



PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING AND GET CHILDREN MOVING:

Yes, PLEASE!



Contact us at:

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Provide healthy meals and snacks

As a start, use these guidelines from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP):

- Offer fruits, vegetables, and foods rich in whole grains.
- Limit sugary foods and do not serve sugary drinks, such as sodas, fruit drinks, and flavored waters.
- Serve unflavored milk only. Serve 1% or skim milk to children ages 2 years and older, and whole milk to 1-year-olds.
- Have water available and offer it throughout the day.
- Do not use deep-fat frying and try to limit purchased pre-fried foods.

** All licensed child care centers and group homes that serve food must comply with these guidelines (CT licensing regulations). These guidelines will help children in family day care homes, too!

Let mealtime be a time of learning

Mealtime is a great time for learning! Best practices in child feeding are made to support healthy eating and help develop motor and social skills. Try this:

- Family style dining where children self-serve food from a large shared bowl.
- Staff sitting and eating with children. If children see you enjoying the foods on the table, and having fun trying a new food, they will too.
- Responsive feeding - help children learn how to stop eating when they feel full; no "clean your plate" club. Talk about cues for hunger and fullness.
- Offer new foods often and praise children for trying them - but never bribe.



Expand children's hands-on fun with healthy foods

Here are a few ideas:

- Involve children in making new, healthy foods that you will enjoy as a group.
- If you can, have children take part in growing fruits and vegetables.
- If you have toy foods, try to include healthy foods and avoid unhealthy branded foods (e.g., toy food from fast food restaurants).
- Ask children to share with their families what they have learned.



Active play every day!

Childhood is a major time for building movement skills and learning healthy habits for life. Children ages birth to 6 years should have daily:

- Two to three times of active play outdoors, when the weather permits.
- At least two activities or games, led by you, that get them moving, indoor or outdoor.
- Activities that improve gross motor skills. Choose play that is right for the child's age and ability.



Scratch screen time

Screen time is watching TV or videos, video games, using a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

Too much screen time for children is linked to poor sleep, learning delays, and higher body weight.

Pediatricians recommend:

- No screen time for children under 18 months, except for the use of live video chat that engages the child (e.g., Skype, FaceTime with family or friends).
- For children 18–24 months, you may give limited screen time of only high quality educational shows (such as Sesame Street or PBS). Watch them with children.
- For children ages 2-5 years, screen time is no more than 1 hour of high quality shows per day. You should continue to watch with children and talk about the program to help them see how it applies to them.
- Meal time should be screen free.

Encourage children to move!

Experts say that child care programs should make time for physical activity all through the day to help children build healthy habits. This includes the following:

- Infants should have supervised tummy time every day when they are awake. Start with short periods (3-5 minutes) at a time, add more time if the infant likes it.
- Toddlers need active play for 60-90 minutes or more in an 8-hour day.
- Preschoolers need 120 minutes or more in an 8-hour day. Both age groups need moderate to high-level activity (like running), too. This physical activity can be all at once, or broken up through the day.

Train Online!

Did you know you can learn more about developing healthy choices in child care online? Some of these courses may be used for professional development or licensing credits, too. Here is a list of websites offering quality training courses:

CT Office of Early Childhood (OEC) Online Registry: www.ccacregistry.org

Account holders with confirmed employment in an early care and education program can directly access an entire online training library **free** of charge directly via your account. Completions are easy to track - they are automatically listed in your OEC Registry account.

Some training is available in English and Spanish!

Here is a sample of related courses offered through the OEC Registry:

- Food Allergies in the Early Care Setting (1 hour)
- Preventing Early Childhood Obesity (1 hour)
- The USDA's CACFP Nutrition Standards: Implications for licensed CT Child Care Centers and Group Homes (1 hour)

Go-NAPSACC: <https://gonapsacc.org/>: See the enclosed flyer.

The Institute of Child Nutrition: <http://theicn.org>

These **free** courses cover all nutrition topics and the basics of CACFP. They may count towards professional development, check with your credentialing body.

Here is a sample of related courses on the ICN website:

- CACFP Child and Adult Meal Pattern Requirements (4 hours)
- CACFP Infant Meal Pattern Requirements (4 hours)
- CACFP Optional Best Practices (1 hour)

Want to learn more about helping children in your care make healthy choices? Contact us to learn more about the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

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