

# Healthy Active Early Years

A Grant from the Coastal Bend Diabetes Initiative

January 2009

## Teaching Good Food Habits

Adapted from "Helping Your Overweight Child"  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health and NIDDK National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, **overweight adolescents have a 70% chance of becoming overweight or obese adults. This increases to 80% if one or more parent is overweight or obese.** These statistics stress the importance of being a positive role model. Children are good learners and often mimic what they see. Choose healthy foods and active pastimes for yourself.

Remember, children grow at different rates at different times, so it is not always easy to tell if a child is overweight. If you think that your child is overweight, talk to your health care provider. He or she can tell you if your child's weight and height are in a healthy range.

Healthy eating and physical activity habits are key to your child's well-being. Eating too much and exercising too little may lead to overweight and related health problems that may follow children into their adult years. Involve the whole family in building healthy eating and physical activity habits. You can take an active role to

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## Are You a Good Role Model?

Adapted from NAP SACC Workshop  
Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment for Child Care

Think about each statement and whether it's **A lot like me** (2 points), **Sometimes like me** (1 point), or **Hardly ever like me** (0 points). Add your score up to determine if you are a good role model. Then think of two things you can do to make yourself a better role model.

I don't drink soda in front of the children.	2 1 0
I sit at the table and eat with the children.	2 1 0
I stop eating when I'm full.	2 1 0
I'm willing to try new foods in front of the children.	2 1 0
I eat and drink the same foods as the children.	2 1 0
I bring healthy snacks for celebrations.	2 1 0
I drink water instead of sweetened beverages when I'm thirsty.	2 1 0
I try to avoid high fat, fried foods.	2 1 0
Total Points	_____

13 -16 points:EXCELENT ROLE MODLE!!!!

9-12 points:GOOD, but there is room for improvement!

8 or fewer:It's a good thing your reading this newsletter!

## Links for Nutrition Information

- [www.Nutrition.gov](http://www.Nutrition.gov) [www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov](http://www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov)
- [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) [www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/youth/youth.htm](http://www.ndep.nih.gov/diabetes/youth/youth.htm)
- [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/index.htm)

help your child- and your whole family- learn healthy eating and physical activity habits that last a lifetime.

Tips for setting a good example (from:mypyramid.gov):

- Eat together. Eat meals with your child whenever possible. Let your child see you enjoying fruits, vegetables and whole grains at meals and snacks
- Take It with you. Show your child how to make healthy choices when you are on the run. Put oranges, bananas or other fruits in your bag for snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.
- Share the adventure. Be willing to try new foods, and try new foods together.
- Cook together. Encourage your preschooler to help you prepare meals and snacks. Teach your child to tear lettuce or add veggie toppings to pizza. Cooking together can mean more “mommy (or daddy) and me” time on busy days.
- Keep things positive. Discourage older children and other family members from making yucky faces or negative comments about unfamiliar food.
- Set a good example for physical activity, too. Make play time a family time. Walk, run and play with your child rather than sitting on the sidelines.

## Smart Snacks

Adapted from Nibbles For Health  
Nutrition Newsletters Parents of Young Children, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service

**Quick Snacks:** Whole Fruit sliced into finger food, Berries, Raw cut-up vegetables, Graham crackers, String cheese, Cheese and crackers, Bagel and peanut butter, or Frozen Yogurt

### Easy to Make Snacks:

Milk shake ups: Pour milk, juice and ice in a covered container. Shake!

Fruit Juice Pops: Freeze fruit juice in small paper cups or in ice cube trays.

Crunchy Banana: Peel bananas. Roll in peanut butter or yogurt and then in crushed cereal. Freeze!

**Parenting Nibble:** Sometimes kids say they're hungry when they really want is attention. Take a little time with your child –talk of doing something fun. Your child will let you know if he or she is really hungry.

## Picky Eater Tips

Introducing New Foods  
From: MyPyramid.gov

Sometimes, new foods take time. Kids don't always take to new foods right away. Offer new foods many times. It may take up to a dozen tries for a child to accept a new food. Small portions, big benefits. Let your kids try small portions of new foods that you enjoy. Give them a small taste at first and be patient with them. When they develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Be a good role model by trying new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer only one new food at a time. Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering too many new foods all at once could be overwhelming. Offer new foods first, at the beginning of a meal, when your child is the most hungry. Serve food plain if that is important to your preschooler. For example, instead of a macaroni casserole, try meatballs, pasta, and a vegetable. Also, to keep the different foods separate, try plates with sections. For some kids the opposite works and serving a new food mixed in with a familiar item is helpful.

## January

Family Fit Lifestyle Month

6<sup>th</sup> Bean Day

11<sup>th</sup> Milk Day

19<sup>th</sup> Popcorn Day

20<sup>th</sup> Cheese Day

21<sup>st</sup> National Hugging Day

23<sup>rd</sup> National Pie Day

28<sup>th</sup> National Kazoo Day

29<sup>th</sup> National Puzzle Day

31<sup>st</sup> Backwards Day

<http://www.theteacherscorner.net/calendars/>

## Let's Move! Gross Motor Activity

**Play Ball!** Try using a variety of balls: beach balls, kick balls, tennis balls, nubby balls, large exercise balls, fabric balls or rubble balls.

Ways to use balls: roll them back and forth, drop them, toss them, push them, roll them, and bounce them. Use language to describe the balls and their actions. Children learn about the properties of objects, cause & effect, similarities & differences, responsiveness of materials, vocabulary, ability to influence environment and confidence in their abilities while playing ball. Adapted from Dimensions of Early Childhood Vol. 35, No.3

**Special Needs/Young Child Adaptation:** Purchase a soft catcher's mitt and ball with Velcro strips. The ball sticks to the catcher's mitt making it easier to catch. Adapted from [The Inclusive Early Childhood Classroom](#)