

USE YOUR SENSES



WHOLE
GRAINS

MAKE WISE
CHOICES

PROTEIN POWER

IS IT A
GO
OR A
WHOA?

A BEST PRACTICE GUIDE TO
**HEALTHY
EATING**
FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD

FRUITS

RECIPES



GET TO
KNOW
YOUR

VEGGIES

WHAT'S
ON MY
PLATE?

FAMILY-STYLE DINING

HYDRATE WITH WATER

BEVERAGES

DAIRY-LICIOUS



TOUCH IT
SMELL IT



TASTE IT
TALK ABOUT IT



About This Guide

This guide is a companion to North Dakota's Early Learning Guidelines. Parents, families, and early care and education (ECE) providers play a key role in supporting the unique growth of each child.

This guide was created to provide practical ideas for including physical activity and offering healthy foods to children ages 2 to 5 years old. Information is based on current science, research, and national best practices.

What are Early Learning Guidelines?

North Dakota's Early Learning Guidelines reflect what typically developing children need to know, understand, and do by the time they reach kindergarten.

What is the Role of Active Play and Healthy Eating in Early Childhood?

Purposeful active play supports a child's gross motor development, a significant part of the Early Learning Guidelines. A child's eating habits are also related to many areas of development, including social and emotional, cognitive, language/communication, and health/physical development.

A Useful Resource for All

Early childhood education providers, parents, and families can use this guide to:

- Incorporate physical activity into daily routines
- Use active play to support children's gross motor development
- Learn creative and positive ways to offer foods to children
- Consider adopting specific written physical activity and nutrition policies

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“After teaching children about MyPlate, they are more aware of what foods do for their bodies and how it makes them feel.”



Healthy Eating Habits

Research shows that early food experiences form the foundation of lifelong eating habits that help children grow up to a healthy weight. It is important to form these habits early. Early Care and Education (ECE) environments are the perfect place to teach, support, and foster healthy eating behaviors.

Although the North Dakota Early Learning Guidelines do not have a domain specific to nutrition, healthy eating themes are present throughout child development, including Social and Emotional, Language, and Physical Development. This section will look at specific healthy eating habits and how they relate to child development.

Choose MyPlate Activity

ACTIVITY MATERIALS:

- Choose MyPlate image (Download a free image at www.choosemyplate.gov)
- Small pictures of different foods for each Choose MyPlate group (Visit www.choosemyplate.gov to view foods in each category)

ACTIVITY PLAN:

1. Show children the Choose MyPlate image and talk with them about what they see. Ask children to repeat the words “MyPlate” out loud with you.
2. Point out the different food groups and the colors of each group. Encourage children to repeat the color and name of each group.
3. Explain one benefit of each food group and demonstrate an action for each. Children remember what they’ve learned when movements are combined with lessons, so encourage the children to repeat the action several times with you.
 - **Dairy (blue):** Builds strong, tall bones (reach up high and stand on tip toes)
 - **Protein (purple):** Builds strong muscles (flex arms)
 - **Grains (orange):** Gives energy to play (run in place)
 - **Fruits (red):** Helps you to feel full (rub belly and say “yummmm”)
 - **Vegetables (green):** Helps your eyes to see and your ears to hear (hold hand over eyes, and then cup hands over ears)
4. If you have pictures of foods, discuss 3 to 4 foods in each food group using pictures. Ask children to help you match each picture to the correct food group. Focus on how foods help bodies to grow more than the accuracy of foods in each group.





Set the Stage for Success

Your commitment to healthy eating in your early childhood program will be more successful if you take these steps.

Put it in Writing

Written nutrition policies communicate how important healthy foods and mealtime environments are in your program. Reference these policies in your parent handbook, contract, staff handbook, and newsletters to:

- Provide clear guidelines for healthy eating in your program
- Educate families and staff on the importance of health eating

Information to include in your written policies:

- Your participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), if applicable
- Quality of food and beverages provided
- Healthy mealtime environments (example: family style meals)
- How adults should model healthy eating
- Nutrition education provided to children

Policy Tips

Watch for policy tips and examples throughout this guide.

Teach Healthy Eating Throughout the Day



Play with Food

Stock the children's play kitchen with fruit and vegetable toy sets to add consistency to your nutrition education.

Promoting healthy eating comes naturally at mealtime, especially when serving family style meals. You can model healthy eating at other times as well - within lesson plans, through stories, and during playtime - to teach the following:

- Basic nutritional benefits of healthy foods
- How to make healthy food choices
- Introduction of foods
- Food tasting experiences
- The taste, smell, and texture of foods
- Language related to food and eating

Keep in mind that new food acceptance can take 8 to 15 offerings, so don't give up on a food too soon.



Get Children Involved

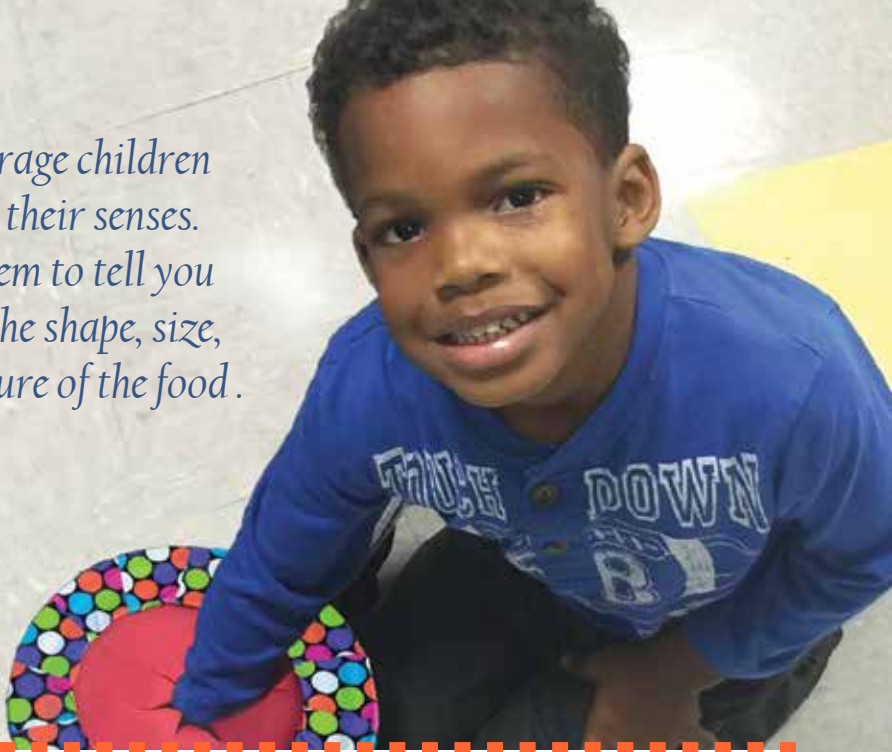
Cooking with children adds to their foundation of healthy eating habits, helps them learn basic math skills, language skills, and builds self-confidence. Things to keep in mind when cooking with children:

- Include varying ages and abilities to participate in food preparation.
- Assign tasks appropriate for a child's age and skill level.
- Adjust tasks to accommodate different abilities.
- Have everyone wash their hands with soap and warm water before starting a food preparation or tasting activity.
- Keep safety in mind.

COOKING ACTIVITIES by AGE	2 YEARS	3 YEARS	4 YEARS	5 YEARS
Wipe tables	X	X	X	X
Hand items to adult to put away	X	X	X	X
Place things in trash	X	X	X	X
Tear lettuce or greens	X	X	X	X
Snap green beans	X	X	X	X
Add ingredients		X	X	X
Scoop and stir		X	X	X
Squeeze citrus fruits		X	X	X
Knead and shape dough		X	X	X
Help assemble a pizza		X	X	X
Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas			X	X
Set the table			X	X
Crack eggs			X	X
Help measure dry ingredients			X	X
Help make sandwiches and tossed salads			X	X
Measure liquids				X
Cut soft fruits with a dull knife				X
Use an egg beater				X

Source: ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers-picky-eating "Kitchen Helper Activities."
Available from www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers-picky-eating

Encourage children to use their senses. Ask them to tell you about the shape, size, and texture of the food.



Make a Mystery Bucket

ACTIVITY MATERIALS:

- Large plastic container with lid (ie: large, clean ice cream tub)
- Decorative duct tape
- Small sheet of felt or fun foam (from arts and crafts section)
- Hot glue gun

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Cut a large hole in the top of the lid (about 6" across).
2. Decorate lid and container with duct tape.
3. Cut an "X" in the felt forming an opening large enough to easily slip a preschooler's hand through, but not so big that you can see inside.
4. Cut and glue the felt to the underside of the lid.
5. Place lid on top of container.

HOW TO USE IT: Without children looking, place food inside of mystery bucket. Allow each child to reach and feel the food inside without looking. Encourage children to describe how it feels. Ask children to guess the food after every child has had a turn.

VARIATION: Use a large opaque bag instead of a bucket.





Encourage Tasting

After children help make a recipe, it is ideal if they also taste the food. Some children will naturally be hesitant to taste foods. Follow the tips below to make sure that all children have a positive experience.

Taste testing tips for children:

- Encourage sensory exploration of a new food before tasting.
- Encourage children to tell you what the food tastes like. Avoid saying “I like it” or “I don’t like it” without saying what it tastes like first.
- Never force a child to taste a new food if they are reluctant.
- Talk with children about words that shouldn’t be said while tasting foods. For example, you may ask that children don’t say words like “ewww,” “gross,” or “yucky.” Encourage them to describe why they think it’s “yucky” instead.



DID YOU KNOW

When children try new foods, they increase their knowledge of the world around them and tend to choose a more varied, balanced diet in later life.

Be a Healthy-Eating Role Model

Children watch and learn from the adults around them. Follow these tips to set a good example of healthy eating:

- Serve meals family style and eat with children.
- Try new foods with the children.
- Eat (and enjoy) healthy foods when in front of children.
- Do not consume unhealthy foods in front of the children.
- Be positive and encouraging when commenting about eating and body image.

Guard Against Food Choking Hazards

Do not serve the following food to children under 4 years old, unless it is cut into small pieces.

- Raw vegetables
- Small, round foods: cherry or grape tomatoes, whole olives, grapes, cherries
- Chunks of foods, whole or sliced in rounds: hot dogs, sausages, cheese cubes

To reduce the risk of choking, cut toddlers’ foods into pieces **1/2” or SMALLER**. Small round foods, such as grapes, cherries, or grape tomatoes should be **CUT AND QUARTERED**.



Veggie Dip

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Measuring cups, mixing bowl

INGREDIENT LIST:

- 3 different colors of bell peppers (cut into very thin strips)
- 1 cup plain, non-fat yogurt
- 1 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 0.4 oz packet ranch dressing mix

HOW TO MAKE IT: Mix all ingredients together, allowing children to help add each ingredient. Have children try the dips with different colored bell peppers and ask them to tell you how it tastes.

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: How does it taste? Is it crunchy? Which color is the crunchiest? Which color is your favorite? Take a vote to see which color is the most popular.





Fruits & Vegetables

GUIDELINES FOR FRUITS & VEGETABLES

Serve these often:

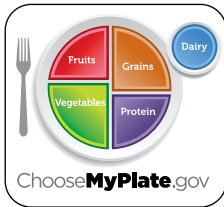
- A colorful variety of fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables. (ie: GREEN: broccoli, spinach, kiwifruit, green peas, romaine lettuce, bok choy, kale, RED: beets, tomatoes, cherries, strawberries, watermelon, ORANGE: butternut squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, oranges, apricots, cantaloupe)
- Canned fruits in natural juice
- Low sodium or no-salt added canned vegetables

Limit these:

- Canned fruits in light or heavy syrup
- Fried or pre-fried vegetables/meats (ie: Food that have been fried and then frozen before packaging even if prepared by microwave or oven before eating. EXAMPLES: frozen and breaded potato or meat products, french fries, tator tots, hashbrowns, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, or corn dogs etc.)

Sources: *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition.* Go NAP SACC: *Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition.* Let's Move! *Child Care Checklist Quiz.*

Vary Your Veggies



- Set up My Plate activity as described on page 3.
- Explain that you are talking about the VEGETABLE group today, repeating how vegetables help our bodies to grow and do the motion again (hands over eyes and hand over ears).
- Have children help you place pictures of vegetables (broccoli, corn, carrots, beets, green beans, bell peppers) in the vegetable group.
- Set up Mystery Bucket as described on page 6, using a green pepper. Have children take turns reaching inside the bucket without looking and describe what they feel. After all have had a turn, have the children guess what is inside.
- Make Veggie Dip (page 8). Taste and talk about it with children.



Toss the Salad Game

MATERIALS: Parachute, toy vegetables

HOW TO PLAY: Have children move parachute when you say “toss the salad,” trying to keep all veggies in the parachute. Talk with children about the different colors of vegetables in the parachute.





Peanut Butter Banana Wraps

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Plastic knives

INGREDIENT LIST:

- 3 bananas (1 for every 4 children)
- Peanut butter
- 100% whole wheat tortillas (1 for every 2 children)

HOW TO MAKE IT: Demonstrate how to spread desired amount of peanut butter on tortilla (thin amount for children to avoid choking hazard).

Place piece of banana in tortilla and roll. Let each child make their own.

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: Have children take a bite of the wrap they just made. Ask them to tell you how it tastes. What do you taste? Is it smooth, mushy, or crunchy? Is it sweet or salty?





Grains & Breads

GUIDELINES FOR GRAINS & BREADS

Serve these often:

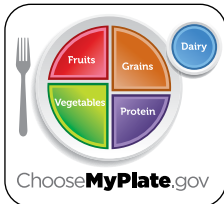
- Whole grain-rich foods.(ie: oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, or whole wheat tortillas)
- Grains that DO NOT have sugar listed as the first, second, or third ingredient

Limit these:

- Refined grains (ie: white bread, white pasta, and white rice)
- Highly sweetened grains/baked goods such as cinnamon rolls, muffins, donuts, cookies, cupcakes, and toaster pastries

Sources: Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition. Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition. Let's Move! Child Care Checklist Quiz.

I Want the “Whole” Grain



- Set up My Plate activity as described on page 3.
- Explain that you are talking about the GRAINS group today, repeating how it helps our bodies to grow and do the motion again (running in place).
- Have children help you place pictures of whole grain foods (whole wheat bread, oatmeal, brown rice) and other grains (white bread, white rice, crackers) in the grains group.
- Point out pictures of the whole grains and ask children to tell you what differences they see between whole grains and other grains.
- Set up Mystery Bucket as described on page 6, using a whole wheat tortilla. Have children take turns reaching inside the bucket without looking and describe what they feel. After all have had a turn, have the children guess what is inside.
- Make Peanut Butter Banana Wraps (page 10). Taste and talk about it with children.



Jump the River

Play “Jump the River”, see page 26 for details. Tell children that this game uses a lot of energy and that we can get the energy we need to play games like this by eating whole grain foods.





Cut the Sodium

Use reduced sodium versions, or drain and rinse canned beans to reduce sodium content by 40%.



Black Bean and Corn Salsa

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Measuring cups, mixing bowl

INGREDIENT LIST:

- 1 can black beans
- 1 ½ cup fresh or canned corn
- 2 cups mild chunky salsa
- Wheat crackers or tortilla chips

HOW TO MAKE IT: Mix all ingredients together (allowing children to help add each ingredient).

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: Use a cracker to take a taste and have children tell you about it. Is it sweet or salty? Is it crunchy or squishy?

Source: FN1584, "Let's Preserve Salsa II," available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn1584.pdf





Meats & Meat Alternates

GUIDELINES FOR MEATS & MEAT ALTERNATES

Serve these often:

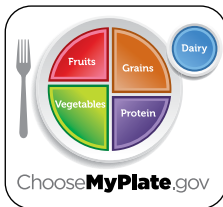
- Lean meats (*ie: 90% lean ground beef, boneless chicken breast, pork loin, or ham*)
- Fish or other seafood
- Beans and peas
- Nut or seed butters - spread thinly
- Low-fat yogurt/cheese (credited as a meat alternate in CACFP)

Limit these:

- High-fat ground beef (75%-85% lean)
- High-fat processed meats (*ie: bacon, sausage, bologna, and hot dogs*)
- Fried or pre-fried breaded meats (*ie: chicken nuggets, fish sticks, chicken patties, and corn dogs*)
- Full-fat yogurt
- Highly processed cheese foods

Sources: *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition. Go NAP SACC: Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition. Let's Move! Child Care Checklist Quiz.*

Protein Power-Up



- Set up My Plate activity as described on page 3.
- Explain that you will be talking about the PROTEIN group today, repeating how it helps our bodies to grow and do the motion again (flex arm/muscles).
- Have children help you place pictures of protein foods (chicken, beef, pork, beans, nuts) in the protein group.

Crab Walk at the Beach

Remind children that proteins help our muscles grow. Tell them, “to show off our strong muscles we are going to play ‘Crab Walk at the Beach’” (see page 27 for details).



Make Corn & Bean Salsa (page 12). Taste and talk about it with children.

Write Healthy Eating into Your Policies

- Our program follows Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) standards.
- We strive to serve:
 - Whole grain foods
 - Whole fruits more than fruit juice
 - A variety of dark green, orange, and red fruits/vegetables
 - Lean protein foods
 - Low-fat (1%) or skim milk to children over the age of 2 years.



Stay Hydrated

Keep drinking water available and visible to children throughout the day. Limit juice to 4-6 ounces per day.



DID YOU KNOW

Many sweet, fruit-flavored drinks are marketed specifically to children and can have deceptive packaging. If you choose to offer juice, look for the words “100% Juice.” Phrases that do NOT mean 100% juice include: Juice Cocktail, Juice Drink, Juice Beverage, or 100% Daily Value Vitamin C.



Beverages

GUIDELINES FOR BEVERAGES

Serve these often:

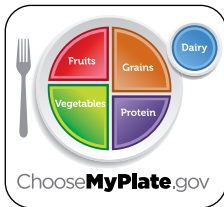
- Whole milk for children ages 12-23 months
- 1% or fat-free milk for children ages 2 years and older
- Water (readily available and visible to children)
- 100% fruit juice, no more than one, 4-6 ounce serving per day

Limit these:

- Sugar-sweetened beverages, including fruit-flavored drinks that do NOT contain 100% juice, soda, sports drinks, and sweetened tea
- More than 4-6 ounces of 100% juice per day

Sources: *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs, 3rd Edition.* Go NAP SACC: *Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care, 2nd Edition.* Let's Move! *Child Care Checklist Quiz.*

Dairy-Licious



- Set up My Plate activity as described on page 3.
- Explain that you will be talking about DAIRY group, repeating how it helps our bodies to grow and do the motion again (reach up high and stand on toes).
- Have children help you place pictures of dairy foods (milk, cheese, yogurt, and cottage cheese) on the chart and explain that dairy foods help bones grow strong.

NOTE: Dairy foods are also meat alternates under CACFP standards.

Strawberry Parfait

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Spoons, bowls, or clear cups for parfaits

INGREDIENT LIST:

- Diced strawberries (or any other diced fruit)
- Vanilla yogurt, non-fat or low-fat
- Crunchy cereal

HOW TO MAKE IT: Place desired amount of yogurt in a small cup. Top with diced strawberries (or other fruit). Top with small amount of cereal.

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: Taste parfait with children. Ask them to tell you how it tastes. Is it crunchy or smooth? What makes it crunchy?





Tips for Family-Style Dining

Instead of focusing on the challenges of family style meals, see mealtime as an opportunity to teach children healthy skills and habits.

- **Take baby steps.** Practice with play food apart from meal time. Start with just snacks or just one component of a meal.
- **Talk to children.** Prepare the children by telling them how meal time will be changing.
- **Use child-size serving utensils, bowls, and pitchers.** This helps children be more successful as they pass and serve food.
- **Be ready for messes.** Children will not pass or serve the food perfectly, but that's okay! Keep some paper towels or wash cloths on hand.



Mealtime Environments

Children between the ages of 2 to 5 years have a variety of food and meal experiences. These experiences shape the relationship children have with foods as they enter school, through adolescence, and into adulthood. Making the mealtime environment positive and healthy (both nutritionally and socially) is key to forming a child's eating habits.

Family-Style Dining

Family style dining is when all food is placed in serving bowls on the table and children are encouraged to serve themselves or serve themselves with help from an adult. This dining style is considered a best practice for meal service in early childhood settings according to many national organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics and CACFP.

When fully implemented, a family dining environment includes all of the following:

- Children pass and serve their own food
- Children pour their own milk/water
- Adults eat with children
- Adults teach and lead conversations

Family-style dining supports all areas of a child's development.

FAMILY-STYLE DINING SUPPORTS

Social-Emotional Development

- Increases independence (ie: self-serving and cleaning up own spills)
- Builds confidence
- Learn manners

Physical-Motor Development

- Engages in a small muscle activities (ie: passing and serving food)
- Learns eye-hand coordination in self-feeding

Language

- Has conversations with adults and children during meals
- Learns new words related to eating experiences

Physical Health/Nutrition

- Chooses what and how much to eat from a variety of nutritious foods
- Learns to prevent the spread of germs (ie: coughing/sneezing into food)
- Learns to tell the difference between hunger and fullness

“I never realized all the independence I could offer to children through family-style dining.”



Talking About Food

Children's thoughts about what to eat or not eat is largely shaped by what they hear adults say about foods. Make sure that what you say encourages a positive relationship with food.

PHRASES THAT SUPPORT HEALTHY EATING

When offering a new food, describe it using the sensory quality of foods. Make comparisons that children may be familiar with.

Say this:

- This is a kiwi; it's sweet like a strawberry.
- These radishes are very crunchy!

Not this:

- Eat that for me.
- Eat one more bite, or I will be very mad.

To help children know when they are hungry or full, ask questions about how their stomach feels (an internal cue of hunger). Avoid phrases that focus on external cues (clean plate).

Say this:

- Are you hungry or are you full?
- Is your stomach making a hungry, growling noise?

Not this:

- Take one more bite before you leave the table.
- Eat all of your peas like your sister.

Ask children about how a food tastes and feels after they taste it. Offering food as a reward and offering a food treat when upset can lead to overeating and other unhealthy eating habits.

Say this:

- How did that taste? What did you like?
- What about it didn't you like? Was it too crunchy?
- Thank you for trying your vegetables.

Not this:

- No dessert until you eat your vegetables.
- Stop crying and I will give you a cookie.

Source: "Phrases that Help and Hinder," www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

"The best part about doing nutrition activities with kids in my program is that they now have better manners and are more willing to try new foods."

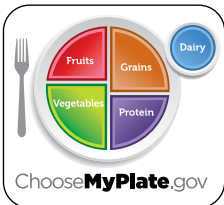


Encourage Adventurous Tasting

A certain level of “picky eating” is normal between the ages of 2 to 5 years, but it’s important for caregivers to minimize struggles at mealtime.

Ways to Encourage Adventurous Tasting

- Have children help prepare parts of the meal or snack.
- Encourage, but never force, children to try new foods.
- Encourage children to experience a new food using their senses to describe the smell, feel, appearance, shape, and size before tasting it (a technique called “sensory exploration”).
- Tell children what a food might taste like before they try it.



- Set up MyPlate activity as described on page 3.
- If you have discussed MyPlate in the past, quickly review MyPlate and how food groups help our bodies to grow.
- Have a brief discussion about trying new foods.
- Ask children if they are ever scared to try something new.
- Share a time that you were scared to try a new food.

- Set up Mystery Bucket as described on page 6, using a kiwi. Have children take turns reaching inside without looking and describe how it feels. Is it big/small, hard/soft, fuzzy, hairy? Ask children to guess the food after all have had a turn.
- Make Strawberry/Kiwi Smoothies. Taste and talk about it with the children.



Strawberry/Kiwi Smoothies

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Blender, measuring cups

INGREDIENT LIST:

- 1 banana
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup frozen strawberries
- 1 kiwi
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup vanilla yogurt (non-fat)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup skim milk

HOW TO MAKE IT: Mix all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Recipe makes small servings for 10 to 12 children.

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: What does it taste like? Is it cold or hot? Is it sweet or sour? Can you taste the kiwi?





Is it a GO or is it a WHOA?

ACTIVITY MATERIALS:

- One poster board cut in half with “Go” written on the top of one and “Whoa” written on top of the other
- Several pictures of “Go and Whoa” foods
- Glue for each child

HOW TO DO THE ACTIVITY:

1. Explain that many foods help us to grow, but other foods do not help our bodies as much (be careful NOT to use the words “good” or “bad” foods).
2. Hold up “Whoa” poster board and explain that foods that don’t help us to grow are called “Whoa” foods. When saying “whoa,” lean back slightly, hold hands by face, and say “whoooooaaaaa.” Ask children to join you in this movement.
3. Hold up the “Go” poster board and explain that foods that help us grow are called “Go” foods. When saying “go,” pump a fist in air three times, saying “Go! Go! Go!” Ask children to join you in this movement.
4. Using pictures you have of Go and Whoa foods, ask children to help you glue Go Foods on the Go Poster and Whoa Foods on the Whoa Poster.
5. Display the posters in your program. Discuss during other lessons, meal times, or snack times.



VARIATIONS:

- Make this lesson more active by having children jump three times when they see the Go Food Poster and say “Go! Go! Go!”
- Play game of Red Light/Green Light using Go/Whoa Foods instead (Go Foods = Green light, Whoa Foods = Red light).





Making Wise Choices

Calling foods “good” or “bad” can lead to unhealthy thoughts about foods. Instead, use words like “Go” or “Whoa” foods or “Anytime” and “Sometimes” to help children ages 2 to 5 years old decide what foods they should to eat.

GO Foods

- All fresh, frozen, and canned fruits (if canned in juice)
- Almost all fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables (not frozen potato products)
- Whole grain breads or pasta
- Brown rice
- Skim or 1% milk and fat-free yogurt
- Water
- Beans
- Skinless chicken or turkey breast

WHOA Foods

- Fruits canned in heavy syrup
- Deep fried meats or vegetables
- Muffins, sweet rolls, doughnuts
- Cookies
- Whole milk and whole milk yogurt
- Bacon and sausage
- Hot dogs
- Chicken nuggets
- Soda, fruit drinks, and other sugary beverages

VARIATION: Add the category of **SLOW Foods** to help older children fine tune their choices. Slow foods include: white bread, 2% milk, 100% fruit juice, and homemade pizza.

Promote Positive Food Choices and Environments Through Your Policies

Include statement about mealtime environments in your written policies. Reinforce these policies by referencing them in your parent handbook, contract, staff handbook, and newsletters.

- Children will be encouraged to try all foods, but will never be forced or bribed to eat anything. No food will be offered as a reward or withheld as punishment.
- Meals at our program are served family-style because it is important for children to learn to serve themselves. It also gives us the opportunity to model eating healthy foods in front of the children and support the development of other social-emotional and motor skills.

“After food activities started at our daycare, my son was more willing to try new foods. He thinks it’s fun to keep a count of how many new things he tries each week.”



Sensory Exploration

Having children open and
remove peas provides
sensory exploration
before tasting.



Yogurt Banana Split

ACTIVITY MATERIALS:

Zip-close bags, small bowls, spoons, forks, dull knife

INGREDIENT LIST:

To make a small serving will need the following for each child:

- ¼ graham cracker
- ¼ banana (sliced in small pieces for young children)
- ¼ cup strawberry or other fruit flavored non-fat yogurt
- 1 tablespoon diced pineapple or other fruit of your choice



HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Give a graham cracker (in closed zipper-lock bag) to each child. Ask children to crush graham cracker into small pieces, then put to side.
2. In a small bowl, place a piece of banana. Top with yogurt, then pineapple, then the crushed graham cracker.

WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Crush graham crackers
- Cut/mash banana
- Scoop yogurt and fruit

TASTE & TALK ABOUT IT: Remind children that ice cream is a “whoa” food and yogurt is a “go” food so that is why you use yogurt for this recipe.

Stuffed Pea Pods

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Small plates, dull knives

INGREDIENT LIST:

- Sugar snap peas
- Reduced-fat cream cheese

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Cut or break open pea pods so peas inside can be removed and set aside. Leave the pod open but intact.
2. Spread a small amount of cream cheese inside each pea pod using dull knife.
3. Eat and enjoy both the stuffed pea pod and the removed peas.



WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Split open pea pods and removing peas
- Stuff pea pods

VARIATIONS: Try stuffing the pea pods with peanut butter, plain yogurt, or the veggie dip from the “Vary Your Veggies” activity on page 8.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program. Minnesota Department of Health.

Available at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdr/nutrition/nutritioneducation/lana/tastingActivities.html



Cinnamon Tortilla Chips

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Baking sheet, spoons, dull knife

INGREDIENT LIST:

To make 10-12 servings you will need:

- 8 - 100% whole wheat flour tortillas
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/3 cup sugar
- Nonstick cooking spray

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Mix cinnamon and sugar together and place in a sealable container (will make more than what you need for one recipe).
3. Coat one side of each tortilla with cooking spray. Cut into wedges of desired size and place in a single layer on baking sheet.
4. Sprinkle tortilla wedges with desired amount of cinnamon sugar mixture. Spray again with cooking spray.
5. Bake for 10-12 minutes. Cool for 15 minutes before eating.

WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Cut tortillas using dull knife
- Spray nonstick cooking spray
- Stir cinnamon and sugar
- Sprinkle cinnamon/sugar mixture on tortillas

VARIATIONS: Serve cinnamon tortilla chips with fruit salsa (see below) or dip in non-fat yogurt for a healthy, whole-grain snack.



Fruit Salsa

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Mixing bowl, plastic (dull) knife, small bowls, spoons

INGREDIENT LIST:

To make 8-10 servings you will need:

- 1 pound fresh diced strawberries
- 1 large ripe peach or pear, cut into 1/2" pieces or smaller
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar (or less, to taste)

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Combine all fruit in a bowl and gently toss to mix.
2. Add lime juice and sugar to taste. It should taste a little sweet and a little sour.
3. Serve with cinnamon tortilla chips (See recipe show above).

WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Cut fruit with dull knives
- Squeeze lime juice
- Add and stir ingredients

VARIATIONS: Use canned fruit (packed in 100% juice) for quicker prep and easier chewing for younger children. Drain one can of grapefruit, one can of pineapple tidbits, and one can of mandarin oranges. Mix together and add cinnamon to taste.

Source: FN705, "Now Serving: Meals with Help from Kids!," Available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn705.pdf



Pepper Pita Pizza

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Baking sheet, spoons, dull knife

INGREDIENT LIST:

You will need the following for each child:

- 1 piece of whole wheat pita bread
- 3 tablespoons pizza sauce
- ¼ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1-2 tablespoons diced bell pepper

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Preheat oven to 400°.
2. Spread sauce on top of pita. Top with shredded cheese, then sprinkle bell pepper on top.
3. Place individual pizzas on a baking sheet. Bake for 10 minutes or until cheese is melted.

WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Cut bell pepper into small pieces using a dull knife
- Spread sauce and add toppings
- Suggest other veggies to add to pizza

VARIATIONS: Use a whole grain English muffin instead of the pita bread.

Source: LANA'S Favorite Recipes; LANA Preschool Program. Minnesota Department of Health
Available at www.health.state.mn.us/divs/hpcd/chp/cdrr/nutrition/nutritioneducation/lana/tastingActivities.html



Baked Garlic Sweet Potato Fries

ACTIVITY MATERIALS: Baking sheet, mixing bowl

INGREDIENT LIST:

- 4 medium sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2" strips
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt and ground black pepper
- 5 cloves garlic, minced
- ½ cup shredded parmesan

HOW TO MAKE IT:

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly coat a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Place potatoes in a single layer onto the baking sheet. Add olive oil and toss potatoes to combine. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
3. Bake for 35-40 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Flip potatoes halfway through cooking.
4. Combine cooked sweet potatoes with garlic and parmesan. Cool slightly and serve.

WAYS CHILDREN CAN HELP:

- Place raw potatoes on cool baking sheet
- Sprinkle salt and pepper over potatoes
- Add garlic and parmesan to potatoes

Source: North Dakota State University Extension Service Available at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food/recipes





Movement Cue

Demonstrate how to jump. Bend knees, extend arms behind you, swing arms forward as you jump, and land on both feet.

Jump the River

SUGGESTED AGES: 3+

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS: Jumping

REQUIRED MATERIALS: Chalk for outdoors or masking tape for indoors

SET UP: Use chalk/tape to create parallel lines spaced the width that children can jump.

HOW TO PLAY: Have all the children stand behind one of the tape/chalk lines. Demonstrate how to jump across the “river”. Cue the action by saying “jump”.

VARIATIONS:

- Try jumping different ways - loudly, quietly, or like a frog.
- Incorporate counting by asking children to jump a certain number of times.
- Tell a story that explains why children are jumping across the river (i.e., to make it home, to get to their garden, etc.).

“A quick 5 to 10 minute game of “Jump the River” can help kids refocus and get their wiggles out.”



Combine Stories and Activities

Tell a story about crabs going to the beach. Call out “SEAGULL” occasionally as you tell the story.

Crab Walk at the Beach

SUGGESTED AGES: 3+

GROSS MOTOR SKILLS:

Balance, stretching, twisting, locomotor movement

REQUIRED MATERIALS: One hula hoop, floor spot, or carpet square per child

OPTIONAL MATERIALS: Cones or other items to define activity area

HOW TO PLAY: Have each child sit on one spot. This spot will be their “crab home.”

At your signal, instruct children to crab walk within the activity area. When you yell out “seagull!” children must crab walk back to their home (hoop or floor spot), where they will be safe from the seagull. A great activity for indoor or outdoor play.

VARIATIONS: Encourage children to add other “at the beach” actions to the story such as wave hello to a crab friend, put on sunscreen, shake out beach towel, stomp their feet, or dig for sea shells.

“Adding structured physical activity has increased teacher morale and boosted the attitudes of children.”

