

## Health and Wellness Newsletter for Early Childhood Educators

# Healthy Children, Healthy Adults

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## Improving the Health & Wellness of Young Children

**H**igh-quality health and wellness Early Child Development (ECD) programs are the most effective strategy in improving children's development early in life. A large body of evidence supports the relationship of early childhood experiences with children's opportunity to be healthy, active, and productive individuals throughout life. There is also evidence that brain and cognitive development are strongly linked to healthy life styles.

Approximately 125,000 children 0-5 years old, live in Alameda County. Many of these children are from limited income families, and they grow up in neighborhood conditions where personal safety, access to fresh produce, and recreational activities are unavailable. Despite parents'

best efforts income, education and neighborhood environment can limit their opportunities to nurture the adoption of healthy behavior.

Early childhood centers play a major role shaping the child's eating behaviors and instilling active life styles. For some children ECE centers are a place where they can access fresh produce, healthful meals, and safe and clean spaces where they can play.

Parent involvement in the child's health and academic learning increases the child's success in school. Early childhood centers open up opportunities for parents to learn about all aspects of the child's learning, nutrition and physical development needs, fostering parent-child relations and nurturing environments. Parents are a great

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resource to spread information about eating healthy meals, promoting physical activity, limiting soda consumption and home television viewing.

The UC-NETA program strengthens the ECE centers ability to provide children with age-appropriate nutrition educational materials. Parent trainings help connect the classroom to the home and encourage parent-child relationships. NETA's early childhood program promotes long-term healthy lifestyles.

### References:

1. Alameda County Children's SART Strategic Plan for Children 0-5 <http://www.ackids.org>
2. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Commission to Build a Healthier America: Early Childhood Experiences and Health. Issue Brief 1, 2008. <http://www.commissiononhealth.org/PDF/095bea47-ae8e-4744-b054-258c9309b3d4/Issue%20Brief%201%20Jun%2008%20-%20Early%20Childhood%20Experiences%20and%20Health.pdf>



Photo: UC Regents

## Teacher Corner

This section provides information to early childhood educators about developmentally appropriate practices connected to the principles of health and wellness included in the California Department of Education Child Development Division Desired Results.

### CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH: DOMAIN 8

Physical development and health are significant determinants of children development and school readiness. *Tips and Nutrition Matters!* are educational resources early childhood providers can use to meet some of the domains of development and learning; physical, social and emotional, and cognitive.

- Health and physical fitness can enhance the children's ability to learn, and prevent them from health conditions such as obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases.
- Healthy and fit children are more likely to gain self-esteem, enjoy play, and have less stress and disciplinary problems.
- With proper adult guidance, children can practice their fine and gross motor skills, using appropriate materials and equipment.

### CHILD'S HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Refers to the child's health including appropriate nutrition, hygiene, and safety practices. Nutrition, eating healthy, access to fresh produce, and health care are some of the factors that impact a child's health condition.

Physical development includes, use of the body and muscle control. In early childhood education we place attention to the child's health, growth, strength, stamina, and flexibility. Physical activity contributes to the child's physical condition; playing tag, climbing a ladder,

jumping, swinging from a rope, and kicking a ball are some fitness-enhancing activities.

### STRATEGIES FOR HEALTH AND PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

- Set up a center with materials and equipment that allow children to practice fine and gross motor skills. Challenge them to gain new skills.
- Participate with children as they practice their physical and nutrition activities.
- Use *Tips (monthly lessons)* to incorporate nutrition and physical activities.
- Practice growing an edible garden and tasting fresh produce.
- Talk about what you are doing in the classroom and why it supports the children and your fitness, nutrition, health, and safety.



### Reference:

1. National Association for the Education of Young Children. (2009). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8: A position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, DC: NAEYC
2. National Association for Sport and Physical Education. (2000) Appropriate practices in movement programs for young children ages 3-5: A position statement of the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), Reston, VA: NASPE

## Movement and Physical Activities

Young children cannot sit still for long periods of time. They need to move their bodies in order to focus and learn. If you see your children drifting off, "stop," and give them a snack or a "brain" break. Snack or brain breaks take only three minutes of structured activity.



- **Locomotor Snack Break Movement:** Animal movement, dance party, freeze dance, and mingle group. For the mingle activity, ask children to mingle around the room until the teacher says "groups of five," then children group themselves quickly.
- **Stability Snack Break Movement:** Movement Song — sing and dance while moving different parts of the body- head, shoulder, knees, toes, chest.

### Source:

Head Start Body Start, National Center for Physical Development and Play <http://www.aahperd.org/headstartbodystart/>  
Minds in Bloom <http://www.minds-in-bloom.com/2012/04/advice-from-ot-if-you-want-children-to.html>

## Roots, Raw, Delight for the Fall

**R**oot vegetables, are the roots of plants that are eaten as vegetables. Roots grow into the ground from the base of the plant stem. They anchor the plant, absorb water and nutrients, and store energy. Some root vegetables include, **beets, carrots, cassava, jicama, parsnips, radishes, rutabagas, turnips, sweet potatoes and yucca.** Most root vegetables provide an excellent source of vitamin C, and they are also a good source of fiber. Complex carbohydrates\* (commonly referred to as “starches”) are key nutrients in root vegetables.

### HOW DO ROOT VEGETABLES GROW?

Root vegetables are cool-weather crops. Roots such as beets, carrots, radishes, rutabagas, and turnips can be planted in early spring and late summer for two crops. Root vegetable plants need to be thinned so they have enough room to develop properly. For a chart with information about how to plant and grow root vegetables, refer to *Root Vegetables Botanical Images* (in the Educators' Corner) on [www.harvestofthemonth.com](http://www.harvestofthemonth.com). University of California Garden Web <http://cagardenweb.ucdavis.edu/>



### SWEET POTATO PIE

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup mashed sweet potatoes
- 1 tbs. honey
- 1 cup vanilla low fat yogurt
- 1 large banana
- 3 low fat graham crackers
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. nutmeg

#### Preparation:

1. Drain sweet potatoes.
2. Place low fat yogurt, honey and spices into a blender and process until smooth.
3. Spread one spoonful onto the bottom of each graham cracker.
4. Place one slice of a banana on top of the sweet potato filling.
5. Sprinkle a little cinnamon on top and enjoy!

#### Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 116, Carbohydrate 26 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 2 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 1 mg, Sodium 78 mg

### TRI-ROOT SALAD SHAKER

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup shredded carrots
- ½ cup sliced radishes
- ½ cup diced jicama
- 3 cups chopped romaine lettuce
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ¼ cup of your favorite low-fat dressing

#### Preparation:

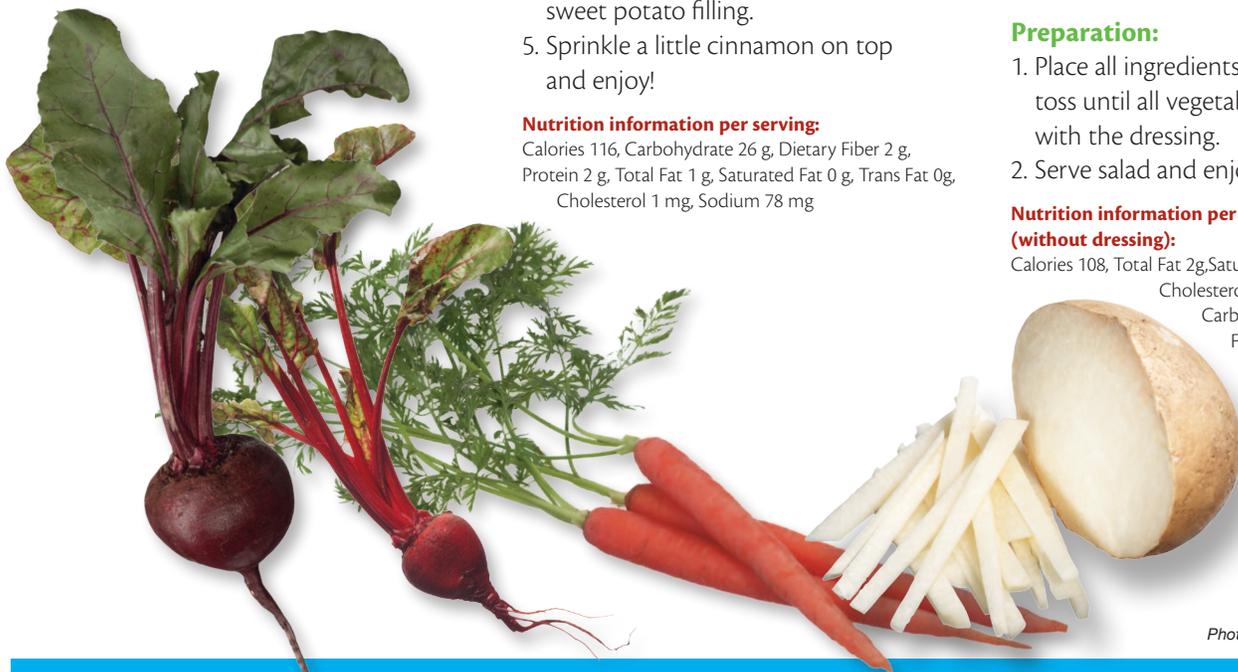
1. Place all ingredients in a large bowl and toss until all vegetables are evenly coated with the dressing.
2. Serve salad and enjoy.

#### Nutrition information per serving (without dressing):

Calories 108, Total Fat 2g, Saturated Fat 0g, Trans Fat 0g, Cholesterol 0mg, Sodium 164mg, Carbohydrate 25g, Dietary Fiber 4g, Protein 1g

#### Source:

Network for a Healthy California, Monrovia Unified School District



## Professional Development Resources

### Brain-Break Activities — Ideas for short physical activity breaks

<http://pinterest.com/parko/brain-break-activities/>

Children need to move in order to develop and refine their balance, coordination, visual motor integration, endurance, and core strength; all of which directly affect their ability to function in school.

### Children and Nature Network

[http://www.childrenandnature.org/news/detail/no\\_outdoor\\_play\\_for\\_many\\_kids/](http://www.childrenandnature.org/news/detail/no_outdoor_play_for_many_kids/)

Young children need to move in order to develop and refine their balance, coordination, and visual motor. They should have a great deal of outdoor playtime.

### National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/live-it/ideas.htm>

Everyday ideas to move more with friends and family



Photo: Network for a Healthy California

## Children's Health and Wellness Books

### FROM HEAD TO TOE

Eric Carle  
Harper Festival; Reprint edition  
(May 29, 2007)  
ISBN-13: 978-0061119729

### CAN YOU MOVE LIKE AN ELEPHANT?

Judy Hindley  
Corgi Childrens. 2005, 32 pp.  
ISBN 13:978-0552548223

### BRIGHT FUTURE ACTIVITY BOOK (ENGLISH AND SPANISH)

American Academic of Pediatrics  
It is an activity book to teach young children about health and wellness  
[http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/BFActivityBook\\_L%200626.pdf](http://brightfutures.aap.org/pdfs/BFActivityBook_L%200626.pdf)  
Download a free copy

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