



NETA

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For Early Childhood Education Providers**

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Developing A Healthy Relationship With Food Yields Positive Self-Esteem In Children

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When parents assist their child in creating a healthy relationship with foods they are investing in their child's positive self-esteem. This process should begin at the moment of their child's birth and continue in various forms throughout the child's development.

The confident child who experiences self worth and who is capable of valuing and caring for him/herself is the least likely candidate to succumb to peer and media pressure, food fears, body image and eating disorders.

Convey to your child how unique and exceptional you feel he/she is. Through the following activities children learn what pleasures you derive from spending time with them. They grasp a vision of the greater world extending beyond themselves and their physical appearances.

Try the following research-based techniques to build self-esteem:

- Model healthy, balanced and meaningful living problem-solving. There is no better time for a child to observe and practice successful conflict resolution, to feel accepted and heard, than within the safety of the home and family.
- When sitting around the table with your child, find out what he/she is thinking about or feeling. Eating together is a great way to know your child and his/her concerns.
- Listen for any negative comments your child may make about body shape or size and initiate discussion about their comments and concerns.
- Be careful not to complain about your own weight and body image concerns in front of your child.
- Respect your child's hunger and satiety. Eliminate the "clean plate club". Do not attempt to limit or control the amount your child eats. Mothers of girls who become bulimic tend to restrict what their daughters eat.
- Your child needs you as much in his/her adolescence, than as in infancy.
- Encourage your child to take control of different aspects of his/her life. Do not be afraid to provide limits appropriately and consistently throughout your child's growing up years and into adolescence.

March is National Nutrition Month®!



The prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity among American children and adolescents has doubled in the past twenty years. Children are less mobile and physically active compared to previous generations. Sedentary lifestyles and higher consumption of foods rich in fat and empty calories lead to unhealthy weights (increasing the probability of obesity, chronic diseases such as higher blood pressure, insulin and cholesterol concentrations and abnormal lipid profiles). *The American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement on the "Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity. Committee on Nutrition"* stresses the importance of making environmental changes in childcare centers, schools, after-school programs and other community settings. Parents and adults are responsible for setting proper eating behaviors that lead to a healthy adult life.

What's National Nutrition Month®? Every March, the American Dietetic Association sponsors a nutrition education and information campaign to "focus attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits".

Eat Smart, Stay Healthy. It is not a mystery, you can do it! Be mindful of the importance of nutrition and physical activity. Making food choices is personal, consider your lifestyle, aim to achieve and maintain a healthy weight and do not make decisions on an empty stomach. Include a variety of foods from the different food groups and remember moderation is key – you decide how much and how often.

Be Active and Flexible. Exercise doesn't have to be boring! Select different physical activities that *you* enjoy and that fit in with *your* lifestyle. Be flexible and ready to do a variety of physical activities.

You Can Make a Difference! As an Early Childhood Education provider, you have an influential role in improving the health of the children and families that you work with. Start by adopting a healthy lifestyle that works for you.

Promote positive eating habits and physical activity within your Early Childhood Education classroom:

- Take a class walk to a local farmers' market.
- Taste an exotic fruit and vegetable.
- Have a mini "nutrition & physical activity fair". Invite local health professionals to be guest speakers.
- Encourage parents to read food and/or physical activity related stories to children.
- Invite parents/extended family members to demonstrate and teach a cultural dance or share a healthy snack recipe with children.
- Keep it simple and fun!

References:

1. American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement on the "Prevention of Pediatric Overweight and Obesity. Committee on Nutrition". *Pediatrics*. Vol. 112 No. 2 August 2003, pp. 424-430.
2. American Dietetic Association. <http://www.eatright.org>

Farmers' Market News



Early Spring Surprises at the Farmers' Market

By: Penny Leff, Berkeley Farmers' Market Manager



California is lucky to have a year-round growing season. California farmers grow more than half of all the fruits and vegetables grown in the entire United States and California supports more farmers' markets than any other state. Many Bay Area towns have year-round farmers' markets every week, where local farmers sell the best and freshest of their produce directly to consumers. Kids always enjoy a visit to the farmers' market, especially when they are allowed to taste the samples of fresh fruits, vegetables and other available foods.

The first three months of the year, you can usually find these seasonal favorites at the markets:

- Navel Oranges and Oroblanco Grapefruits
- Mandarin Oranges and Dancy Tangerines
- Crisp Fuji Apples
- Kiwis (Some farmers also sell decorative dried kiwi vines)
- Leafy greens for cooking or salads
- Dates and raisins
- Winter squash, turnips, beets, sweet potatoes and yams for baking
- Carrots, of course!
- Asparagus, in February or early March
- Snow Peas to eat fresh, steam or stir-fry
- Fresh baked breads and pastries
- ...and much more

Most people aren't aware of this, but customers can now shop at many Bay Area farmers' markets with the new EBT cards, which have replaced food stamps. Many markets are now equipped with wireless Point-of-Sale devices to swipe the cards. At the Berkeley Farmers' Markets, customers shopping with EBT cards first stop at the market information booth to get their cards swiped in exchange for wooden tokens. These tokens are accepted by all vendors at the market who sell food-stamp eligible foods. For more information, ask the market manager at your local farmers' market about shopping with your EBT card.

Nutritious Seasonal Recipes



Spinach with Lentils



Ingredients:

- 3-1/2 cups low-salt canned lentils (1 cup dried lentils)
- 1-1/2 Tbs. unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/2 cups recipe-ready crushed tomatoes
- 1-1/2 lbs. spinach, washed and stems discarded
- 1-1/2 Tbs. parsley, minced
- 1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 tsp. ground coriander
- salt and pepper to taste



Method:

1. Melt butter in a heavy nonstick skillet over medium high heat.
2. Add garlic, tomatoes and spinach and sauté 3 minutes, or until spinach is wilted.
3. Stir in lentils and remaining ingredients. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Simmer until just heated through-out.

Canned lentils are as healthy and nutritious as dried ones. Choose a salt-reduced brand and rinse them under cold water before using.

Prep: 10 min, Cook: 5 min; Servings: 6
Source: <http://www.mealsforyou.com/>

No-Cook Fruit Kabobs

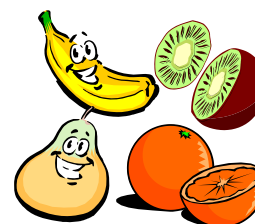


Ingredients:

- 2-1/2 Jonathan apples or other fresh apples
- 2-1/2 ripe bananas
- 2 fresh mandarins
- 3 fresh pears
- 2 lbs. kiwi fruit
- 10 skewers

Method:

1. Cut all the fruit into bite size pieces.
2. Thread, alternating the fruit onto skewers.
3. Serve.



Physical Activity Corner



Did you know that when it comes to being physically active, it doesn't have to be at a gym nor does it have to be more than 30 minutes a day? With that in mind, what do you think is the easiest way to become more active?

That's right, it's walking! Walking is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to get in shape. Walking can happen before work, after work, during the lunch hour or break time and it is something that adults and children can do together. When walking with preschoolers, make it fun. Have them put their creative hats on and mimic different animals; such as gorillas, elephants, spiders, etc.—while they're walking.

Weekend walking activities can be done at a local state park. Take advantage of the beautiful area we live in and get some exercise too! Below is a list of local parks in the San Francisco Bay Area. For more details about camping and hiking visit the Bay Area Backcountry website: <http://www.hknot.com/bab/bab.html>

- * Angel Island State Park
- * Big Basin Redwoods State Park
- * Butano State Park
- * Castle Rock State Park
- * Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park
- * McNee Ranch State Park



- * Mount Tamalpais State Park
- * Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District
- * Muir Woods National Monument
- * Point Reyes National Seashore
- * Portola State Park
- * Sanborn-Skyline County Park
- * Wilder Ranch State Park

Seasonal Gardening Tips



January: Plan your summer garden!

1. Plant bare root artichokes, asparagus, blackberries, grapes, raspberries and strawberries.
2. Prune dormant deciduous plants such as roses, fruit and shade trees, grapes and flowering shrubs. Peaches, nectarines, apricots and plums require the heaviest pruning, apples, pears and cherries need only light thinning.
3. Plant cool weather vegetables like cauliflower, broccoli, lettuces, collards, kale and other leaf crops.

February: Many plants begin to bloom this month.

1. Protect citrus and other tender plants from frost. If the ground is dry, water the day before a frost is expected.
2. Under lights indoors, plant seeds of spring flowers and vegetables -- stock, calendulas, sweet Williams, lettuce, cole crops, root crops, parsley and onions.

March: The spring growing season and spring winds begin.

1. Plant trees, shrubs, herbs, perennials and ground covers.
2. Prepare planting beds; cultivate down to about one foot and add organic amendment, especially for vegetable and flower beds.
3. Fertilize trees and shrubs: fruit trees at first leaves, strawberries and citrus.



Nutrition Tidbits



Tips for Parents: Research shows that eating breakfast helps children to have better school performance, as well as higher concentration, higher test scores and less behavior problems. During school days, morning is hectic and quite frequently the family rushes out the door without eating breakfast. Children mimic adults. If adults set the example, children will eat breakfast too! Plan ahead – **make it a quick and easy breakfast!**

Some Delicious Ideas: Instant oatmeal with milk and dried fruit; Whole grain cereal with fruit and milk or yogurt; Toasted waffles topped with peanut butter; A whole wheat pita stuffed with sliced boiled eggs; Leftovers: just re-heat and eat!

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