groups



Reading the ingredients is the only way to know if a prepared food is a whole grain food. Color is not an indication of a whole grain. Bread can be brown because of molasses or other added ingredients. Foods labeled with the words “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain,” or “bran” may not be whole-grain products. Since ingredients are listed in the order of quantity, whole grain foods are those that have one of the following ingredients listed first: brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat and wild rice.



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 23	Calories from Fat 1
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0g	0%
Sodium 240mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 5g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Sugars 2g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 241%	Vitamin C 3%
Calcium 3%	Iron 3%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

FIGURE 7b: Fiber Facts

REDUCE YOUR RISK



Another way to help determine if a product is whole grain is to use the Nutrition Facts Label.

Choose products with a higher percent Daily Value for fiber. The percent Daily Value for fiber is a good clue to the amount of whole grain in the product (Figure 7b).

To increase the amount of whole grain served to Head Start children, food service staff will want to menu plan, read labels and introduce whole grain foods to students, staff and parents.



Head Start and its grantee agencies can adopt menu and purchasing policies to encourage the consumption of whole grains. They include:

- Serve only whole grain breads, cereals, pancakes and brown rice.
- Prepare all homemade quick breads with at least ½ the total flour being whole grain flour.
- Serve whole grain pasta noodles, crackers and pizza crust when possible.
- Prepare and serve whole grain products such as barley, quinoa, amaranth, millet, sorghum and triticale when available.
- On the menu, list foods as whole grain so that children and families become familiar with the term.
- When purchasing cereals, breads, or pasta, select products that list brown rice, bulgur, graham flour, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, whole oats, whole rye, whole wheat, wild rice as the first ingredient.

Serve Low Fat Milk

The only food creditable in the CACFP Milk food group is fluid milk, or in Alaska nutritionally equivalent reconstituted milk. To assure Head Start children ages 3–5 are served meals that are low in fat as required by the Performance Standards, serve only 1 percent or skim milk for children ages 2 and older.



UNDERSTANDING THE NUTRITION FACTS
www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

Whole grains are important because they are rich in fiber and nutrients. Consuming foods rich in fiber, such as whole grains, as part of a healthy diet, reduces the risk of coronary heart disease and may reduce constipation. Eating at least three ounce equivalents a day of whole grains may help with weight management.

GOT MOO?

The CACFP and MyPyramid classify foods made with milk differently. The only CACFP creditable food from the Milk food group is fluid milk; the CACFP credits yogurt, cheese and cottage cheese as a Meat or Meat Alternate. MyPyramid considers all fluid milk products and foods made from milk, such as yogurt, cheese and cottage cheese as part of the MyPyramid Milk food group because all are good sources of calcium.

This difference between the CACFP and MyPyramid can cause confusion when meal planning or discussing good nutrition. However, to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirement, only fluid milk is creditable. Food service staff receiving input on menu planning will need to clarify this difference to families and staff.

Serve Legumes and Lean Meats

The majority of foods in the MyPyramid and the CACFP Meat food groups are the same. Examples of foods counted in both groups are lean meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal), poultry, fish, eggs, peanut butter, legumes and nuts. Both MyPyramid and the CACFP recommend selecting lean cuts of meat and using low fat cooking techniques.



The Dietary Guidelines key recommendation, for children 4–18 years of age, is to keep total fat intake between 25 percent to 35 percent of calories from fat, with most of the fats coming from sources of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as fish, nuts and vegetable oils. To meet this recommendation, Head Start menus will want to offer fish, legumes and nuts frequently. Serve only ground or finely chopped nuts and seeds to children age 5 years and under to prevent choking.

The CACFP and MyPyramid both classify legumes (dried beans), peas and nuts in the Meat food group. Legumes provide a great low fat, high fiber, protein rich, delicious and nutritious meal when made into soups, salads, casseroles, or when served as a side dish. Legumes are also low cost, do not require refrigeration for storage and are shelf-stable for many months.

Examples of legumes and peas are black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, mature lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, split peas, white beans and peanuts. Peanuts are not truly a nut but a legume. Nuts and nut butters made from almonds, walnuts, macadamia, pecans and hazelnuts are also creditable as a Meat Alternate. The CACFP does not allow soy beans, tofu, tempeh, soy burgers, or other soy products to be served as a Meat or Meat Alternate.



Fish is an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including young children. Many people have heard about high mercury levels in fish and are cautious about serving fish to children. The state of Alaska will soon publish up-to-date consumption guidelines for young children and women of childbearing age. These guidelines offer suggestions specific to each type and size of fish. Good news! All five species of Alaska wild salmon have very low mercury levels. Parents will be able to access the new guidelines on the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health web site or by calling 907-269-8000.

The Head Start grantee can adopt menu and purchasing policies or recommendations to decrease the amount of saturated fat and increase the amount of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat coming from the Meat and Meat Alternate food group.

Our recommendations:

- Prepare meat, poultry and fish from scratch.
- Trim all visible fat and remove the skin from meat and poultry before cooking.
- Cook meat and poultry by broiling, poaching, roasting, stewing, steaming, stir frying, or using the crock pot.

ALASKA FISH CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES

www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/

The CACFP meal pattern requires fluid milk to be served for breakfast, lunch and supper. Additionally, fluid milk may be served as one of the meal pattern components for snacks. For breakfast, fluid milk can be served as a beverage, used on cereal, or used in part for each purpose. Both lunch and supper must contain a serving of fluid milk as a beverage. Milk is never credited when cooked in cereals, puddings, or other foods.

The CACFP meal pattern requires fluid milk to be served for breakfast, lunch and supper. Additionally, fluid milk may be served as one of the meal pattern components for snacks. For breakfast, fluid milk can be served as a beverage, used on cereal, or used in part for each purpose. Both lunch and supper must contain a serving of fluid milk as a beverage. Milk is never credited when cooked in cereals, puddings, or other foods.

The CACFP considers cheese, yogurt and cottage cheese as a meat alternative because these foods are a good source of protein. MyPyramid considers foods made from milk that retain their calcium content as part of the MyPyramid Milk food group. Foods made from milk that have little to no calcium, such as cream cheese, cream, and butter, are not considered part of the MyPyramid Milk group. Since the CACFP requires that fluid milk be served at each meal, Head Start children are assured adequate calcium.



- Use vegetable oils such as olive or safflower oil instead of butter, margarine or vegetable shortening for cooking meats.
- Serve low fat and non fat yogurts, cottage cheese and cheeses.
- Serve Alaska fish.
- Serve legumes more often in soups, salads, casseroles, or side dishes.
- Serve only peanut butter and nut butters made with no added sugar or hydrogenated fat.
- Avoid serving processed products such as chicken nuggets, fish sticks, bologna, canned meats, hot dogs and corn dogs because they are high in fat and salt.
- Avoid serving high fat, processed, non-creditable meats such as salami, sausage and bacon because they are high in fat and salt.



Enjoy a Rainbow of Colorful Fruit and Veggies



Since the CACFP has not yet been updated to match the MyPyramid recommendations, the CACFP puts fruits and vegetables into one food group. The CACFP considers all fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and vegetables, 100% juice, legumes (beans) and peas creditable Fruits/ Vegetables. The MyPyramid food group system separates fruits and vegetables into their own food groups. Nonetheless, health messages often group fruits and vegetables together. In March of 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention launched a new campaign. Fruits and vegetables are grouped together and people are encouraged to eat more fruits and vegetables every day.



The CACFP considers all fresh, frozen, or canned fruit and 100% juice as creditable. The Dietary Guidelines recommends choosing fiber rich fruits and foods with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners, in order to consume a sufficient amount and variety of fruit each day. Head Starts following the Dietary Guidelines for fruit should serve a variety of whole, canned, frozen, dried, or fresh fruit every day. Serve canned fruit packed in water or its own

juice, not heavy syrup, to reduce the amount of added sugar. Whole fruit is low in calories, high in fiber and nutrients, takes time to eat and helps provide the feeling of fullness.

Choose whole fruit over 100% fruit juice. Whole fruit (canned, frozen or fresh) contains fiber and is lower in sugar. Juice is fruit that becomes high in sugar when concentrated and has lost its fiber. Juice offers no nutritional advantage over whole fruit. Choosing fresh, frozen or canned fruit provides more nutrients, less calories, makes one feel full and helps introduce children to eating whole fruit.



Compare ½ cup 100% grape juice to 1 cup of whole grapes (Figure 7c). The whole grapes are lower in calories, lower in sugar and have more fiber than the juice.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting 100% juice to 4–6 ounces (½–¾ cup) per day for children age 6 months to 6 years.¹ A recent study of juice intake in children noted that more than 20 percent of toddlers drink 9.5 ounces a day. Ten percent of toddlers drink more than double the recommended limit. The same study noted that many toddlers were not eating any fruit (fruit juice excluded) on a daily basis.² Since many children are exceeding the recommended amount of juice and not eating any fruit on a given day, Head Start should serve whole fresh, frozen or canned fruit instead of juice.



BEANS AND NUTS

FRUITS AND VEGGIES: MORE MATTERS

www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov

DELICIOUS RECIPIES WITH BEANS

www.americanbean.org

The CACFP allow legumes (beans) such as black, garbanzo, kidney, and pinto beans to be creditable from either the Meat Alternate or the Fruit/Vegetable food group. However, legumes cannot be credited towards the meat or Meat Alternate and the Fruit/Vegetable requirement in the same meal. Canned green or yellow beans and green peas may be credited only as vegetables. Nuts may be credited as a serving of Meat Alternate for a snack, but only 1/2 a serving of Meat Alternates at lunch or supper. Serve only ground or finely chopped nuts and seeds to children under 5 years of age to prevent choking.

FIGURE 7c: Comparing Juice to Whole Fruit

	½ Cup 100% Grape Juice	1 Cup Whole Grapes
Grams of Fiber	0	2
Calories	75	62
Grams of Sugar	19	15

Canned and frozen fruits without added sugars are a good source of nutrients, are low in calories, store well and are simple to prepare. Kids also really enjoy eating them. Canned and frozen fruits are usually picked at their peak of ripeness and nutritional quality and then are processed within a few hours to lock in their nutrients. Few nutrients are lost during processing. However, only those without added sugar, syrups, or other ingredients are healthy choices.



Essentially all vegetables are low in fat, salt, calories and high in nutrients. However, fat and salt are often added during processing or preparation. Blue, purple, green, white, yellow, orange and red colored vegetables should be served instead of fried potatoes such as french fries, Tater Tots and hash browns. The CACFP considers french fries, Tater Tots and hash browns creditable vegetables. However their use is discouraged by Performance Standards and by the Dietary Guide-

Compare a Nutrition Facts label of canned water-packed peaches to the Nutrition Facts of peaches canned in heavy syrup (Figure 7d). The peaches in heavy syrup have three times as many calories and almost four times as much sugar. Peaches packed in water are the better choice.

FIGURE 7d: Nutrition Facts of Peaches

CANNED IN WATER

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams (100g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 24	Calories from Fat 1
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 3mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 11%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

CANNED IN HEAVY SYRUP

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams (100g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 74	Calories from Fat 1
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 6mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 20g	7%
Dietary Fiber 1g	5%
Sugars 19g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 7%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 0%	Iron 1%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

The CACFP requires that lunch and supper contain two separate servings of vegetables or fruits. The Dietary

Guidelines recommend consuming a sufficient variety of vegetables and choosing and preparing foods with little salt and fat.



lines because fried potatoes are high in fat and salt. Potatoes that are prepared without the addition of large amounts of salt and fat are an acceptable vegetable choice.

If the Nutrition Facts labels of canned and frozen carrots are compared (Figure 7e, on the following page), almost all the nutrients are very similar, including vitamin A. Unfortunately, the canned carrots are much higher in sodium because it is added during canning. The terms sodium and salt are often used interchangeably because salt is made from sodium. The Dietary Guidelines recommend choosing and preparing foods with little salt and the Performance Standards require foods served to be high in nutrients and low in salt. Since frozen vegetables usually do not have added salt, serving frozen vegetables is the better choice because they are lower in salt.



CARROTS, CANNED

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams (100g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 2
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 242mg	10%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 5g	
Sugars 2g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 223%	Vitamin C 5%
Calcium 2%	Iron 4%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

CARROTS, FROZEN

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 100 grams (100g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 36	Calories from Fat 4
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 68mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate 8g	3%
Dietary Fiber 3g	
Sugars 5g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 225%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 4%	Iron 2%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

FIGURE 7e: Nutrition Facts of Carrots

However, canned vegetables are easier to transport, store, are high in nutrients and are a nutritious choice, except for the salt. To lower the amount of salt served, empty canned vegetables into a colander and rinse with water to help remove the salt.

WHAT'S UP, DOC?

A variety of canned, frozen and fresh fruits and vegetables should be on the Head Start menu. One way to make sure that the menu has good variety is to serve fruits and vegetables from different color groups. The main color groups are dark green, yellow and orange, red and pink, blue and purple and white.

BLUE, GREEN, WHITE, YELLOW AND RED

A sampling from each color group:

Dark green

green beans, cucumbers, green grapes and green apples

Yellow and orange

salmon berries, sweet corn, oranges and carrots

Red and pink

Highbush cranberries, tomatoes, red potatoes, beets and red apples

Blue and purple

blueberries, huckleberries, raisins, prunes and purple cabbage

White

bananas, potatoes (not fried), mushrooms and white corn



The Head Start grantee can also adopt menu and purchasing policies or recommendations to increase the amount of fruit and vegetables. Examples of policies or recommendations are:

- Serve a fruit and vegetable at lunch and supper (do not serve two fruits or two vegetables).
- Avoid serving processed potato products such as hash browns, Tater Tots and french fries as a vegetable serving.
- Serve fresh and frozen vegetables more often than canned. Rinse salt from canned vegetables before preparing.
- Do not add salt or fat when cooking vegetables.



To see more examples of foods in each color group and to learn about the nutrients in each group see Module 5, Slides #26–31 in this Training Manual.

The nutrient content of canned and frozen carrots is very similar. Canned carrots have more sodium (salt) because salt is added during the canning process.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
BREAKFAST	White Banana	Blue/Purple Raisins	Red Frozen Strawberries	Orange/Yellow Canned Apricots	Dark Green Green Apple
SNACK	Dark Green Cucumber Coins	Red Red Bell Pepper Sticks	Orange/Yellow Carrot Sticks	Blue/Purple Purple Cabbage Slaw	Blue/Purple Tundra Picked Blueberries
LUNCH	Red and Blue/Purple Baked Red Potatoes with Canned Prunes	Orange/Yellow and Dark Green Mashed Sweet Potatoes with HoneyDew Melon	White and Red Mashed Turnips and Pickled Beets	Orange/Yellow and Dark Green Broccoli and Canned Pineapple	White and Dark Green Cauliflower and Canned Green Pears

FIGURE 7f: Colorful Weekly Menu

- Serve a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables each day and plan for a variety throughout the week.
- If juice is served, serve juice rarely and only as a snack.
- Serve canned fruit packed in water or its own juice. If fruit is packed in heavy syrup, serve fruit without the juice.
- Purchase apple sauce without added sugar.
- Do not serve commercial fruit pie filling (it is high in sugar).
- When dried fruit is served ensure that children brush their teeth.
- Make your own fruit sauce by blending frozen or canned fruit. Serve blending fruit with pancakes or French toast instead of syrup.
- Serve sliced fruit.

Trans Fat

The Dietary Guidelines recommend keeping trans fat intake as low as possible. Trans fats are found primarily in hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Partially hydrogenated vegetable oils are used by food manufacturers to make processed foods such as chips, crackers, cookies, chocolate and most snack foods. Trans fat is common in the frying oil used in deep fat fryers. Processed foods provide approximately 80 percent of the trans fat in the diet as compared to 20 percent that occur naturally in food from animal sources.³

Trans fats increase the risk of heart disease, stroke and may increase the risk of diabetes, cancer and other chronic diseases. Since January 2006, the amount of trans fat in a product must be listed on the Nutrition Facts label (Figure 7g).



The average daily trans fat intake for the average American is 5.8 grams a day or 2.6 percent of calories. The major sources of trans fat in the American diet in 2003 were 40% from cakes, cookies, crackers, pies, bread, etc.; 17% margarine; 8% fried potatoes; 5% potato chips, corn chips, popcorn; 4% household vegetable shortening; 3% salad dressing; 1% breakfast cereal; 1% candy; and 21% from prepared animal products (Figure 7h).³



FIGURE 7g: Locating Trans Fat

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 30g	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 241%	Vitamin C 3%
Calcium 3%	Iron 3%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

To avoid additional sugar, one must read the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in order of predominance by weight, that is, the ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. Sugar has many names such as high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, brown sugar, invert sugar, corn sweetener, lactose, maltose, dextrose, malt syrup, fructose, molasses, fruit juice concentrates, glucose, sucrose, honey and syrup.

Examples of policies and procedures are:

- Purchase food with zero trans fat listed on the Nutrition Facts label.
- Reduce the number of foods served made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oil.

Avoid Sweetened Beverages and Food

Many high sugar foods are obvious because they taste sweet. However, sugar is often added to many foods, including tomato sauces, peanut butter, breakfast cereals and canned fruit. The Dietary Guidelines recommends choosing and preparing foods and beverages with little added sugar or caloric sweeteners.

The way to determine if the trans fat in a meat product is naturally occurring or added is to read the ingredient list. If no partially hydrogenated oils are listed, then trans fats occur naturally. Trans fat is likely to be found naturally at very small levels in products containing butter, milk, cheese, beef or lamb.

To decrease the amount of trans fat from hydrogenated oils fed to Head Start children, food service staff will want to read labels. The Head Start grantee can also adopt menu and purchasing policies or recommendations that limit the use of foods containing trans fat.

Food service staff will need to read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredient list to keep trans fat consumption as low as possible. The Head Start center or grantee agency can also adopt menu and purchasing policies or recommendations that limit the use of foods containing trans fat.

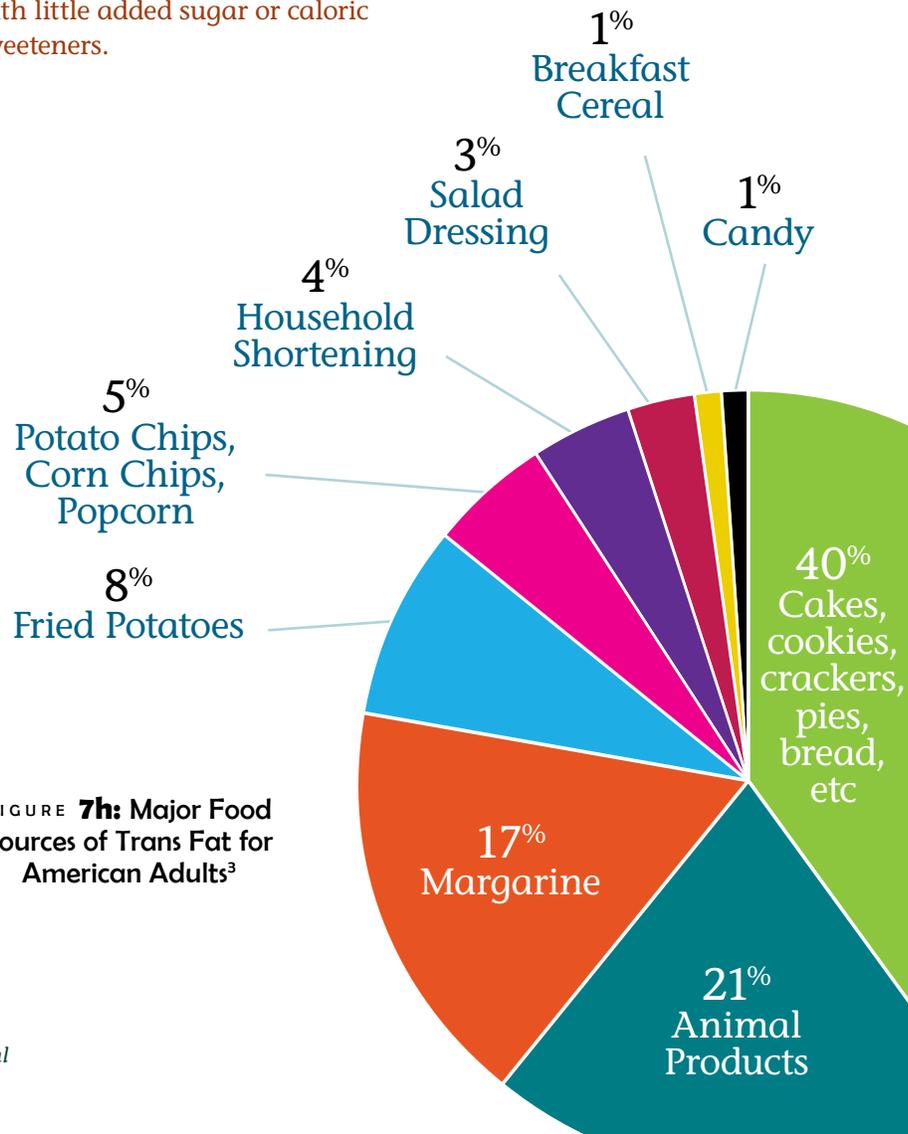


FIGURE 7h: Major Food Sources of Trans Fat for American Adults³

MORE ON TRANS FAT

www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transfat.html#after

THE LABELING OF TRANS FAT

www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2003/503_fats.html

Often sugar is listed several times on the ingredient list, but with various names. For example, the second ingredient is sugar, the fourth ingredient is corn syrup and the sixth ingredient is brown sugar syrup. If these sugars were added together, there might be more sugar than the first ingredient in a product (Figure 7i). To decrease the amount of sugar served to Head Start children, food service staff will need to label read.

FIGURE 7i: Hidden Sugar

Ingredients: Whole grain wheat, **sugar**, salt, **corn syrup**, canola and/or rice bran oil, **brown sugar syrup**, trisodium phosphate, natural flavor.



Food service staff will need to read the Nutrition Facts label and the ingredient list to choose foods and beverages with little added sugar. The Head Start center or grantee agency can also adopt menu and purchasing policies or recommendations that limit the use of foods containing high amounts of sugar, such as:

- Avoid foods with sugar listed as one of the top three ingredients or listed several times.
- Do not allow added sugar, syrup or sweeteners added at the table.
- Do not serve sweet foods such as baked products or candy.



Wrap up

The information presented in this module is designed to help food service staff menu plan, select food items and prepare healthy foods using most recent scientific nutrition recommendations. Information was presented on: selecting whole grain products; offering fish, legumes and nuts rich in polyunsaturated and monounsaturated oils more often; serving low fat and non fat milk to children after the age of two; offering a variety of canned, fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables; and reducing trans fat, salt and sugar by making smarter food choices.

These suggestions allow Head Start to receive the CACFP reimbursement and exceed the nutritional requirements of the Performance Standards by applying the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPyramid recommendations. Serving nutritious food to Head Start children will help children grow up healthy and strong.

MODULE SEVEN REFERENCES

1 Gidding SS, Dennison BA, Birch LL, Daniels SR, Gilman MW, Lichtenstein AH, Rattay KT, Steinberger J, Stettler N, Van Horn L. Dietary Recommendations for Children and Adolescents: A Guide for Practitioners; Endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics on August 24, 2005. *Pediatrics* 2006; 117(2) 544-559.

2 Clarke S, Ziegler PJ, Dwyer JT, and Hendricks K. Take a Look at the Diets of Our Youngest Americans! Lessons From the Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study. *Nutrition Today*. 2006;41(4):153-159.

3 FDA Consumer magazine online, September-October 2003 Issue. Revealing Trans Fat. www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2003/503_fats.html. Accessed October 2006.

Traditional Foods in Alaska's Head Starts

Head Start centers may wish to serve donated traditional Alaska Native foods to address the cultural food preference of their community



and students. In 2005, almost 60% of Alaska Head Start students enrolled reported their ethnicity as

Alaska Native or American Indian (Figure 8a). Serving traditional Native foods in the Head Start classroom provides good nutrition and addresses the cultural and ethnic food preferences of many of the children.

This module will provide a brief overview of the nutritional benefits of Alaska traditional foods, how to determine if the Head Start center has the capacity to prepare traditional foods, ways to involve the community in the donation of Alaska traditional foods to the Head Start, and the Alaska Department of Conservation (DEC) Alaska Food Code regulations surrounding the use of Alaska traditional foods.



The Head Start Performance Standards and Other Regulations support serving cultural and ethnic foods. Performance Standard 1304.23 (b) Nutritional services (1) states:

“Grantee and delegate agencies.... nutrition program must serve a variety of foods which consider cultural and ethnic preferences and which broaden the child’s food experience.”

Serving traditional foods will support the cultural and ethnic food preferences of many Alaskan Head Start children.

Examples of common traditional wild game are seal, whale, venison, moose, caribou, duck, goose, salmon, halibut, and all other fish. Examples of harvested foods include blueberries, huckleberries, salmonberries, cranberries, beach asparagus, seaweed, fiddlehead ferns, young fireweed leaves, young sourdock leaves, and wild rhubarb. Many of these foods are of superior nutritional quality to similar store bought foods.



The Alaska DEC and the Department of Education and Early Development allow the use of traditional foods in Head Start when Alaska Food Code regulations are followed. Before serving any donated traditional foods, food service staff need to be familiar with and strictly follow the Alaska Food Code regulations. Donated traditional wild game meat, fish, sea mammals, plants and other food can be served at the Head Start.

Due to the food safety risk, Alaska Food Code regulations restrict the use of some traditional foods as explained in slide #22 of this module.

Head Starts interested in serving traditional foods will want to work with Head Start parents, food service staff, local fisherman, hunters, and gathers to achieve regular service of traditional foods. To help achieve regular food service of traditional foods, the Head Start staff and specifically the food service staff will want to enlist community support and learn the Alaska Food Code regulations.

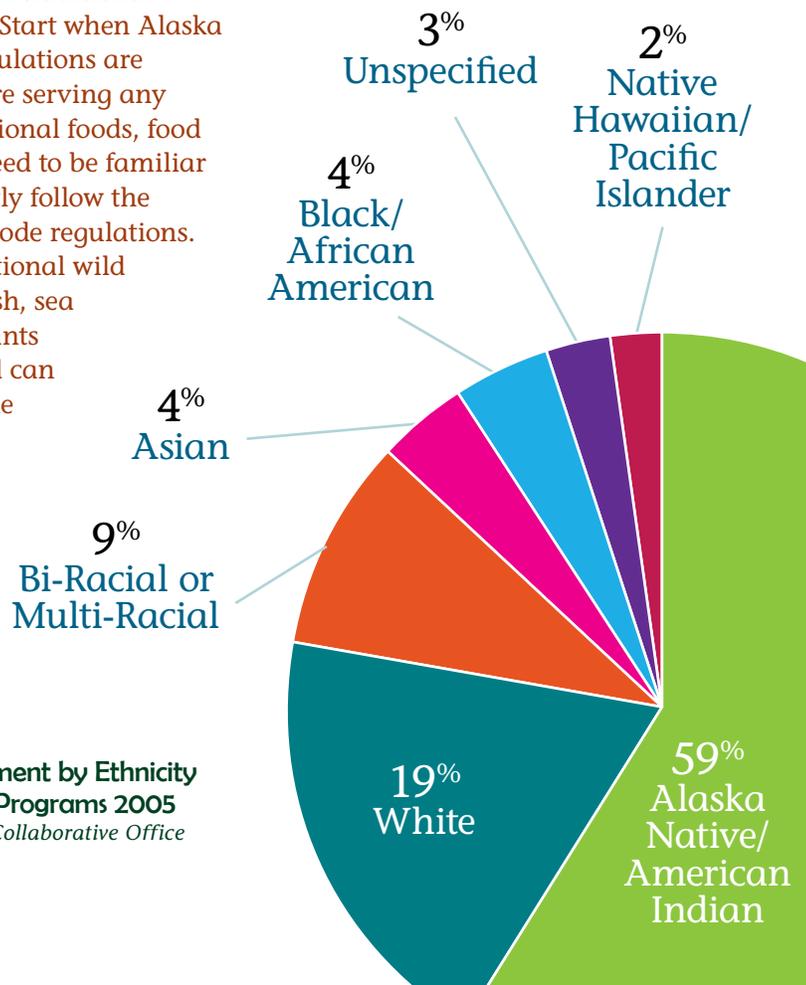


FIGURE 8a: Total Enrollment by Ethnicity in Alaska Head Start Programs 2005
Source: Alaska Head Start Collaborative Office

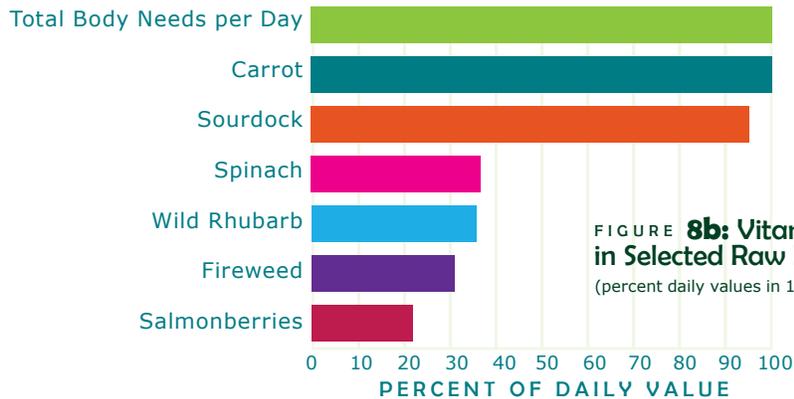


FIGURE 8b: Vitamin A in Selected Raw Food
(percent daily values in 1/2 cup)

YOUR DAILY VALUES

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

Nutritional Benefits of Traditional Foods

The Alaska Native people have lived off the land by hunting and gathering for centuries. These activities provide good nutrition, exercise, affordable food, and preserve cultural heritage. Traditional foods are natural, do not contain additives or preservatives and are a good source of nutrients. Traditional foods in Native culture are believed to nourish not only the body, but the spirit and community as well. Science has clearly demonstrated that many traditional foods are nutritionally superior to store-bought foods.



Healthy children need protein to build muscles, calcium for strong bones and teeth, and Vitamin A to help fight infections, promote vision health, and keep healthy skin. Children benefit from Vitamin C which helps fight infection, improves the body's ability to use iron, helps heal wounds, and plays a role in cancer prevention. Dietary iron helps prevent iron deficiency anemia so that children have energy and are mentally alert for learning. Traditional Alaska foods are a rich food source of these nutrients.



Many traditional Native foods such as sourdock, wild rhubarb, fireweed and salmonberries are a good source of vitamin A. Vitamin A is important for night vision, to help prevent skin infections, and to keep skin healthy. As shown in Figure 8b, a half cup of sourdock provides more than 90% of the Daily Value for Vitamin A. A half cup of wild rhubarb or fireweed leaves provides more than 30% and ½ cup of salmonberries provides more than 20% of the Daily Value for Vitamin A.¹



Many traditional Native foods such as lowbush salmonberries, willow leaves, sourdock, and lowbush cranberries are a good source of Vitamin C. Vitamin C helps to keep teeth and gums healthy, keep skin elastic, fight infection, and heal wounds.

Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. *What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.*

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs.

As shown in Figure 8c, a half cup of lowbush salmonberries provide 100% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C. A half cup of willow leaves provides more than 80% and ½ cup of sourdock provides more than 40% of the Daily Value for Vitamin C. Berries are also low in sugar, high in cancer preventing antioxidants and Vitamin A.¹

Traditional Alaska fish are rich in heart healthy nutrients.

Alaska fish is high in Omega-3 fatty acids, monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fat.

Omega-3 fatty acids have been linked to a wide range of health benefits including improved heart health, good development of a baby during pregnancy, healthy joints, improved behavior and mood, and prevention of certain cancers.²

Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are good for heart health. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 suggest eating fish as a food source of monounsaturated

and polyunsaturated fats.³ The American Heart Association recommends adults eat two servings of fish a week to help prevent heart disease.⁴

Fish is an important part of a healthy diet for everyone, including young children.

Many parents have heard about high mercury levels in fish and are cautious about serving it to their children. The state of Alaska will soon publish up-to-date consumption guidelines for young children and women of childbearing age.

These guidelines offer suggestions specific to each type and size of fish. Good news! All five species of Alaska wild salmon have very low mercury levels.

Parents will be able to access the new guidelines on the State of Alaska, Division of Public Health Web site or by calling 907-269-8000.



Traditional Alaska fish and meats have nutritional benefits that make them superior to many store bought foods. Fish, seal, moose and caribou are typically lower in fat and saturated fat than meat purchased from the store. Sea mammals, moose, caribou and venison are also excellent sources of protein and higher in iron than store bought beef.



Seal, ptarmigan, and moose provide more iron per 3 ounce serving than lean beef or chicken. Iron carries oxygen to muscles and body parts, helps children learn better, and provides the body with energy. Three ounces of seal provides almost 100% of the Daily Value for iron. Three ounces of moose or ptarmigan provides more than 20% the Daily Value for iron whereas the same portion of lean beef provides 15% the Daily Value and chicken less than 10% the Daily Value (Figure 8d).



Three ounces of seal meat provides more iron than three ounces of caribou, hamburger or hotdogs. To get the same amount of iron as three ounces of seal one would need to eat 6 ounces of caribou meat, 6 three-ounce hamburgers (or 18 ounces of hamburger), or 56 hot dogs. The iron content of seal meat and caribou is superior to store bought hamburger and hotdogs.

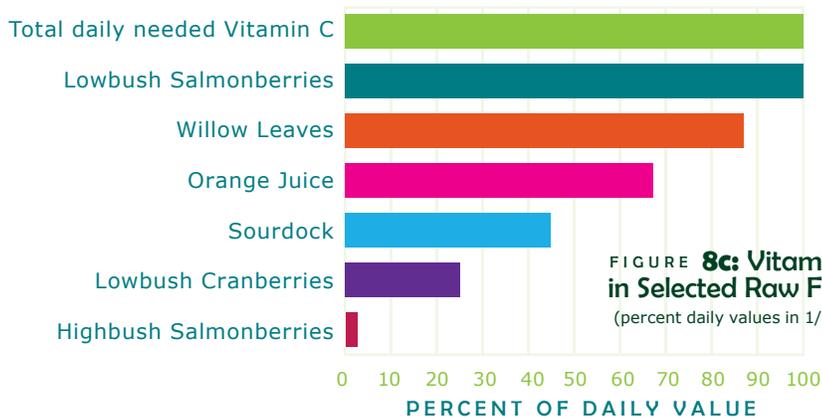


FIGURE 8c: Vitamin C in Selected Raw Foods (percent daily values in 1/2 cup)

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

ALASKA FISH CONSUMPTION GUIDELINES
www.epi.hss.state.ak.us

Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.

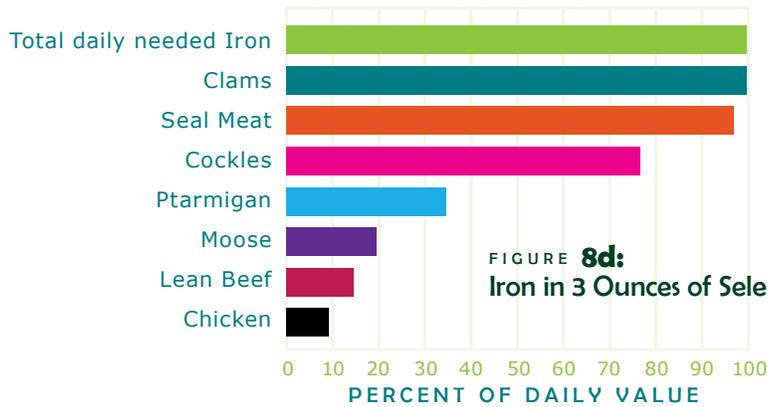


FIGURE 8d:
Iron in 3 Ounces of Selected Meat

OUR SOURCE FOR THIS CHART

These are just a few of the nutritional benefits of traditional Alaska foods. Clearly, traditional Alaska foods are a rich source of nutrients and Head Start children would benefit nutritionally from eating more traditional foods.



Community Involvement

Head Starts wanting to incorporate more traditional foods in the daily menu will want to assess the capacity of their food service staff and kitchen. Head Starts can only serve donated traditional food if the kitchen is designed for cooking from scratch versus “heat and serve.” The Head Start will want to determine if the food service staff have enough time allotted to cook from scratch. Cooking from scratch takes more time than serving prepared “heat and serve” foods.



Once the Head Start determines if the kitchen and food service staff are able to prepare donated traditional foods, the Head Start should enlist community support by holding a community meeting.

The community meeting should provide background information on the nutritional and cultural benefits of serving traditional foods and the Alaska Food Code regulations. Guidance should be clear about the harvest of the animal including sanitation and butchering. Expectations regarding the transportation, refrigeration, and sanitation of the donation need be addressed. The goal of this meeting would be to increase interest and knowledge about donating traditional foods to Head Start.



Providing parents, community members, hunters, fisherman, and gathers with information about the donation of traditional foods to the Head Start center will help donations become more regular and ensure products donated meet Alaska Food Code regulations.

The following information can be used for food service staff to become more familiar with the donation of traditional foods and can also be used during the community meeting to help explain the Alaska Food Code regulations.



Donation of Traditional Foods

The following information regarding Alaska DEC Alaska Food Code regulations is current as of December 2006. New regulations are periodically issued. Head Starts are responsible to know and follow the most current regulations.

The Alaska Food Code regulations must be followed before serving any donated food. Head Start staff, especially food service staff, need to know which foods can and cannot be served and ensure that donations are received, prepared and processed properly.

The following information, based on the Alaska Food Code regulations, will be presented: what can be donated; what cannot be donated and why; expectation for harvest, transportation, and dressing of animal; receipt and storage; preparation and processing. This information can be used by food service staff for accepting and preparing donations and to educate community donors.



MORE ON THE ALASKA DEC
www.dec.state.ak.us/regulations/pdfs/31mas.pdf

GUIDANCE ON ALASKA'S EDIBLE PLANTS
www.ankn.uaf.edu/NPE/CulturalAtlases/Yupiaq/Marshall/edibleplants/loc.gov/rr/scitech/tracer-bullets/edibleplantstb.html

HOME COOKED MEALS

The Alaska Food Code regulations only apply to regulated food service establishments. Regulations do not apply to food prepared at home for individual consumption.

The edible nontoxic berries, roots, and leaves of plants that are harvested can be accepted as donations and served to Head Start children. It is critical to properly identify plants. If there is any doubt regarding the plant name do not serve. Examples of some plants are cranberries, blueberries, fireweed, rose hip, dandelions, wild currants and salmonberries.

Most traditional wild game meat, fish, and sea mammals can be accepted as donations. For example the meat from hare, duck, goose, moose, beaver, muskrat, reindeer, caribou, fish, seal, stellar sea lions, and whale are acceptable. The meat needs to be accepted in portions no smaller than quarters or roasts; no ground meat can be accepted. Head Start can grind the meat themselves or take it to a permitted facility for grinding. Food establishments, including Head Starts, are prohibited by the Alaska Food Code regulations from serving some seafood, game meats, fermented or smoked products because of the potential for human illness.

The following foods cannot be served at Head Start:

- Shellfish that is not from a permitted facility. Shellfish that is not monitored is at increased risk for Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning (PSP), *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*, and bacteria.
- Fox meat is prohibited because of rabies.



- Polar bear, bear, and walrus meat, which are prohibited because meat not cooked to a proper temperature may contain Trichinellosis.
- Seal or whale oil, with or without meat (such as oil with dried meat), fermented game meat (such as beaver tail, whale flipper, seal flipper and muktuk), and fermented seafood products (such as stink eggs or stink fish) are prohibited because they may harbor Botulism.
- Home canned products or canned products from an un-permitted processor are prohibited because of the risk of Botulism.
- Vacuumed sealed, reduced-oxygen packages are prohibited because of the risk of Botulism.
- Smoked or dried seafood products are prohibited due to the risk of Botulism and Listeria.

The Alaska Food Code regulations state that the food service staff must make a reasonable determination that the animal was not diseased; the food was butchered, dressed, transported, and stored to prevent contamination, undesirable microbial growth, or deterioration; and the food will not cause a significant health hazard or potential for human illness.



Food service staff will want to ask questions about the transportation and storage of the animal before

accepting the donation. A healthy animal does not exhibit obvious signs of illness. The animal should have been eviscerated within an hour of harvest and chilled as quickly as possible to 41° F or below. For raw meat or seafood donations, food should have been covered to protect it from contamination such as insects, dust, or dripping water during transport. It should have been kept separate from non-food items, and kept cold (41° F or below) during transport and storage.

The food service staff will want to inspect the food when it is received to assure that it is whole, gutted, gilled, and in quarters or roasts that have not been further processed. Communicating this requirement with donors ahead of time will help streamline the donation process. Food service staff will want to check for general cleanliness and quality, for any signs that the game animal was diseased, and for any signs of contamination, bacterial growth and/or deterioration.



FIGURE 8e: Label for Donated Caribou



It is important to maintain records of the donation date, person donating, and the type of food. Donations should then be packaged to prevent contamination and kept at the proper temperature. Packaged foods should be labeled and stacked in an area designated for donated foods and not packed beyond the capacity of the freezer. Make sure raw wild game is stored on the refrigerator shelves below the ready to eat foods and commercially processed raw meats.



Food service staff need to assure that donated food is packaged and labeled individually. The label should clearly state the information shown by Figure 8e.

Preparing Donated Traditional Foods



In the Head Start kitchen, the preparation of donated foods should be kept completely separate from other food preparation by space and time. Food service staff will need to clean and sanitize all equipment and food preparation surfaces prior to and following processing and packaging of donated seafood or game meat to avoid cross-contamination.

The procedure to thaw donated food is the same as other frozen foods. Thaw seafood or game meat in a refrigerated unit or as part of the cooking process. Cook all parts of traditional wild game meat to an internal temperature of 165° F. The cooking temperature for seafood is 145° F. Temperatures may vary for seafood; check with DEC for temperature regulations. Hold cooked portions of game meat at an internal temperature of 140° F prior to service. Avoid cooling and reheating meats. After the traditional food is prepared or processed, surfaces and utensils need to be cleaned and sanitized.



Meal preparation and recipe ideas for traditional foods can come from a variety of sources. Recipes can be provided by community members, found in published Alaska Native Foods cook books, and food service staff can substitute traditional foods for store bought foods in recipes. For example, one pound of cubed moose meat can be used instead of one pound cubed beef. Food production will need to follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) regulations regarding amounts and components of foods served.



Wrap up



To help encourage Head Starts to serve traditional foods more often, this module provided a brief overview of the nutritional benefits of Alaska traditional foods. However, Head Start centers need to determine if they have the capacity to prepare traditional foods before requesting donations. Head Starts were encouraged to hold a meeting to involve parents, community members, hunters, fishermen, and gatherers in the donation of Alaska traditional foods. Lastly, this module reviewed the Department of Conservation (DEC) Food Code regulations surrounding the use of traditional foods.

Head Start centers wishing to serve traditional Alaska Native foods on a regular basis can become successful by encouraging the parents and the community to participate. Donations will become more acceptable and regular if donors and food service staff understand the Alaska DEC Food Code regulations. Serving traditional Native foods in the Head Start classroom will provide good nutrition and address the cultural and ethnic preferences of many of the children.

MODULE EIGHT REFERENCES

- 1 Jensen PG, Nobmann ED. What's in Alaskan Foods, Chart Series, Alaska Area Native Health Service, Anchorage 1994.
- 2 Ruxton CHS, Reed SC, Simpson MJA, Millington KJ. The health benefits of omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids: a review of the evidence. *Journal of Human Nutrition & Dietetics*. 2004; 17: 5 449 - 459
- 3 US Department of Health and Human Services and US Department of Agriculture. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005*. healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines. Accessed October 2006.
- 4 American Heart Association Statement 11/18/2002. New guidelines focus on fish, fish oil, omega-3 fatty acids. americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3006624. Accessed October 2006.



NUTRITION IN YOUR CLASSROOM SELF - ASSESSMENT

This form is designed to assist you in improving the nutrition of your students. Please circle the number that most accurately responds to the statement.

	Disagree	Strongly Agree
A. Classroom & Dining Set-up		
1. Dining area is equipped with child sized furniture.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
2. Containers and scoops are sized for children.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
3. Eating utensils enable children to eat, to serve, and to pass food without difficulty.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
Classroom and Dining Set-up Total:		
B. Introducing New Foods		
Rarely Always		
4. To improve the acceptance of new foods, staff teach a lesson about a new food before serving.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
5. Food taste tests are conducted to promote sensory exploration of foods.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
6. Circle time is used to teach children about food before serving.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
Introducing New Foods Total:		
C. Children Help Prepare Food		
Rarely Always		
7. Children help prepare foods for meals and snacks.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
8. Small groups of children help with food preparation in the kitchen.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
9. Children are properly supervised around hot stoves and sharp knives in addition to following proper sanitation regulations.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
10. Staff teach about numbers, colors, textures, patterns and sequencing when children are helping prepare food.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
Children Help Prepare Food Total:		
D. Supporting Healthy Eating		
Rarely Always		
11. Staff encourage children to participate with the social and educational interactions of the meal or snack, even if they choose not to eat.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
12. Staff encourage children to serve themselves to practice lifting, pouring, scooping, and aiming.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
13. Staff teach children about the nutritional benefits of food during meals.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
14. Meals provide the opportunity for children to become familiar with flavors, smells, textures and a variety of foods.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
15. Staff encourage children to help with meal service by setting the table and cleaning their own dishes.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
16. Children are properly supported by staff to serve themselves reasonable portion sizes and to self regulate food intake.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
17. Staff do not eat or drink foods in front of the children that are not on the daily menu.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
18. Staff avoid negative facial expressions, body language or verbal cues in regard to the food being served.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
19. Staff use positive messages with children about the foods served and the health benefits of the food.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
20. Choosy eaters are sat with adventurous eaters during meals and snacks.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
21. Staff allow children to stop eating even if there is still food left on the plate, when a child says he is full or finished.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
22. Staff help children explore new foods by teaching about flavors, textures, and colors.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
23. Slow eaters are allowed to eat their meal at their own pace.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
24. A staff member or adult volunteer stays with the child until she is done eating.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
25. To allow slower eaters time to eat, activities scheduled after meals do not require group participation and cause the slow eater to rush.	1 2 3 4 5	3 4 5
Supporting Healthy Eating Total:		

NUTRITION IN YOUR CLASSROOM SELF-ASSESSMENT

E. Messages to Parents		Rarely				Always			
		1	2	3	4	5			
26.	Staff assign children reasonable "homework" that promotes healthy eating.	1	2	3	4	5			
27.	Menus and newsletters inform parents about the nutrition education taught in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5			
28.	Newsletters include healthy recipes that emphasize foods provided to Women, Infants and Children (WIC) recipients.	1	2	3	4	5			
29.	Classroom menus are written to emphasize nutrition messages such as "low-fat milk," "whole grain rolls," and "vitamin A-rich sweet potatoes."	1	2	3	4	5			
Messages to Parents Total:									
F. Celebrations		Rarely				Always			
		1	2	3	4	5			
30.	Celebrations offer a variety of activities, games and crafts that children enjoy and shift the celebration away from food.	1	2	3	4	5			
31.	If food is served for celebrations, it is served as part of the regular meal or snack.	1	2	3	4	5			
32.	A policy or procedure regarding food served at celebrations exists.	1	2	3	4	5			
33.	Development and adoption of the celebration policy involved parents, community members, staff and food service staff.	1	2	3	4	5			
Celebrations Total:									
G. Nutrition Education		Rarely				Always			
		1	2	3	4	5			
34.	Classroom walls are decorated with posters of healthy food.	1	2	3	4	5			
35.	The creative play area is stocked with models of healthy foods.	1	2	3	4	5			
36.	Pictures of fruits and vegetables are used to help teach letters and numbers.	1	2	3	4	5			
37.	Food items are used in art projects, such as making flowers or faces from fruit and vegetable pieces.	1	2	3	4	5			
38.	Children's books which relate to and present a positive view of healthy eating are displayed and read.	1	2	3	4	5			
39.	When possible, staff provide opportunities to learn about gardening and growing of fruits and vegetables by having a garden at the center, by participating in a community garden, or by taking a field trip to local garden or farm.	1	2	3	4	5			
40.	Field trips are taken to pick wild foods such as blueberries, fiddleheads, or beach asparagus.	1	2	3	4	5			
Nutrition Education Total:									

Transfer your total from each section into the total column.

	Your Total	Need to Improve!!	Look for ways to Improve	Good Work	Excellent Work. Keep up it up!
A. Classroom & Dining Set-up Total		<9	10-11	12-13	14-15
B. Introducing New Foods Total		<9	10-11	12-13	14-15
C. Children Help Prepare Food Total		<13	14-16	17-18	19-20
D. Supporting Healthy Eating Total		<52	53- 59	60-67	68-75
E. Messages to Parents Total		<13	14-16	17-18	19-20
F. Celebrations Total		<13	14-16	17-18	19-20
G. Nutrition Education Total		<24	25-28	29-31	32-35
Overall Score		<139	140-159	160-179	180-200

STAFF KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Please circle the number that most accurately responds to the following statement.

	Disagree					Strongly Agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1. Children learn about foods through formal education, first-hand experiences, hands-on approaches and observation.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
2. Food preferences and dietary habits are established during the first six years of life.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
3. Meal time provides a great opportunity for staff to talk about food and model healthy eating behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
4. There are developmental and socialization benefits to children when meals and snacks are eaten together with their classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
5. Caregivers and parents are responsible for the what, when and where children are fed.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
6. Children are responsible for how much and whether they choose to eat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
7. Repeated prompts to eat, using food as a reward or punishment, or restricting non-nutritious foods to control a child's food intake may promote a lifetime of overeating or refusals to eat.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
8. Positive role models can have great influence on children eating food and forming healthy eating habits.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
9. A child may need to taste a food up to a dozen times before the food becomes familiar.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
10. Staff should eat the same foods as children to send the message "do as I do."	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
11. Establishment of healthy eating habits is critical to prevent childhood overweight.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
Subtotal										
					Total					

Your Total	Improve Your Outlook!	Look for Ways to Improve Your Outlook!	You're a Positive Thinker!	You Believe in Nutrition First!
	<37	38-43	44-49	50-55

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN YOUR CLASSROOM SELF-ASSESSMENT Please circle the number that best describes physical activity in your classroom.

A. Play Environment		Disagree	Strongly Agree
1.	Fixed play equipment (swings, slides, climbing equipment, overhead ladders) is available at our site	1 2 3 4 5	5
2.	Safety checks on equipment occur once a week	1 2 3 4 5	5
3.	Portable play equipment for gross motor skill development (wheels, toys, balls, tumbling mats) is available at the Center.	1 2 3 4 5	5
4.	When the weather is not suitable for outdoor play, indoor play space is available	1 2 3 4 5	5
5.	Indoor activity and play areas are free from clutter	1 2 3 4 5	5
TOTAL			
Play Environment Total:			
B. Physical Activity		Rarely	Always
6.	Children have 60 minutes of active (free) play time each day	1 2 3 4 5	5
7.	Children have 60 minutes of structured (staff-led) activity each day	1 2 3 4 5	5
8.	Children go outdoors to play 2 or more times each day	1 2 3 4 5	5
9.	Staff do not withhold play time for children who misbehave	1 2 3 4 5	5
TOTAL			
Physical Activity Practices Total:			
C. Supporting Physical Activity		Rarely	Always
10.	During active (free) play time staff join children in active play	1 2 3 4 5	5
11.	Posters, books, and pictures about physical activity are displayed in the center.	1 2 3 4 5	5
12.	Staff lead structured activities that teach physical activity skills, such as "Simon Says," jumping rope, throwing and catching balls	1 2 3 4 5	5
TOTAL			
Supporting Physical Activity Total:			
D. TV Use and Viewing		Rarely	Always
13.	The TV is used for educational purposes	1 2 3 4 5	5
14.	Children are not allowed to watch TV, videos, or play video games	1 2 3 4 5	5
TOTAL			
TV Use and Viewing Total:			
E. Physical Activity Education		Rarely	Always
15.	Staff receive training on physical activity	1 2 3 4 5	5
16.	Children are taught about the benefits of physical activity	1 2 3 4 5	5
17.	Head Start newsletters inform parents about physical activity in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5	5
18.	Physical activity education is included in parent trainings	1 2 3 4 5	5
TOTAL			
Physical Activity Education Total:			
Your Total		Look for Ways to Improve	Good Work
A. Play Environment Total		16-18	19-21
B. Physical Activity Practices Total		14-16	17-18
C. Supporting Physical Activity Total		10-11	12-13
D. TV Use and Viewing Total		5-6	7-8
E. Physical Activity Education Total		14-16	17-18
TOTAL		70-67	72-78
		Excellent Work: Keep up it up!	22-25
			19-20
			14-15
			9-10
			19-20
			83-90

Adapted from: Ammerman, AS, Benjamin, SE, Sommers, JS, Ward, DS. 2004. The Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care environmental self-assessment instrument. Division of Public Health, NC DHHS, Raleigh, NC, and the Center for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention, UNC-Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC.: (Physical Activity and Nutrition for Alaska's Head Start Kids: Module 3 Activity)

LET'S PLAY PARACHUTE SOUP!

Activity for Kids in Preschool to Grade 2

What You'll Need to Get Started

- Parachute or Large Bedsheet
- Foam alphabet letters
- Foam vegetables
- Rubber chicken(s)

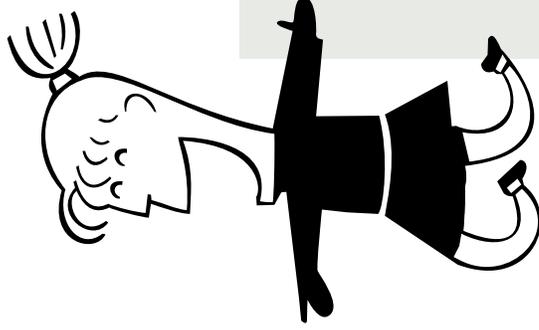
Let's Play!

Each student gets one letter of the alphabet and one vegetable. Students are positioned around the outside edge of the parachute and begin walking with the parachute (teacher indicates clockwise or counterclockwise). The teacher calls out a letter or vegetable—if the student has it, they toss it into the soup bowl (parachute).

The teacher then tells the students that there is something else to add to the soup and tosses a rubber chicken (more than one if you have them). When the teacher says "stir"

- everyone skips in the predetermined direction.

When the teacher says "simmer" - students will walk in the predetermined direction while making SMALL, SOFT ripples and waves. When the teacher says "boil" - students make BIG ripples and waves. When the teacher says "eat" - students lift the parachute up and bring it down quickly (all the letters fly up in the air and fall down on the students).



Mix it Up!

- Vary movements used when moving around outside of the parachute.
- Substitute the chicken with animals in your area.

LET'S PLAY GHOSTBUSTERS!

For Kids in Preschool to Grade 2

Get your kids moving!

Practice throwing and catching by developing a variety of tricks with the scarves. Students will create their own "ghostbuster trick" and teach it to another student.

After providing the above examples ask children to create their own "ghost trick." Ghostly music playing in the background adds to the activity. As students develop their own tricks, ask them to share the variety of "ghost tricks."

What You'll Need to Get Started

- One scarf for every student.

Let's Play!

Students sit in a circle while you introduce your friend for the day-- "ghost buddy." Demonstrate various tricks and have student do them with you:

- **"Ghost, Ghost fly up high ... BOOOO...catch"**
(Throw scarf into air and catch).
- **"Ghost, Ghost fly to my other hand...catch"**
(Throw with one hand, catch with the other).
- **"Ghost, Ghost fly, twirl...catch"**
(Throw scarf into air, turn around and catch).
- **"Ghost, Ghost, fly, touch my head...catch."**

If children are having trouble throwing the scarf into the air, ask that they hold one corner of the scarf and hold the scarf down low by their knees, raise their hand quickly overhead and release the scarf.

Assessment Ideas:

- A checklist may be helpful to assist in answering the following questions.
- Are children able to track the scarf?
- Are they able to create their own trick?
- Are they able to demonstrate their trick to a friend?

Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:

- Scarves are excellent to use for children with disabilities as they are easily caught by children of all skill levels.
- Since children are creating their own trick they can be successful in whatever creation they come up with.

LET'S MAKE

BEAN SOUP!

What You'll Need to Get Started

- A variety of dried beans and peas such as black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, mature lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, soy beans, split peas, white beans, etc. (Each participant should take home 3 cups of dried beans which is equivalent to one 20 ounce bag.)
- Powdered chicken and/or beef broth
- Chili powder
- Powdered garlic
- 1 gallon zip lock bags (one for each participant)
- Snack or sandwich sized zip lock bags (one for each participant)
- 4-6 serving scoops (use a different scoop for each variety of dried bean and not cross contaminate)
- Teaspoon and tablespoon for powdered broth
- Sticker/labels for zip lock bags
- Bean recipe for each participant



“Mom, there’s a legume in my soup.”

Discuss the nutritional benefits of dried beans. Beans are rich in nutrients, high in fiber, inexpensive, versatile, and a great source of protein. Dried beans are also offered as a choice in many of the WIC food packages. Beans provide a great low fat, high fiber, delicious nutritious meal when made into soups, salads, casseroles, or when served as a side dish.

Dry beans and peas fall into both the MyPyramid Vegetables food group and the Meat and Beans food groups. Generally, individuals who regularly eat meat, poultry, and fish would consider dry beans and peas as a vegetable. Individuals who seldom eat meat, poultry, or fish (vegetarians) would count some of the dry beans and peas they eat as a meat.

Have each participant make their own bean soup to take home by:

- Filling the large zip lock bag with a scoop of each variety of bean (for a total of 3 cups)
- Filling a small zip lock with 2 tablespoons of powdered chicken or beef broth, 1 tsp chili powder, and 1-2 teaspoons garlic powder.
- Taking a Vegetable Bean Soup recipe

Vegetable Bean Soup Recipe

- 3 cups mixed beans
- 2 TBSP powdered chicken or beef broth mixed with powdered chili and garlic.
- 1 medium sized onion, chopped
- 1 15 oz can stewed to diced tomatoes
- 1 bag frozen mixed vegetables

Instructions

1. Soaking: Place 3 cups beans in a large pot, cover with 2 quarts water. Allow beans to soak overnight or at least 8 hours.
2. After soaking, drain water, and add 2 quarts of water.
3. Bring beans to boil, reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 2½ hours.
4. When beans are soft, add onions, tomatoes, and 2 TBSP powdered chicken or beef broth. Simmer for 10- 15 more minutes.
5. Add bag of Frozen Mix Vegetables, simmer for 5 more minutes and serve.
6. Makes about 12 one cup servings of Bean Soup.

Quickcook Method

1. Place 3 cups rinsed beans in a pot with 3 quarts water.
2. Bring to a rapid boil. Reduce heat, cover and continue boiling for 60-70 minutes. Stir occasionally to prevent the food from sticking to the pan.
3. When the beans are soft, add onions, tomatoes, and 2 TBSP powdered chicken or beef broth. Simmer for 10- 15 more minutes.
4. Add bag of frozen mixed vegetables, simmer for 5 more minutes and serve. Makes about 12 one cup servings of Bean Soup.

Nutrition

IN THE NEWS

increase fruit AND vegetables!

Eat a fruit or vegetable with every meal and snack.
Select a variety of colorful fruits and veggies.
Try fresh, frozen, canned or dried

soda CONSUMPTION HAS BEEN LINKED TO:

Reduced consumption of milk, fruits and vegetables
Lower bone density in teenage girls
Higher total calorie intake
Increased tooth decay

There's **19 sugar cubes** in that 20 oz. **soda!**

HEALTHY **drink** alternatives

WHY ARE FRUITS AND VEGETABLES **good for** **your kid?**

Provide important vitamins and minerals
for growth and development.

May reduce the risk of cancer and other chronic diseases.

HEALTHY **snacks**

Lowfat yogurt with fresh or canned fruit
Celery, peanut butter and raisins
Raw vegetables and ranch dressing
Trail mix with both dried fruit and nuts
Apple slices with cheese
Fruit smoothies

100% juice limited to 4-6 ounce per day
Water with a dash of fruit juice
Water with a squirt of lemon
Water

COOKING **corner**

Fruit Smoothies

1 Banana
1-2 cups unsweetened frozen berries
(strawberries, blueberries, and/or blackberries)
1 cup low fat vanilla yogurt or low fat milk, or soft tofu
1 cup 100% orange juice

Place all ingredients in a blender, cover tightly. Blend until smooth. If mixture is too thick, add 1/2 cup cold water and blend again. Serve cold. Prep time: 5 minutes

THE MEAL PLANNING PARENT
WHERE DO I FIND IT IN MY GROCERY STORE?

	PRODUCE	CANNED GOODS	FREEZER AISLE	SALAD BAR	BREADS	PASTA AND RICE	BREAKFAST CEREALS	DAIRY	REFRIGERATED	MEAT AND POULTRY	SEAFOOD	Your Best Choice
Fruit	PRODUCE	CANNED GOODS	FREEZER AISLE	SALAD BAR								Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen and canned fruit.
Vegetables	PRODUCE	CANNED GOODS	FREEZER AISLE	SALAD BAR								Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen and canned vegetables. Choose dried beans and peas.
Whole Grains					BREADS	PASTA AND RICE AISLE	BREAKFAST CEREALS					Select products made with whole grains most of the time.
Milk, yogurt, cheese								DAIRY	REFRIGERATED			Choose nonfat and low fat products
Meat, beans, fish, poultry, eggs, soy, and nuts		CANNED GOODS	FREEZER AISLE			PASTA AND RICE AISLE		DAIRY	REFRIGERATED	MEAT AND POULTRY	SEAFOOD	Choose lean meats, skinless poultry, seafood, dried beans and nuts



Plan Meals with MyPyramid

Make a Grocery List and Stick to it!

Plan ahead to save time and money
Buy enough food to last until the next trip. Have your kids help make the grocery list. Kids are more willing to try new foods when they help.

Read Nutrition Facts Labels

- Keep these Low:
- Saturated Fat
 - Trans Fat
 - Added Sugar

COOKING CORNER

Quick Pasta and Egg Salad

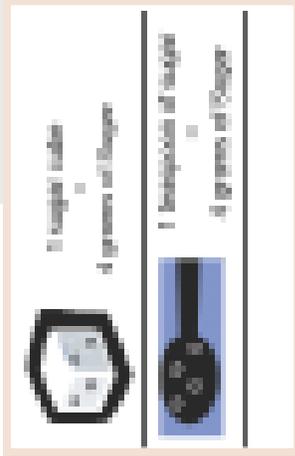
- 1 (12 oz) package spiral shaped noodles (whole grain if available)
- 1 (16 oz) package of mixed frozen vegetables (such as broccoli, cauliflower, and carrots)
- 8 hardboiled eggs, chopped
- 1 can kidney beans
- 3/4 cup low fat Italian dressing

Thaw vegetables and drain liquid (do not cook). Cook noodles in boiling water according to package directions. Drain noodles.
In a large bowl, mix together cooked noodles, thawed vegetables, eggs, beans and salad dressing. Serve chilled.

A CLOSER LOOK AT SUGAR AN ACTIVITY FOR PARENTS

What You'll Need to Get Started

- Several food and beverage packaging with Nutrition Facts and ingredient lists.
- Box of Sugar Cubes



How many sugar cubes in one serving?

Let's Play!

Staff will show how the grams of sugar listed on the Nutrition Facts can be used to calculate the number of sugar cubes in a serving. Four grams of sugar is equal to one sugar cube (or one teaspoon). The ingredient list can also be used to find sugar, see the list of sneaky names for sugar.

Sneaky Names for Sugar

High fructose corn syrup	Corn sweetener	Malt syrup	Glucose
Corn syrup	Lactose	Fructose	Sucrose
Brown sugar	Maltose	Molasses	Honey
Invert sugar	Dextrose	Fruit juice concentrates	Syrup

Would you eat only one serving?

How many sugar cubes in two servings?

Look at the ingredient list. What ingredient is providing the sugar?

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size

Servings per container

Calories **Calories from Fat**

% Daily Value*

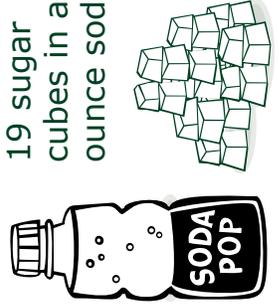
Total Carbohydrate g

Sugars g

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Ask participants to select a food or beverage container and look at the Nutrition Facts and the ingredient list. Ask the participants to fill in the Nutrition Facts, complete the following questions, stack the sugar cubes next to the food package, and be prepared to share with the group.

19 sugar cubes in a 20 ounce soda!



LET'S BE ACTIVE AT HOME

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that all children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week to maintain good health. Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by muscles that burns energy. So...any kind of moving counts as physical activity!

Physical activity doesn't just mean exercises like jogging or push-ups....in reality, many things that kids con-

sider "having fun" are physical activities - swimming, playing tag, or riding a bike, for instance.

All children need both planned activity and free play. The National Association of Sports and Physical Education (NASPE) recommend that preschool children get at least one hour of structured AND unstructured physical activity each day.

In addition, children should not remain inactive for more than

an hour at a time. The only time kids should be not moving for more than an hour straight is when they are sleeping!

Try to be active as a family each day. Walk the dog together after dinner or go on a family bike ride to a local park or gym instead of watching T.V. You could assign each family member one night per week to be the "Coach of the Day" whose job is to organize or invent a game that evening!

Here are some outdoor game ideas for your "Coach of the Day":

Capture the Flag	Kick the Can	Hide and Seek
500 fly-up	Hopscotch	Red Light, Green Light
Tag	Jump Rope	
Red Rover	Marco Polo	

Arm Wrestling

Leg Wrestling

Thumb Wrestling

Dancing

Duck, Duck, Goose

Charades

Simon Says

Follow the Leader

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Breakfast	TOAST TANGERINES BOILED EGG MILK	HOT CEREAL DRIED FRUIT MILK	CHEESY TOAST ORANGE MILK	PILOT BREAD PEANUT BUTTER APPLE MILK	SCRAMBLED EGGS HASH BROWNS TOAST MILK
Snack	QUACKUMS MILK	STRING CHEESE APPLE	CEREAL MILK	BOILED EGGS ORANGE	FRUIT BREAD MILK
Lunch	TUNA SALAD ON SALTINES VEGETABLE SOUP FRUIT MILK	SALMON PATTIES RICE GREEN BEANS CARROT STIX MILK	HAM SWEET POTATOES PEAS PILOT BREAD MILK	MEAT LOAF POTATOES CAULIFLOWER/ BROCCOLI PILOT BREAD MILK	ROAST BEEF AND GRAVY OVER RICE STEAMED CARROTS APPLE MILK

Instructions: Re-write the menu above, emphasizing the health benefits of each food as shown in the example below.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Breakfast	Whole Grain TOAST <i>Vitamin C Rich</i> TANGERINES BOILED EGG lowfat MILK				
Snack					
Lunch					

SERVING TRADITIONAL FOODS AT HEAD START CENTERS

For centuries, the Alaska Native people have lived off the land by hunting and gathering. These activities provide good nutrition, exercise, affordable food, and preserve cultural heritage. Traditional foods are natural, do not contain additives or preservatives, and are a food source of many minerals and vitamins. For these reasons, it makes sense that Alaska Native communities want to serve traditional foods at the local Head Start.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and the Department of Education and Early Development allow the use of traditional foods in Head Start when DEC Alaska Food Code is followed. The Code eliminates the option of serving some traditional foods that pose too great a food safety risk. However, there are many traditional foods Head Starts can serve. Food service staff will need to become familiar with the DEC Alaska Food Code regulations before using any traditional foods or local foods.

Head Starts interested in serving traditional foods to their children will need to work with their parents, food service staff, local fisherman, hunters, and gathers to achieve regular service of traditional foods.

A community meeting about the donation of traditional foods to the Head Start will increase interest and knowledge about donating. The meeting should include information on what foods can and cannot be donated. Guidance should be clear about the harvest of the animal including sanitation and butchering. Expectation regarding the transportation, refrigeration, and sanitation of the donation should be clear. Donation will become more regular and more useful, if the hunters, fisherman, and gathers are clear on the expectations for donated foods.

Requirements for Traditional Foods in Institutions and Non-Profit Programs

Traditional wild game meat, seafood, plants, and other food may be donated to some institutions and non-profit programs. Institutions and non-profit programs for this purpose are defined as residential child care facilities licensed by Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, school lunch programs and senior meal programs.

The following is a description of the requirements that should be followed when receiving and using traditional wild game meat.

Receiving

Inspect the food when it is received to assure that is whole, gutted, gilled, and in quarters or roasts.

Make a reasonable determination that the animal was not diseased; that it was butchered, dressed and transported in a way to prevent contamination; that no undesirable spoilage or deterioration occurred, and that the food does not pose a significant health hazard or potential for human illness.

Preparation and Processing

Further preparation or processing of traditional food must be done at a different time than the processing of other food in the establishment or done in a different space to prevent cross-contamination.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

After the traditional food is prepared or processed, surfaces and utensils used must be cleaned and sanitized.

Storage

All donated food is labeled with the name of the food and stored separately from other foods either in a separate refrigeration unit or a separate compartment.

Prohibited Foods

Because of the significant health hazards and the potential for human illness, food establishments are prohibited from serving the following foods:

The meat from fox, polar bear, bear, and walrus

Seal oil and whale oil, with or without meat

Fermented game meat, such as beaver tail, whale or seal flipper, and muktuk

Fermented seafood products, such as salmon eggs or fish

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Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Division, Public Health
Section, Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

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This publication is released by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and produced at a cost of \$9.96 per copy. It was written by the Alaska Division of Public Health, Section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion for the Alaska Division of Education and Early Development, Head State Collaboration Office. Alaska Statute 44.99.210