

NETA Quarterly News

Nutrition, Physical Activity & Gardening for
Early Childhood Providers



Is There Enough Food for Children at the Table?

The most effective way to improve performance is to provide children with the foods recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Today, many of our children depend upon community nutrition programs. The *Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act*, which provides funding for all Federal child nutrition programs, is up for renewal in 2009. Included are the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, Summer Food Service Program, and the WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) Program. Participation in these programs improves children's health and academic performance, and most importantly secures access to the nutrients required during critical growth and development periods.

Teachers, parents, and health professionals support the renewal of the *Reauthorization Act*. Renewal at current funding levels will allow the 51,554 Alameda County children participating in the School Lunch

Program, 17,367 children in the School Breakfast Program, and 9,898 children in the Summer Food Programs to continue receiving meals otherwise not available. Given the economic crisis in the nation, child advocates recommend that Congress make improvements to the *Reauthorization Act* to expand the child nutrition programs.

Alameda County families need our support to help feed their children. U.S. Rep. George Miller said, "With today's economy making it harder and harder for families to pay the bills, more children than ever are in need of healthy, nutritious, and inexpensive meals." Only 22% of eligible families participate in the School Breakfast Program, 64% in the School Lunch Program, and 31% in the Summer Food Program. We need to make every effort to enroll eligible families. Teachers are a valuable outreach resource for child nutrition programs. They have an excellent opportunity to encourage parents to enroll their children.

Every unused dollar from programs under the *Reauthorization Act* is returned to the Federal government. This represents millions of dollars lost to Alameda County's economy. Increased enrollment in food-assistance programs can not only help protect children from

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hunger and poor nutrition, but can help the community, as well.

Help keep food on the table for children!

References:

G. Miller.
California Food Policy Advocates.

Food Research and Action Center.



**CHAMPIONS
for CHANGE**

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Food Insecurity-Obesity Paradox and Its Impact in Alameda County

Is there a relationship between food insecurity and obesity? One of the most significant public health problems in the U.S. is obesity. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that more than one-third of U.S. adults (over 72 million people) are obese. The prevalence of overweight in preschool children aged two to five, has increased from 5.0% in 1971 to 13.9% in 1974.

Also, high cost and lack of availability may prohibit consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Psychological factors and behavioral changes may also contribute to this paradox. Preoccupation with food, susceptibility to hunger, stress, and depression might lead some families who are chronically food insecure to over eat. Low-income, food-insecure mothers often restrict their own food intake during periods of food insufficiency to protect their children from hunger.

In Alameda County, 36% of low-income households experience food insecurity, and 11% of the population lives in poverty.

Food insecurity exists “whenever the availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or the ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways is limited or uncertain.” In the presence of an obesity epidemic, it may seem paradoxical that there is food insecurity. However, a correlation has been proposed. Experts found that when there is a food shortage, the consumption of inexpensive, energy dense foods increased, resulting in increased body mass. Additionally, studies indicate that children raised in poverty are more likely to become obese as adults. From a practical perspective, it makes sense that people who have a limited budget will select low-quality diets consisting of inexpensive, energy dense foods.

Food insecurity is a prominent issue. An effective step in reducing food insecurity is to enroll children in federally funded food programs. Studies show that participation in federal nutrition programs can combat both hunger and obesity.

References:

- L. Dinour, et al. The Food insecurity-obesity paradox: A review of the Literature and the Role Food Stamps May Play. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2007;107:1952.
- California Food Policy Advocates. Alameda County Nutrition Profile 2008.

United States Department of Agriculture. Economic and Research Services. Food Security in the United States.

P.H. Casey, et al. The Association of Child and Household Food Insecurity with Childhood Overweight Status. *Pediatrics.* 2006;118: 1406.

Food Research and Action Center. Hunger and Obesity? Making the Connections.

Mandarins

Mandarins are a type of citrus fruit that look like oranges but are usually smaller and more pumpkin-shaped. Mandarins that have a deep orange-red color are called tangerines. Other types of mandarins include satsumas, clementines, and tangelos. California mandarins are available from October to January.

Mandarins are a perfect snack, easy to peel, sweet and succulent. They are excellent sources of Vitamin C, as well as sources of Vitamin A and folic acid.

Source:

Harvest of the Month, January, Network for a Healthy California

and

TURKEY SALAD WITH ORANGE VINAIGRETTE

Serving Size: 1½ cup

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

- ¼ cup orange juice
- 2 Tablespoons vinegar, white wine
- 2 Tablespoons finely chopped onion
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- dash of pepper
- 1 Tablespoon oil
- 2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 4 cups torn salad greens
- 2 cups cooked turkey breast - cut into julienne strips
- 1 can (11 ounce) drained mandarin orange segments, or use fresh
- ½ cup sliced celery

Instructions:

1. In a jar with tight-fitting lid, combine all vinaigrette ingredients; shake well. If you don't have a container with a tight-fitting lid, place ingredients in a small mixing bowl and mix together with a whisk.
2. In large bowl, combine all salad ingredients; toss gently.
3. Serve with vinaigrette. If desired, garnish with fresh strawberries.

MAPLE-TANGERINE CARROT COINS

Serving Size: about ½ cup

Yield: 8 servings

Ingredients

- 4 cups (1/8-inch-thick) slices carrot (about 1½ pounds)
- ½ cup fresh tangerine juice (about 2 tangerines)
- ½ cup fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Note: You can substitute 1½ teaspoons dried chopped onion for the chopped fresh onion or as recommended on the dried onion container. Prepare the dressing at least 10 minutes before you need it to allow the dried onion to rehydrate from the fluids in the dressing.

Use white meat leftovers if you've prepared a whole turkey and not just the breast portion.

Preparation

1. Combine first 6 ingredients in a large nonstick skillet; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer 2 minutes. Uncover and cook 10 minutes or until liquid almost evaporates, stirring occasionally. Stir in salt and pepper.

Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 72, Carbohydrate 15 g, Dietary Fiber 3 g, Protein 1 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 0.5 g, Cholesterol 2 mg, sodium 218 mg.

Source:

Adapted from *Cooking Light Magazine*, December 2007.

Another way to add crunch to your salad would be to use 4 tablespoons chopped walnuts instead of the celery.

Adapted from:

Cook it QUICK! University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension Service

Nutrition information per serving:

Calories 200, Carbohydrate 13 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 23 g, Total Fat 6 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 50 mg, sodium 280 mg.

Source:

USDA, SNAP-Ed Connection.

Winter Fun with Physical Activity

Winter is around the corner. Colder and shorter days may deter families from being active.

Being outdoors, dressed warmly is the perfect way for children to stay active and less vulnerable to sickness. If rainy days keep children indoors, here are a few simple ways to encourage them to get moving!

- Dance—Find some favorite music and shake your body.
- Follow the Leader—Lead a marching band. Raise your arms and stomp your feet. Walk like a duck. Drive a bus.
- Pretend—Hop like a frog. Growl like a lion. Trot like a horse. Act like a firefighter. Fly like an airplane.

- Toss and Catch—Bounce a ball. Play catch (try “Milk Jug Catch”). Chase a balloon.

It is easy and inexpensive to make your own active play equipment. Make your own “Milk Jug Catch.”

Cut the bottoms off two empty plastic gallon milk jugs. Tape up any sharp edges using colorful masking tape. Use the “catchers” to play catch with a ball, beanbag, or crumpled up piece of paper.

All these activities meet the specific developmental needs of children ages 3

to 5. They provide skill-building physical play. These skills build self-confidence, help prepare for success in school, and help children feel comfortable about being active the rest of their lives.

Sources:

Let's Get Moving! Working Together to Promote Active Lifestyles in Young Children Ages 2-7. University of California, Berkeley, Center for Weight and Health. Publication 3494, 2004.
Fit WIC Activities. Vermont Department of Health, March 2005.

Photo: Network for a Healthy California



Funded by the USDA's Food Stamp Program through the *Network for a Healthy California*. This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. For information on the Food Stamp Program, call 1-888-328-3483.

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