Best Practices for Healthy Eating
Session Objectives

- List ten best practices related to nutrition
- List three resources supporting implementation of the best practices
- Identify two resources you want to use to support positive change in your program

Sources:


Considerations for Healthy Eating

- **Food groups**
- **Type within food group**
  - E.g., whole grains vs. refined grains; low-fat dairy vs. full-fat dairy
- **Variety within food group**
  - E.g., rotate beans, fish, poultry, red meat, etc.
- **How much (portion size)**
- **How often (over the course of a week)**
- **How it’s prepared (e.g., baked, fried, etc.)**
Best practice:
- Use Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) guidelines for meal patterns and serving sizes
- Current guidelines are based on nutrition information from 1989

New recommendations for CACFP in 2010
- Goal is to align CACFP with Dietary Guidelines 2010
- Many of the best practices we talk about will be CACFP requirements in the next few years
Current CACFP Meal Components

- Milk (fluid)
- Fruits & vegetables
- Breads & grains
  - Rice
  - Bread
- Meats & meat alternates
  - Meat (e.g., chicken, turkey, fish)
  - Eggs
  - Cheese
  - Beans
  - Yogurt
  - Nuts and nut butters
Serving Sizes

- Start with the CACFP recommended serving for age and food group

- If children are still hungry, allow them more food
  - Encourage them to check in with their tummy (cues)
  - Encourage fruits and vegetables first

- Serving sizes are a min, not a max!
Milk – Infants

- Infants under 12 months should receive only breast milk or iron-fortified formula – no cow’s milk.
  - Whole cow’s milk does not provide enough Vitamin E, iron, and essential fatty acids for infants.
  - Whole cow's milk protein and fat are more difficult for an infant to digest and absorb.
Milk – Children

- Milk served to children **12-23 months** should be **whole**.

- Milk served to children **2 years and older** should be **fat-free (skim) or 1% (low-fat)**.
  - Flavored milk should not be served
Rationale – Milk

- **Children 12 through 23 months** need the fat in whole milk for healthy weight gain, growth and development.

- **Children 2 years and older** do not need the extra fat and calories in whole milk.
Infants should **not** be served juice.
Juice – Children

- Limit 100% juice to 1 serving per day in a size appropriate to age (4-6 oz.), or don’t serve at all.

- All juice served should be 100% fruit or vegetable.

- Non-100% juice (e.g., juice “cocktail” or juice “drink”) is a sugary beverage and should not be served at all.
Sugary Beverages

- Sugary drinks should never be offered
  - Juices that are not 100% juice
  - Fruit drinks (cocktails/-ades)
  - Sports drinks
  - Sweet tea
  - Soda
  - Energy drinks
  - Coffee drinks
Rationale: Juice & Sugary Beverages

- They are high in sugar and calories which can cause...
  - overweight/obesity
  - tooth decay
  - diarrhea

- May displace healthier beverages (like milk)

- Whole fruits and vegetables provide more nutrients and fiber than even 100% juice
Fruits & Vegetables

- Fried or pre-fried fruits or vegetables are offered **only 1x per month or never**
  - French fries, tater tots, hash browns, potato chips; fried apples or okra

- Serve a fruit (not juice) and/or a vegetable at every meal and snack
  - French fries, tator tots, and hash browns don’t count as vegetables!
Fried or pre-fried fruits/vegetables should be avoided because...

- They are high in calories and fat. Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>57 calories, 0.06 grams fat</th>
<th>180 calories, 5.35 grams fat</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Potato</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>French Fries</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Fruits & Vegetables

- Serve vegetables of a variety of colors (dark green, red, orange, deep yellow) each week

- Serve f/v that are fresh, frozen or canned
  - Canned veggies should be low in sodium
  - Canned fruits should be in water, 100% juice or drained
Fruits & Vegetables

- Are rarely or never prepared with added:
  - Meat fat
  - Butter
  - Margarine
  - Sugar
Breads & Grains

- Cereals should contain **no more than 6 grams** of sugar per serving.

- At least **half** of grains served **should be whole grains**.
  - Serve whole grains whenever possible.

- Grains high in fat or sugar should be served **rarely or never**.
  - Donuts, Danishes, cupcakes, toaster pastries, granola bars, etc.

Ingredients:
- WHOLE WHEAT FLOUR, WATER, SUGAR, WHEAT GLUTEN, CANE REFINERY SYRUP, YEAST, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF EACH OF THE FOLLOWING...
Rationale – Breads & Grains

- Whole grains are good sources of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals.
- Added sugars supply calories but few or no nutrients.
- Fried baked goods are high in calories and fat and low in nutrients.

Example:
Meats & Meat Alternates

- Fried/pre-fried and processed meats
  - E.g., chicken nuggets/tenders, fish sticks, hot dogs, bologna, sausage, salami, spam
  - Limit to 1x per month or less

- Choose a variety of beans and lean meats each week
Cheese & Other Dairy Products

- Serve only **real cheese** – no cheese food or cheese product.
  - (e.g., Velveeta®, Cheez Whiz®)

- Serve **low-fat** or **fat-free** dairy
  - milk, cheese, yogurt, cream cheese, etc.
Rationale: Meats & Cheese

- Processed and fried meats and fish are typically high in total and saturated fat and sodium.

- In general, cheese products contain more sodium and fewer nutrients than real cheese.
Water

Drinking water is

- visible,
- available to children inside and outside,
- available for self serve.
What type(s) of beverage should be served to infants?

- a) whole milk
- b) fat-free (skim) or 1% (low-fat) milk
- c) breast milk or formula

Answer: c) breast milk or formula
What type(s) of milk should be served to children 12 through 23 months of age?

a) whole
b) 2% (reduced-fat)
c) fat-free (skim) or 1% (low-fat)
d) any of the above

Answer: a) whole
What type(s) of milk should be served to children 2 years and older?

a) whole
b) 2% (reduced-fat)
c) fat-free (skim) or 1% (low-fat)
d) any of the above

Answer: c) fat-free (skim) or 1% (low-fat)
Children should receive no more than 1 serving per day (4-6 oz) of what type(s) of juice?

a) 100% fruit/vegetable  
b) juice cocktail  
c) juice drink  
d) any of the above

Answer: a) 100% fruit/vegetable
Children should never be served sugary drinks. Sugary drinks include:

a) soda
b) non-100% juice drinks
c) sports drinks
d) energy drinks
e) lemonade
f) all of the above

Answer: f) all of the above
Fried or pre-fried foods should be served...

a) once a month or never
b) once every two weeks
c) once a week
d) daily

Answer: a) once a month or never
What is the best type of cheese to serve?

a) real cheese  
b) cheese food  
c) cheese product  
d) low-fat or fat-free real cheese

Answer: d) low-fat or fat-free real cheese
Cereals should contain no more than ____ grams of sugar per serving.

a) 5  
b) 6  
c) 8  
d) 10  

Answer: b) 6
How often should whole grains be served?

a) once per day
b) twice per day
c) half of grains should be whole grain
d) all grains should be whole grain

Answer: c) half; but more is better!
Drinking water should be ...

a) visible
b) available for self serve
c) outside and inside
d) all of the above

Answer: d) all of the above
Menu Analysis Activity

Which of these things is not like the others?
Feeding Best Practices for Infants

- Support breastfeeding
- Feeding by a consistent caregiver
- Staff trained on preparing, feeding and storing breast milk and formula
- Responsive feeding
  - Timing
  - Amount
- Introduction of solid foods to infants
  - No earlier than 4 months, preferably 6 months
  - By spoon only, no bottles
  - Develop a feeding plan with parents
- Encourage self-feeding
  - Supervise children learning to feed themselves
Feeding Best Practices for Children

- Serve meals family-style
- Encourage self-feeding
- Eat when seated at a table
- Use appropriate serving sizes
  - Serve more only if the child is still hungry
  - Children will eat what they need
- Engage children in mealtime prep and cleanup
- Serve familiar and new foods
- Encourage, don’t force
- No food as punishment or reward
- Integrate nutrition experiences for children into program activities
Staff Involvement & Environment

- Have books, posters and toys that remind children of healthy foods
- Teach about eating and enjoying healthy foods
- Sit and eat with children during meals
- Eat the same food & drinks children are eating
- Talk about trying and enjoying healthy foods during mealtimes
- Eat only healthy foods & drinks in front of children
Partnering with Families

Get to know them, their hopes for their children, and their expectations of your partnership.

- Communicate nutrition policies
- Provide written menus
- Work together on feeding plans for each child
  - And care plans for children with allergies
- Accommodate vegetarian/vegan/religious/cultural diets
- Link program nutrition experiences to home environment
- Nutrition education for families twice/year plus use teachable moments
Policy

- Staff training annually

- Food and nutrition service
  - Use a nutritionist/dietician to develop written menus
  - Written plan for requirements of foods served, allergy considerations, staff interaction with children during meals, staff foods aligning with rules, etc.

- Nutrition education for parents annually

- Nutrition education for children integrated into curriculum
MyPlate for Preschoolers

- Picky eaters
- Portion sizes
- Help them recognize hunger and fullness
- Help them try new foods
- Make food fun!
- Low-cost and healthy recipes
- Tip sheet for families

www.choosemyplate.gov
Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children

- Designed to help providers create healthier environments
- Series of tip sheets
  - Ideas for meal planning, shopping, and food preparation
  - Tips for creative menus
  - Hints for meeting meal pattern requirements
  - Ways to serve foods safely
  - Activities for hands-on learning
  - Suggestions for active play
  - Success stories from providers
  - Links to additional resources

http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/nutritionandwellness.html
First Years in the First State Series:
Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Early Care and Education

- Meal Planning on a Budget
- Serving Size Photos for All Ages
- Physical Activity Ideas and Resources
- Engaging Children
- Connections to Learning
- Menu Cycles
- Recipes
- Shopping Lists
- Shopping Cheat Sheet
- Reading a Nutrition Facts Label
- Partnering with Families

Nemours’ Best Practices for Healthy Eating

- Covers rules and best practices on nutrition
  - Organized by age and food group
- Rationale
- Recommended and non-recommended foods & beverages
- Serving sizes by age and food
- Serving size photos for different ages
- Sample policies for programs
Success Story: Neighborhood House Association Head Start in San Diego

- Hired a Registered Dietitian and professional chef who led a menu overhaul
- Menu now includes fruits and vegetables in season

“The cornerstone of our efforts revolves around our menu. We have embraced the challenge of trying to dispel the myth that young children will not eat ‘healthy’ food.”

– Rudolph A. Johnson, III, President and Chief Executive Officer, Neighborhood House Association
Questions or Comments?

Find additional trainings and resources at www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org