

# NETA Quarterly News

Nutrition, Physical Activity & Gardening for  
Early Childhood Providers



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## Improving Young Children's Health and Wellness

Children's health and wellness should be a national priority. Healthy children are ready to learn, eager to be physically active, and better prepared to develop skills that lead to successful school experiences and productive lives. Children's health is an investment that pays off through adulthood, and can prevent long-term health costs.

Alameda County has approximately 125,000 children, ages 0-5. Many of these children are from families with limited income and grow up in environments where health may limit their social, emotional, and academic development. These children are at risk of developing certain diseases, such as obesity, with roots in societal factors. We need solutions that reach all sectors of children's lives--homes, schools, neighborhoods, childcare centers, and businesses. We need to ensure that children have access to healthful food

choices, safe and clean spaces where they can be physically active, emotional and social support that promote health and wellness, and schools that focus of health promotion.

The Nutrition Education Training Academy (NETA) works with early childhood education sites and offers an array of educational resources for teachers, children, and families. Regularly incorporating "Nutrition Matters!" and "NETA Tips" (aligned with "Harvest of the Month") activities into your preschool supports recommendations to improve health and wellness in young children.

Parents need to be part of the solution and become involved. Parents are excellent sources of human capital to educate other parents on practical strategies to improve their children's health through increasing fruit and vegetable intake, decreasing soda consumption, encouraging regular physical activity, and limiting television viewing. NETA's Community Nutrition and Mobilization (CNAM) program works with parents, including parent cooking/nutrition classes, to help educate parents on how to make changes in their families' eating and physical activity efforts.



Photo: Network for a Healthy California

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Contact NETA at <http://neta.ucdavis.edu/> or phone (510) 567-6812 for information about the program.

### References:

- Grant, D. and Kurosky, S. [http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/files/Hlth\\_Children\\_PB\\_102008.pdf](http://www.healthpolicy.ucla.edu/pubs/files/Hlth_Children_PB_102008.pdf)
- Alameda County Children's SART Strategic Plan for Children 0-5. <http://www.ackids.org/Documents/sart/Alameda%20County%20Childrens%20SART%20Report.pdf>
- Roots of the Childhood Obesity Epidemic. American Public Health Association. <http://www.apha.org/programs/resources/obesity/proresobesityroot.htm>



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## Keeping a Healthful Child Care Environment

For many children the most appropriate environment for promoting and modeling healthful eating habits and physical activity is their child care center. Over 33% of Alameda County's low-income children enter school obese or overweight. The UC Cooperative Extension NETA Program, partnering with the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD), has a long-term commitment to work diligently to curb this epidemic before children develop poor habits that lead to overweight. NETA works with teachers in the schools, enhances community awareness to keep kids healthy through outreach efforts, develops publications, and advocates on the local, state, and national level. We engage parents, communities, and decision makers to create environments that make eating healthfully and being active a reality for children and families. The California Department of Education (CDE) has some new goals and recommendations for assisting child care providers with improving nutrition and increasing physical activity levels of the State's preschoolers. The following



are activities you can do to encourage healthful eating and increased physical activity:

- Incorporate nutrition activities (such as "Nutrition Matters!" or "Tips") into your circle time on a regular basis;
- Use your school garden to teach nutrition and encourage eating more vegetables and fruits;
- Offer regular playtime, using teacher-directed activities to develop physical activity;
- Provide consistent nutrition and physical activity messages in your classroom. Be a good role model.

OUSD is ahead of many of the child care centers. We have been implementing the Nutrition Education Training Academy's "Nutrition Matters!" Curriculum, which includes nutrition, gardening, and physical activity. Contact the NETA Program at <http://neta.ucdavis.edu/> or (510) 567-6812.

### References:

- Healthy in California's Child Care Environments: Recommendations to Improve Nutrition and Increase Physical Activity." 2009. <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/he/documents/keepchildhealexecsumm.pdf>
- 2008 Pediatric Nutrition Surveillance. Alameda. <http://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/chdp/Documents/PedNSS/2008/16B0to5.pdf>
- "Improving the Health of California's Children," First 5 California. [www.cffc.ca.gov](http://www.cffc.ca.gov)

## Food Feature: Cool Seasonal Drinks

is the choice of drinks when you are thirsty. There are 15 teaspoons of sugar and 240 calories in the average 20-ounce bottle of soda.

If you want a little flavor in your water, add a slice of lemon or cucumber; or some mint leaves or other herbs. You can also make flavored waters by adding watermelon cubes to a pitcher of water and refrigerating. Adding cucumber or mint to water makes a refreshing drink.

Or try the recipes here to incorporate seasonal produce into your drinks.

## Produce Tips for Oranges

- Look for fruit that is firm and heavy for its size with bright, colorful skins.
- Avoid fruit with bruised, wrinkled or discolored skins. Oranges with marks or green spots on the skin are fine to eat.
- Oranges with thin skins tend to be juicier than those with thick skins.
- Oranges can be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator without plastic bags for up to two weeks.

### Reference:

Harvest of the Month, Network for a Healthy California

<http://www.harvestofthemonth.com/>



**"It is never too early to start teaching children good nutrition and exercise. The healthy eating habits children learn in preschool can last a lifetime."**

—State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell



### AQUA DE MANZANA

Makes 4 servings. 1 cup per serving.

#### Ingredients

- 1 medium apple, washed, cored, and sliced
- 4 cups water
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

#### Preparation

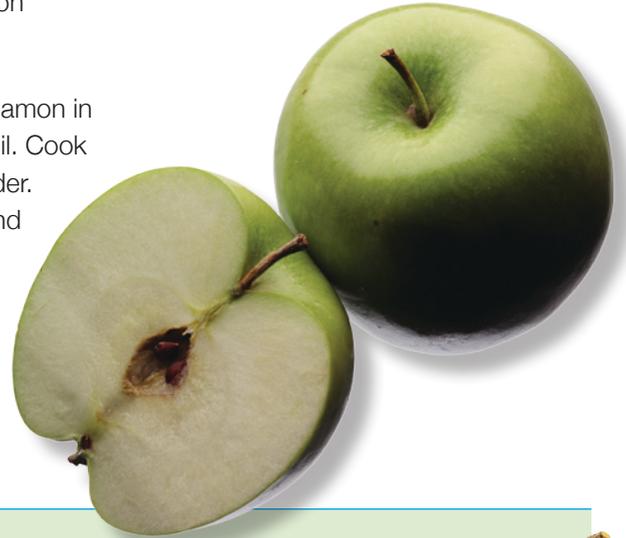
1. Place apple, water, and cinnamon in a small pot and bring to a boil. Cook 15 minutes until apple is tender.
2. Cool. Pour into blender. Blend until smooth.
3. Pour into glasses and serve cold.

#### Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 24, Carbohydrate 6 g, Dietary Fiber 1 g, Protein 0 g, Total Fat 0 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 0 mg, Sodium 10 mg

#### Recipe adapted from:

<http://www.patronatodelperu.org>



### NARANJADA A SU GUSTO — ORANGE SMOOTHIE

Makes 4 servings. 1 cup per serving.

When oranges are in season, as they are now, use fresh orange juice for the frozen orange juice concentrate and water.

#### Ingredients

- 1 6-ounce can frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 cup 1% milk
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 10 ice cubes

#### Preparation

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend until all ingredients are well mixed
3. Pour into glasses and enjoy!
4. Store in container with lid in the refrigerator within 2 hours.

#### Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 99, Carbohydrate 20 g, Dietary Fiber 0 g, Protein 3 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 0 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 2 mg, Sodium 39 mg

#### Recipe adapted from:

Oregon State University Extension Service. <http://extension.oregonstate.edu/catalog/pdf/em/em8758-e.pdf>



# Reducing Screen Time

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends limiting children's total media time (includes TV or video watching, computer or computer-type toys) to no more than 2 hours of quality programming per day. For children younger than 2 years, television viewing should be discouraged; more interactive activities should be encouraged to promote proper brain development. The average child spends 4-6 hours per day in front of a TV, playing video games, or on the computer.

Early childhood educators can help by:

- Getting children active.
- Keeping parents informed on how to limit screen time.
- Providing ideas for replacing TV with other family activities.

Check the most recent "Tips for Busy Early Childhood Professionals" for ways to increase physical activity and "Tips for Parents Preschool Children" for family activities to suggest.



Photo: Network for a Healthy California

## References:

- American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Pediatrics 107(2), 2001. <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;107/2/423>
- Boylan Wolfson, E. [www.wholefamily.com/aboutyourkids/child/television.html](http://www.wholefamily.com/aboutyourkids/child/television.html)



This material was produced by the California Department of Public Health's *Network for a Healthy California*, with funding from the USDA Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly the Food Stamp Program). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. In California, food stamps provide assistance to low-income households, and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For food stamp information, call 877-847-3663. For important nutrition information visit [www.cachampionsforchange.net](http://www.cachampionsforchange.net).

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