



NETA

**Nutrition Education Training Academy
Newsletter
For Early Childhood Education Providers**

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What Are Children Eating?



With the focus on the childhood obesity epidemic, many adults are increasingly aware of the long-term, chronic disease impact of foods (high fat, high sugar, low nutrient-dense) on health. Combine poor food choices with little or no exercise and here's a recipe for overweight/obesity. But, what are our children **really** consuming? Is it high in fat, calories and sugar? Is it sufficiently high or horribly low in vitamins? Is it healthy or not?

Based on a survey conducted by KidzEyes.com (a division of C&R Research) with 5,401 children between the ages of 6 -14, eating habits and attitudes on nutrition were revealed. What food came in first place as a favorite? If you guessed 'pizza', you're correct (1/3 of boys; almost 1/4 of the girls). Other favorites included pastas (such as macaroni & cheese and spaghetti); chicken (mostly fried – tenders, nuggets and wings); red meats (like cheeseburgers, hamburgers and steak); and sweets (such as ice cream and candy). So the answer to the question about how nutritious the foods are that children eat is...not healthy at all'. Right? Well, maybe that's not the whole story.

Many of the favorite foods named weren't necessarily the healthiest; however, more of the children's votes are worth mentioning. Equally, 6% of children chose a favorite food that was within the vegetables category or the sweets category. Some vegetable favorites: broccoli, salad and corn. More children chose a vegetable as their favorite food compared to fruit as a favorite (most mentioned: apples, strawberries). Something of gourmet interest: 5% of children had some type of seafood/fish as a favorite (in descending order of popularity: shrimp, crab legs, lobster, tuna and sushi).

So, what does this all mean? Children's favorites include less than nutritious foods, but on the flip side, children still have a significant interest in many foods that **are** nutritious. Consider the variety of food favorites that children have -- this can be a great opportunity for adults to improve children's long-term health. You have the ability to positively influence the dietary habits of children. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Be a Good Role Model.** Set the example for children. If they see you eating good-for-you foods, they are more apt to try it.
- **Create a High-Nutrition Environment.** Have foods available that are lower in fat, sugar, calories and higher in nutrients.
- **Encourage Taste-testing of Unfamiliar Foods.** Allow children to try new and different foods. They can expand their individualized list of favorite healthy foods!
- **Watch Portion Sizes.** Support children in listening to their own hunger and 'full' cues when it comes to how much they eat.

References:

1. <http://www.kidzeys.com>
2. C&R Research. www.crrresearch.com

Busy Preschool Teachers “Keeping Physically Active and Healthy”



Teachers and other Early Childhood Education Providers play an important role in the fight against childhood and adult obesity. Exercise, along with good nutrition, increases life expectancy and helps with weight control, lowering blood pressure, raising HDL (“good”) cholesterol levels, and reducing the risk of diabetes and some cancers. Being physically active also improves children’s psychological well-being, self-confidence and self-esteem. These are good reasons for promoting physical activity with 3-5 year olds in the classroom. Preschool providers are key role models and messengers of the benefits of physical activity and they too, should adopt an active physical lifestyle.

Although Early Childhood Educators dedicate a tremendous amount of attention and energy toward children and by the end of the day might feel exhausted, it is very important for them to set some time aside to be physically active every day.

Here are simple ways to sneak in some exercise during your busy schedule:

- ♥ Turn on your favorite music while doing housework. Dance freely while getting your home clean!
- ♥ Get into your garden and rake leaves, prune, dig and pick up trash.
- ♥ Walk to the corner store instead of driving.
- ♥ Get up off the couch! Don’t use your TV/video remote control. Don’t ask someone to get you a drink or refreshment; get it yourself and add this to your physical movement scoreboard!
- ♥ Walk the dog.
- ♥ Park farther way when at the shopping mall or at school. Walk the extra distance.
- ♥ Walk down the hall to speak to someone instead of using the telephone.
- ♥ Take the stairs instead of the elevator.
- ♥ Get off the bus a few stops earlier and walk the rest of the distance to home or work.

It is a mistake to postpone being physically active until you “enroll in a gym” or buy expensive “exercise equipment”. Busy preschool teachers can keep themselves active throughout the day doing physical activities with children. Taking time to care of yourself (physically and nutritionally) is a good investment in your current and future health!

References:

1. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA). *US Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2000/document/frontcover.htm>
2. American Heart Association. *Tips for Exercise Success*. <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=801>
3. American Heart Association. *Physical Activity in Your Daily Life*. <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=2155>
4. American Heart Association. *Exercise (Physical Activity) and Children* <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=4596>
5. American Heart Association. *Children's Need for Physical Activity: Fact Sheet*. <http://www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=771>

Farmers' Market News



Pick 5-A-Day the Fun Way!

Looking for a fun way to promote 5-A-Day in your classroom? Pick-your-own farms are located throughout California and are growing in popularity. These farms are a wonderful teacher's resource. Children can explore the food (nutrition)--land (garden) connection by taking a class field trip to a pick-your-own farm. The quality of fresh picked fruit is better than those bought at the store. It costs less money. Not only do children work towards getting their 5-A-Day, but they also get some physical activity in the fresh outdoors.



Here are some farms where you can pick-your-own fruit and vegetables. Be sure to call ahead to check for hours and availability. Visit <http://www.pickyourown.org> for additional farms.

- **Dwelleys Farms:** 515 Delta Road, Brentwood, CA (925) 634-6508
- **Smith Family Farms:** 4430 Sellers Road, Brentwood, CA (925) 625-5966
- **Gerry's Fruit Bowl:** Marsh Creek Road, Brentwood, CA (925) 634-3155



Crop	Month
Strawberries	April 10 - July 30
Boysenberries	May 10 - July 5
Cherries	May 21 - June 25
Apricots	May 25 - July 10
Grapes	May 25 - Dec 15
Olallieberries	June 1 - July 31

Crop	Month
Pears and Peaches	June 10 - Sept 10
Plums	June 15 - July 30
Green Beans, Peas and Nectarines	June 15 - Sept 15
Corn	June 25 - Sept 30
Apples	July 15 - Sept 10
Tomatoes and Okra	July 15 - Sept 15

Source: <http://www.pickyourown.org/CA.htm>

Nutritious Seasonal Recipes



Cucumber Salad

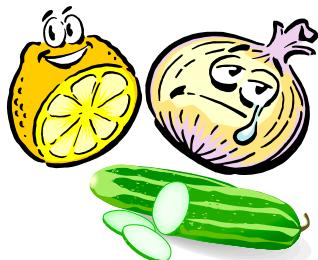


Ingredients:

4 large cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped
2/3 cup red onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup white vinegar or lemon juice
1 tsp sugar

Method:

1. Combine all ingredients in a serving bowl.
2. Chill



Prep: 10 min. plus chilling time. Serv-

ings: 8

Source: <http://www.mealsforyou.com>

Summer Squash with Sweet Corn and Tomatoes



Ingredients:

2 Tbs. Olive oil
1 lb. corn kernels, thawed if frozen
1 lb. zucchini, cut into 1/2 inch slices
1 1/2 lbs. summer squash, cut into 1/2 inch slices
1 1/2 lbs. tomatoes, seeded and chopped
2 Tbs. cilantro or parsley, minced

Method:

1. In a heavy nonstick skillet over medium heat sauté zucchini, summer squash and corn 2 minutes using the olive oil.
2. Add tomatoes.
3. Cover skillet and simmer 5-6 minutes, or until zucchini is tender.
5. Remove from heat.

Physical Activity Corner



School will be out before we know it and summer will be upon us. Children will have plenty of time on their hands. Why not find a summer camp that will keep them moving? The City of Oakland's Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) enthusiastically invites everyone to participate in their classes. They offer activities that serve all ages (from toddlers to seniors) and embraces all cultures.

Oakland Parks & Recreation is responsible for more than 2,500 acres of open space, 70 parks, 25 recreation and community centers. OPR partners with more than 50 nonprofit organizations and the Oakland Unified School District to provide programming such as sailing, basketball, swimming, summer camps, soccer, tennis and dance at six gymnasiums, more than 53 athletic fields, 100 basketball courts and 59 tennis courts. Check the list below to find the recreation center nearest you and take advantage of this great resource.

Allendale Center	FM Smith Center	Montclair Center	Sheffield Village Center
Arroyo Viejo Center	Franklin Center	Mosswood Center	Studio One Center
Brookdale Center	Golden Gate Center	Poplar Center	Tassafaronga Center
Bushrod Center	Ira Jinkins Center	Rainbow Center	Verdese Carter Center
Defremery Center	Lincoln Square Center	R. Heights Center	
Dimond Center	Manzanita Center	San Antonio Center	

For a brochure contact: City of Oakland, Office of Parks and Recreation
250 Frank Ogawa Plaza, Suite 3330, Oakland, CA 94612 Phone: 510-238-PARK

Seasonal Gardening Tips



April:

1. Plant color to brighten up a shady area. Try astilbe, begonia, bergenia, browallia, Chinese foxglove, cineraria, coleus, coral bells, impatiens and lamium.
2. Tomatoes can be grown in containers if your garden area doesn't have proper sun exposure. Start with a 24-30 inch wide container that's at least 28 inches deep. Water and fertilize regularly.
3. Clean bird feeders. Spray olive trees with a strong blast of the hose when small white flowers appear. This will prevent the setting fruits from staining driveways and sidewalks.

May:

1. Aerate compacted lawns. This will help lawns with soil that is hard and water doesn't penetrate well.
2. Mulch. A 3-inch layer of mulch will help soil retain moisture, keep the weeds manageable and the soil cooler.
3. Thin fruit trees. Asian pear, apple, nectarine and peach trees need the excess fruit thinned so remaining fruit can get bigger.

June:

1. Sow seeds of beans and corn. Set out transplants of cucumbers, eggplant, melons, okra, peppers, pumpkins, squash and tomatoes.
2. Caring for roses with a complete fertilizer will guarantee additional flowers.



Nutrition Tidbits



Tips for Parents: With a new school year about to begin, parents can get their children off to a good start by establishing smart eating habits. Kids watch and learn from adults around them. Empower children by being a healthy role model and involving them in planning meals and snacks. Make nutrition fun by choosing different themes, such as shapes or colors, when buying fruits and vegetables.

Some Delicious Ideas: How many different colored fruits and vegetables can you and your family eat every day? Orange wedges, honeydew melon slices, raspberries, broccoli and eggplant...eat at least 5-A-Day!

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