



NFS100: Healthy Habits: Nutrition and Fitness Practices Handout

Welcome to NFS100:

Good nutrition is an essential component of quality child care. We know that children develop lifelong eating habits through early eating experiences, so promoting good eating habits by providing nutritious foods and educating children and families on nutrition should be a priority.

Objectives:

By taking notes on the handout and successfully answering assessment questions, participants will meet the following objectives as a result of taking this course:

- Identify the purpose and general contents of a nutrition policy
- Identify strategies for introducing new foods to young children
- Identify strategies for promoting positive, appropriate mealtime practices
- Identify content to include in nutrition education programs for children and families
- Identify USDA nutrition recommendations
- Identify strategies for reducing malnutrition and obesity in young children

References:

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Additional Resources:

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3. Martin, J. (2011). *Preschool Health and Safety Matters*. Gryphon House.
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5. Pica, Rae. (2003). *Your Active Child: How to Boost Physical, Emotional, and Cognitive Development through Age-Appropriate Activity*. McGraw-Hill.
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Course Notes:

Use the space provided to record important information for each section.

Nutrition Policy

What is the purpose of a **nutrition policy**?

Introduction of Foods

Be sure to provide at least _____ for children to eat.

Picky Eaters

Nutrition Education for Children

Nutrition Education for Families

Menu Planning

What is the USDA MyPlate?

The sample menu is for 2 to 3-year-olds. Each item represents one serving in that particular food group.

Fruits (1 cup per day)

- 1 piece of fruit or melon wedge, or
- ½ cup of juice, or
- ½ cup of canned fruit, or
- ¼ cup of dried fruit

Grains (3 ounces per day, at least half from whole grains)

- 1 slice of bread, or
- ½ cup cooked rice or pasta, or
- ½ cup of cooked cereal, or
- 1 ounce of ready-to-eat cereal

Vegetables (1 cup per day)

- ½ cup of chopped raw or cooked vegetables, or
- ½ cup of raw leafy vegetables

Protein (2 ounces per day)

- 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, or
- ½ cup cooked dry beans, or
- 1 egg (equals 1 ounce of meat), or
- 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (equals 1 ounce of meat)

Dairy (2 cups per day)

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt, or
- 2 ounces of cheese

Oils (3 teaspoons) Oils provide nutrients that the body requires

- 1 teaspoon peanut butter, or
- 1 tablespoon of salad dressing

A couple of ways to include food group lessons in the classroom are:

- [MyPlate Activities](#)
- [Food Group Videos](#)
- [Food Group Books](#)

Some additional items to consider when planning a nutritious menu:

- **Vitamin C:** oranges, broccoli, etc.
- **Iron:** dried fruits, whole-grain pieces of bread, beans, turkey, etc.
- **Vitamin A:** carrots, tomatoes, sweet potatoes, etc.
- **Fiber:** whole-grain pieces of bread, cereals, and other grain products.

This [list](#) of food books for preschoolers can also help start a discussion about foods without the stress of the food in front of them.

It is also worth noting that studies have shown that certain ingredients can have adverse effects on children, for example:

- **Food Dye:**
- **Artificial flavors:**
- **Preservatives:**
- **Sugar:**
- **Caffeine:**

And do NOT forget to include:

- Foods with different textures, colors, and shapes.
- Foods that consider special dietary needs (lactose intolerance, food allergies).
- Foods that are adjusted to modify salt, sugar, and fat content.
- Foods that are choking safe such as grapes cut in half lengthwise and meat cut into small pieces.

Mealtime Pattern Requirements

What is the CACFP?

Natural and Organic Foods

What does **organic** mean? Why are **organic** foods said to be healthier than other foods?

Nutritious Snacks

Preventing Malnutrition and Obesity

According to the [WHO](#), "**malnutrition** refers to deficiencies, excesses, or imbalances in a person's intake of energy and/or nutrients."

The term malnutrition addresses 3 broad groups of conditions:

- **Undernutrition:**
- **Micronutrient-related malnutrition:**
- **Overweight, obesity, and diet-related noncommunicable diseases:**

Children facing hunger are more likely to:

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According to the [WHO](#), "**overweight** and **obesity** are defined as abnormal or excessive fat accumulation that presents a risk to health. A body mass index (BMI) over 25 is considered overweight, and over 30 is obese."

Children who are overweight at _____ are more likely to be overweight as adults.

The [National Center for Health Statistics](#) tells us that childhood obesity is related to:

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Promoting Nutritious Eating

Here are some resources to share with families:

- [The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#)
- [Walmart Foundation Healthier Food Access grant](#)
- [Feeding America](#)
- [Why Hunger](#)

[Nemours Health and Prevention Services](#), [KidHealth.org](#), and [Sesame Workshop](#) collaborated in developing [The Healthy Habits for Life Child Care Resource Kit](#).

In addition to incorporating healthy measures in your program, try to convey the following measures to the families in your programs:

- Provide plenty of active play opportunities.
- Schedule designated meal and snack times.
- Limit high-calorie foods.
- Limit consumption of sweetened beverages.
- Use low-fat milk with children over 2.
- Provide high-fiber, filling, crunchy foods.
- Eat 3 small meals and 2 snacks.
- Plan non-food rewards and plan activities for holidays and special events that do not revolve around food.
- Help children learn to deal with stress without turning to food.
- Be a good role model of healthy habits.

Strategy Number 1: Review and Revamp Your Menu

- Follow the [USDA recommendations](#).
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Strategy Number 2: Involve Your Cook

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Strategy Number 3: Always Have Water Available in the Classroom and Outdoors

Water is:

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Strategy Number 4: Facilitate Teacher Planning

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Strategy Number 5: Increase Opportunities for Children to be Active

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- Have children participate in the [President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports](#) if you have children 6-12 years.

Strategy Number 6: Eliminate the Use of Passive Media

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Strategy Number 7: Team Up with Families

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Strategy Number 8: Integrate Discussions about Nutrition and Fitness into the Curriculum

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- Read books such as [Stone Soup](#), [The Carrot Seed](#), and [Bread, Bread, Bread](#) to the children.
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Strategy Number 9: Share Resources with Families

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Strategy Number 10: Secure Funding to Support your Initiative

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Encourage Active Play

There are simple fitness strategies that are preventative, effective, and fun. In the book [Your Active Child](#), author Rae Pica identifies 5 fitness factors that affect anyone's health (child or adult):

1. Cardiovascular endurance
2. Muscular strength
3. Muscular endurance
4. Flexibility
5. Body composition (percentage of lean body tissue to fat)

The [National Public Health and Performance Standards](#):

Also, all young children should participate daily in:

- 2 to 3 occasions of active play outdoors, weather permitting.
- 2 or more structured or caregiver-led activities or games that promote movement throughout the day (indoor or outdoor).
- Frequent opportunities to develop and practice age-appropriate gross motor and movement skills.



NFS100: Healthy Habits: Nutrition and Fitness Practices Try This! Activities

Try This!

Family-Style Dining

In **family-style dining**, food is placed in serving bowls on the table, and children are encouraged to serve themselves (with or without help from an adult). Adults sit at the table with the children, encouraging good manners and informal conversation.

Family-style dining is a great way to promote nutritious eating and build social skills. First, however, it is important to adhere to strict hygiene policies. For example, children must use serving utensils (no fingers in the mashed potatoes!), and the same utensil should not be used to serve different types of food. And everyone needs to wash their hands well before and after the meal!

Try This!

Self-Confidence

The little things can make a big difference. Let children plan, prepare, and serve simple nutritional snacks. For example, allowing children to choose the cracker they want off a platter, along with a piece of cheese, helps them feel important and competent. Or letting children spread cream cheese on their cracker and topping it with the fruit of their choice makes them feel accomplished and enhances their self-confidence.

Try This!

Health Appreciation

Talk to children about the foods that are good for their teeth, bones, hair, and muscles, and show real examples of these foods if possible. For instance, you could show milk products for strong teeth and bones. This will help children gain knowledge of how food promotes growth and development.

Try This!

Self-Expression

Bake various kinds of whole-grain loaves of bread and allow children to taste each of them. Provide cookie cutters for them to cut out fun shapes to make sandwiches. Make a chart of the likes and dislikes of the group.

Try This!

Cycle Menu

Cycle menus are designed to save time, labor, money, and storage space. These menus are implemented for 3 to 4 weeks and then repeated in the same order. This format allows you to purchase frequently used items in bulk and store the nonperishable items for future use. You can also organize **cycle menus** by season instead of by month. The Team Nutrition [website](#) is a great resource to use for menu planning.

Try This!

Healthy Options

Apple Sandwich: Slice an apple into thin segments and provide soy butter, cream cheese, or cheese slices for children to layer on. Peanut butter is not recommended and is generally forbidden by local regulations due to the risk of severe food allergies.

Wrap-Ups: Provide lettuce leaves or whole wheat tortillas for children to fill with tuna, chicken, or egg salad. Low-fat ricotta cheese can be blended with vanilla, cinnamon, or 100% fruit juice for a sweeter, delicious taste.

Yogurt Sundae: Provide yogurt and various toppings such as fresh fruit cubes, wheat germ, dry cereal, and carob chips for children to build their sundaes.

Frozen Fruit Cups: Freeze applesauce, crushed pineapple, or fruit yogurt in a small paper cup with a Popsicle stick.

Banana Pops: Mix 2 cups of plain low-fat yogurt with 1 cup of mashed bananas and 1 teaspoon of vanilla. Pour into six 4-oz. paper cups and insert a Popsicle stick in the center of each. Freeze until firm. Remove the cup and serve.

Fruit Soup: Mix ½ cup of orange juice, 1 banana, 1 apple, 2 teaspoons of lemon juice, 4 tablespoons of plain, low-fat yogurt, ½ cup of strawberries, a dash of cinnamon, and a dash of dried mint in the blender. Chill before serving. Makes six ½-cup servings.