



Eat. Move. Talk!



Toolkit

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Georgia Department of Public Health

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For more information in regards to the Toolkit and/or the associated training contact Chronic.Disease@dph.ga.gov.

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Introduction

Welcome to Eat. Move. Talk!

As educators of young children, it's important to help children in your care grow up to be healthy and able to succeed in school. Good health and educational success are deeply connected. Children that are healthy are able to learn better. Children who have positive experiences in learning and school, have healthier lives. This connection is also important for the future since academic success is linked with more stable employment, higher income and longer healthier lives.

- Research over the past decade has consistently concluded that children who eat well and are physically active learn better.
- The opposite also seems true. Poorly nourished, overweight, sedentary or hungry children tend to have weaker academic performance and score lower on standardized achievement tests over time.
- In addition to healthy nutrition and physical activity improving a child's ability to learn, research has shown that early language exposure is the single strongest predictor of third grade reading proficiency.
- Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is an important indicator of later academic achievement, including the likelihood of graduating high school, and health and economic outcomes.
- The most effective action early childhood educators and families can take to optimize outcomes for their children is to integrate healthy eating, movement and "talk" with their babies/children.
- Language Nutrition is the use of language that is sufficiently rich in engagement, quality, quantity and context that it nourishes the child's brain, social skills and language development. Language Nutrition includes not only talking, but reading books, telling stories and singing.
- Georgia ranks 40th in health status, overall. Improving both health outcomes and the potential for high educational attainment is critical to improving population health and overall lifelong health outcomes in Georgia.
- Early childhood represents one of the most important opportunities to address lifelong health since an estimated 360,000 young children each year are cared for in licensed early childhood education settings in the state of Georgia.

For these reasons, we have developed Eat. Move. Talk! After completing this training, we hope you will be empowered to lead the way to healthier eating, more movement and enhanced Language Nutrition in both your early care setting and in the homes of the children you care for and teach. We believe that this is an extraordinary opportunity to increase learning and to improve long term health outcomes and wellbeing for our children.

Thank you for joining us in this exciting work!



How to Use This Manual

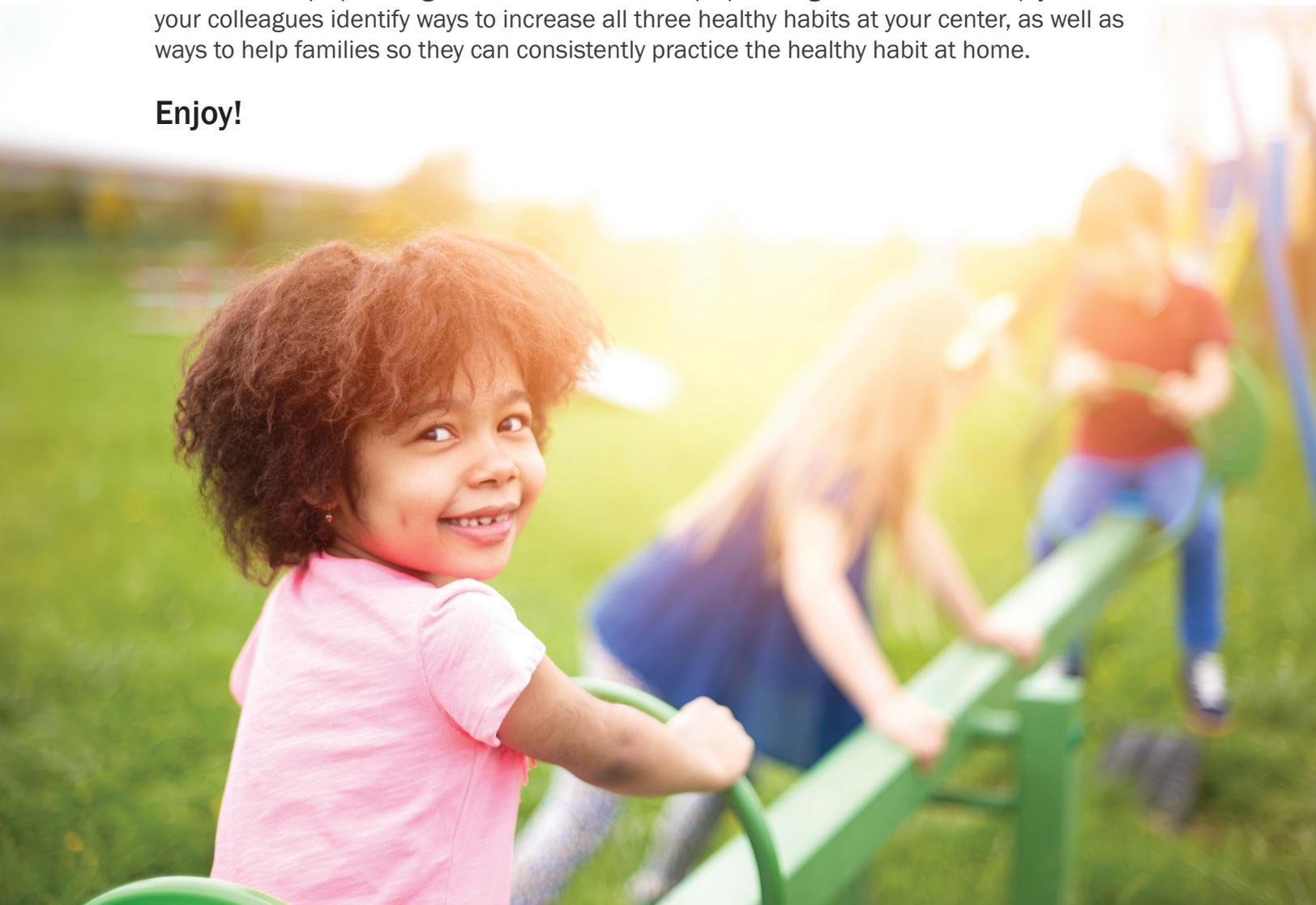
We have divided this Training Manual into three main sections, one for each of our healthy habits:



Each section contains **general information** on the healthy habit as well as **handouts** that 1) contain ideas about how to integrate the healthy habit into the center or 2) can be copied and shared with families so they can practice the healthy habit at home. We have also included conversation starters with ways to increase the quality and quantity of words used with children while engaging in healthy habits. And finally each section contains a **success story** that provides an example of how an early learning care center was able to improve the healthy habit in their environment.

Following the healthy habits section is information about additional trainings, resources, and a next steps planning document. The next steps planning document will help you and your colleagues identify ways to increase all three healthy habits at your center, as well as ways to help families so they can consistently practice the healthy habit at home.

Enjoy!



General Information on Healthy Eating

Eating more fruits and vegetables is important for disease prevention, weight management and ensuring kids continue to eat a healthy diet into adulthood. Most children consume too few fruits and vegetables. In 2007–2010, 60% of children aged 1–18 years old did not meet fruit intake recommendations, and 93% did not meet vegetable recommendations.

How much fruit and vegetables do children need daily?

Age	Fruit	Vegetables
Two to Three Years Old	1 cup	1 cup
Four to Eight Years Old	1-1 ½ cups	1 ½ cups

These amounts are for children who get less than 30 min/day of moderate physical activity, beyond normal daily activities. More active children may be able to consume more while staying within calorie needs.

Source: USDA, www.ChooseMyPlate.gov

Because of the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables and because childhood dietary patterns are associated with food patterns later in life, encouraging children to eat more fruits and vegetables is important. Over the past few years, whole fruit consumption has increased and juice has decreased. However, vegetable intake has not changed.

Early care professionals can make a difference in the amount of fruit and vegetables that children eat and in establishing healthy habits at a young age. Some ways early child care centers can encourage healthy eating are sharing healthy food at meals family-style, preparing healthy snacks as a class, including fruits and vegetables in celebrations, and sending home tips for fruit and vegetable snacking to families.



Kids in the Kitchen

Encourage the children in your care to try new foods by having them help you in the preparation of snacks and meals. Children are less likely to reject foods that they help to make. Kids feel good about doing something “grown-up.” Give them small jobs to do. Praise their efforts.

As toddlers and preschoolers grow, they are able to help out with different tasks in the kitchen. While the following suggestions are typical, children may develop these skills at different ages. Consider incorporating some of these ideas into your center and sharing these ideas with families.

<p>5 Years All that a 4-year-old can do, plus:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure liquids • Cut soft fruits with a dull knife • Use an egg beater
<p>4 Years All that a 3-year-old can do, plus:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas • Set the table • Crack eggs • Help measure dry ingredients • Help make sandwiches and tossed salads
<p>3 Years All that a 2-year-old can do, plus:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add ingredients to a bowl • Talk about cooking • Scoop or mash potatoes • Squeeze citrus fruits • Stir pancake batter • Knead and shape dough • Name and count foods • Help assemble a pizza
<p>2 Years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wipe tables • Hand items to an adult to put away (such as groceries after shopping) • Place things in trash • Tear lettuce or greens • Help “read” a cookbook by turning the pages • Make “faces” out of pieces of fruits and vegetables • Rinse vegetables or fruits • Snap green beans
<p>Before 2 Years</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Position babies so they can see what is happening • Talk about what you are doing in the kitchen • Talk about food items • Encourage use of spoon and cup

Adapted from United States Department of Agriculture Kitchen Activities. Retrieved at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.



Eat. Move. Talk!

The text "Eat. Move. Talk!" is displayed in a bold, sans-serif font. The word "Eat." is green, "Move." is orange, and "Talk!" is red. Below the text are three stylized icons: a green spoon, an orange arrow pointing right, and a red smile.

Tips for Healthy Eating...Even for Picky Eaters

Children may eat only a certain type of food or refuse foods based on a certain color or texture. They may also play at the table and not want to eat. Picky eating behavior is common in children between 2 and 5 years old. Many family members and caregivers worry about what their children eat or do not eat. However, most children get the variety and nutrition they need over the course of the week. As long as your child has plenty of energy and is growing, he or she is most likely eating enough to be healthy. If you have concerns about your child's growth or eating behavior, talk to your child's doctor.

Try the following tips to help you promote healthy eating and deal with picky eating behaviors in a positive way.

Guidelines to healthy eating

- ✓ Respect the child's appetite or lack of. If your child isn't hungry, don't force a meal or snack.
- ✓ Don't bribe or force your child to eat certain foods.
- ✓ Don't force your child to clean his or her plate.
- ✓ Serve small portions allowing your child the opportunity to ask for more
- ✓ Encourage water as the drink between meals and snacks.
- ✓ Try to serve meals and snacks at about the same times every day.
- ✓ Minimize distractions by turning off the TV and other electronic gadgets or toys at mealtime.
- ✓ Don't use dessert as a reward. This sends the message that dessert is the best food. Consider serving dessert only a few times per week and use fresh fruit or yogurt as dessert.

Trying new foods

Your child may not want to try new foods. It is normal for children to reject foods they have never tried before. Here are some tips to get your child to try new foods:



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 more types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals.

Offer only one new food at a time.

Serve something that you know your child likes along with the new food. Offering more new foods all at once could be too much for your child.

Offer new foods first.

Your child is most hungry at the start of a meal.

How to encourage healthy eating and deal with picky eaters

It takes time for children's food preferences to mature. They need repeated exposure, as many as 10-12 times of the same food, to determine their likes. If you don't make it a big deal, it will usually end before school age. Children's picky eating is often temporary.

Tips for families

Let your kids be “produce pickers.”

Let them pick out fruits and veggies at the store or farmer’s market.

Have your child help you prepare meals.

Children learn about food and get excited about tasting food when they help make meals. Let them add ingredients, scrub veggies, or help stir food.

Offer choices.

Rather than ask, “Do you want broccoli for dinner?” ask “Which would you like for dinner, broccoli or cauliflower?”

Enjoy each other while eating family meals together.

Talk about fun and happy things. If meals are times for family arguments, your child may learn unhealthy attitudes toward food.

Offer the same foods for the whole family.

Don’t be a “short-order cook,” making a different meal for your child. Your child will be okay even if he or she does not eat a meal now and then.

Be a good role model.

Try new foods yourself. Describe their taste, texture, and smell to your child.

Our family ideas to make food fun: _____

Making food fun

Cut a food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

Encourage your child to invent and help prepare new snacks.

Create new tastes by pairing low-fat dressings or dips with vegetables. Try hummus or salsa as a dip for veggies.

Name a food your child helps create.

Make a big deal of serving “Maria’s Salad” or “Peter’s Sweet Potatoes” for dinner.



Adapted from Choose My Plate – Healthy Tips for Picky Eaters. Retrieved from ChooseMyPlate.gov/preschoolers/ And adapted from Children’s nutrition: 10 tips for picky eaters. Retrieved from mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/childrens-health/in-depth/childrens-health/art-20044948

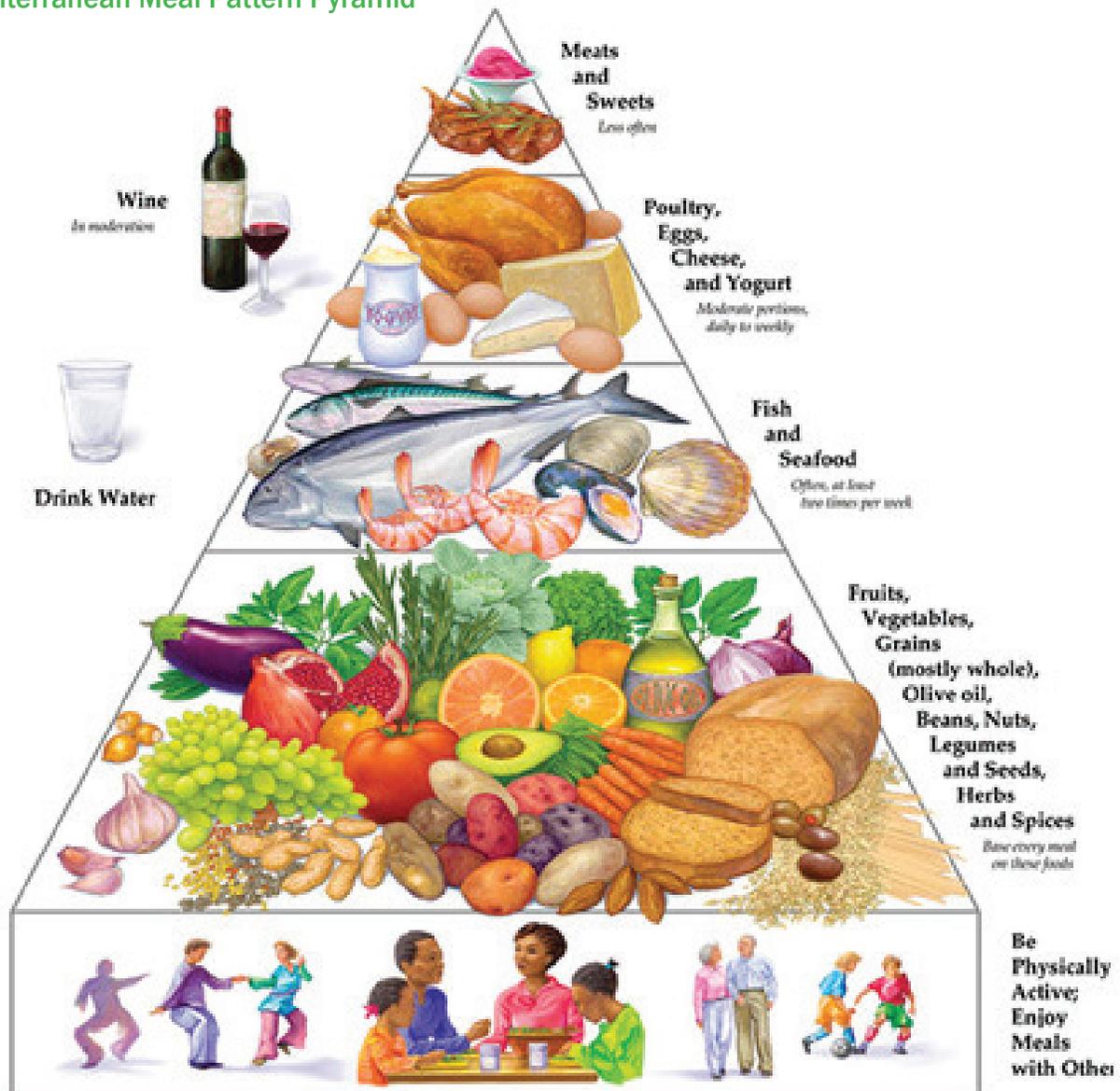
Cultural Considerations in Nutrition and Food Preparation

It is important to understand cultural differences when working with children and families. The varied diets and eating patterns of different cultures may impact how families shop, prepare meals, and eat. Respecting families' traditions and cultures is important.

You cannot assume that your past experiences with a person from a particular culture can be applied to everyone from that culture. It is important to seek more information by asking families questions about their culture and what kinds of foods they may prefer to eat and at what time of the day he/she prefers to eat a large meal. These foods and meals may be different from what you are used to eating.

A Few Meal Patterns:

Mediterranean Meal Pattern Pyramid



Illustrations by George Middleton

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African Meal Pattern Pyramid



Illustration by George Middleton

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Latin Meal Pattern Pyramid

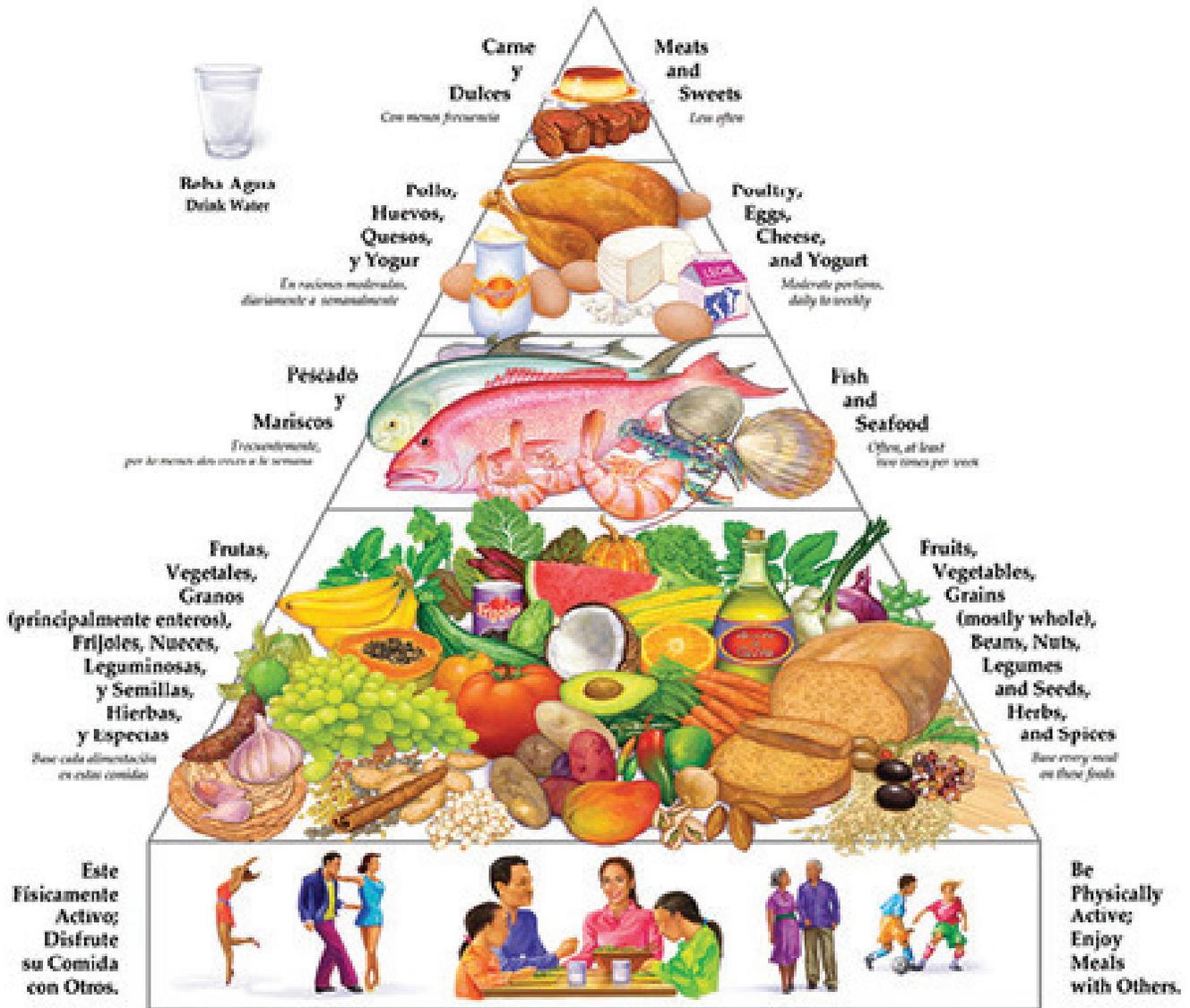


Illustration by George M. M. M. M.

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Conversation Starters: Healthy Eating

	Cooking	Meal Time	At a BBQ or A Picnic
Talking Tips	Whether you are cooking for your baby/child, yourself, or the rest of the family, cooking in the kitchen is a daily activity that is full of talking points. Make the most of the time by discussing foods, preparation, and ways your baby/child can contribute to the situation.	No matter how you are feeding your baby/child it's a great time to talk, because baby/child is especially focused on you.	A community BBQ or family picnic is a great time for your baby/child to experience new sights, smells and words. Encourage other family members to take over the talking as well, introducing your baby/child to everyone and everything that's happening around them.
You could say things like:	<p>"We're making pasta for dinner! Pasta comes in many different shapes. This is spaghetti. It's long and straight. First, we have to boil the water."</p> <p>"Your sister is setting the table for dinner. You can help too! Would you like to carry your napkin over to the table and give it to your big sister?"</p>	<p>Are you feeling hungry? Let's get you into your chair so you can eat. I'm going to pick you up and put you into your chair. Ready? 1, 2, 3...UP WE GO!"</p> <p>"That was a big bite! Chew it all up before you swallow it. Would you like another bite? No? All done? Okay, we're all done with eating our meal."</p>	<p>"Mmm, smell that? That's a smoky barbecue smell. It makes me feel hungry. How does it make you feel? Let's go find out what everyone is cooking. Oh! I see some carrots, celery and broccoli. Those vegetables are so good for us."</p>
	Food Shopping		
Talking Tips	The grocery store is a great place to talk with your baby/child about food, shapes and colors. It's also a good place for you and your baby to interact with other people and each other while you shop.		
You could say things like:	<p>"It's apple season! My favorite apples are green apples. Do you see the green apple? Green apples are fresh and tart to eat! Let's get three green apples. 1, 2,3 green apples go in our cart."</p> <p>"Ooh, look at all these orange carrots. You love mashed carrots! Would you like to get some carrots today? Here, why don't you hold the carrots while we shop?"</p> <p>"Those vegetables are so good for us."</p>		

Developmental Guidelines and Behavioral Milestones: Healthy Eating

Developmental Guidelines: The First Year



Breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding for the first year

- Breastfed babies who are breastfed for at least 6 months have a reduced risk of being overweight, developing asthma or allergies, ear infections, and bouts of diarrhea
- The duration of breastfeeding also is inversely related to the risk of obesity



Bottle Feeding

Practice appropriate bottle feeding practices

- Avoid bottle propping
- Only breastmilk or formula in bottle unless otherwise directed by physician



6 months

- Introduce solid foods around 6 months of age
- Encourage baby to drink from a cup starting at 6 months of age
- Expose baby to a wide variety of healthy foods and textures
- Encourage baby to use spoons and fingers to feed themselves
- Families recognize hunger and satiety cues



9 months

- Offer 2-3 healthy and nutritious snacks per day
- Continue offering fruits and vegetables after finger foods are introduced



Healthy Drinks

- Babies should drink breast milk or formula for the first year of life
- Try to avoid introducing juice until a child is a toddler (1-3 years of age)
- If juice is introduced, wait until 6-9 months and limit consumption to 4-6 ounces
- Avoid introduction of sugar-sweetened beverages

Lots of parents are surprised to find out that babies who are breastfed for at least 6 months are less likely to be overweight or obese as they get older. Breastfeeding can be a lot of work, but it's a great way to bond with your baby and help him or her stay healthy.

Developmental Guidelines adapted from Infant Food and Feeding by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved from www.aap.org. Behavioral Milestones adapted from the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, July 2015.

The preschool years are an important time for developing healthy habits for life. From 2 to 5 years old, children grow and develop in ways that affect behavior in all areas including eating. The timing of the milestones may vary with each child.

Behavioral Milestones: Healthy Eating for 2–5 year olds!

2 Years

- Can use a spoon and drink from a cup
- Can be easily distracted
- Growth slows and appetite drops
- Develops likes and dislikes
- Can be very messy
- Can suddenly refuse certain foods

3 Years

- Makes simple either/or food choices, such as a choice of apples or orange slices
- Pours liquids with some spills
- Comfortable using fork and spoon
- Can follow simple requests, such as, “Please use your napkin.”
- Starts to request favorite foods
- Likes to imitate cooking
- May suddenly refuse certain foods

4 Years

- Influenced by TV, media, and peers
- May dislike many mixed dishes
- Rarely spills with spoon or cup
- Knows what table manners are expected
- Can be easily sidetracked
- May suddenly refuse certain foods

5 Years

- Has fewer demands
- Will usually accept the food that is available
- Dresses and eats with minor supervision

Developmental Guidelines adapted from Infant Food and Feeding by the American Academy of Pediatrics. Retrieved from www.aap.org. Behavioral Milestones adapted from the USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion, July 2015.



Success Story: Eat

Three and Four Year Olds Can Love Spinach... Really!

How do you get three and four year olds to eat raw spinach?
With Spinach Flowers, of course!

Teachers at Wee Care Early Learning Center led children in a fun HealthMPowers lesson about spinach that integrates language and math skills. After listening to a book about spinach to learn about its color, shape and texture, students made and showed off their own “spinach flower” creations. Each child received a red plate and chose either a dollop of ranch dressing for a white center or French dressing for an orange one. Using their math skills, each child counted out five spinach leaves and arranged them as flower petals before eating the leaves in order from smallest to largest. Children were given a small squeeze of lemon juice, “rain,” for their flowers to try different tastes. To the delight of everyone involved, all of the children tasted the spinach!

The creative Wee Care teachers led children in follow-up activities, including pictures and information sent home to families about the spinach tasting, as well as planning for a spinach salad classroom snack the next day.



“What I like most was how the HealthMPowers’ educator helped us learn how to engage the children and make the taste testing hands on.”
– Teacher, Wee Care Learning Center

Eat. Move. Talk!



General Information on Movement

Physical movement from infancy throughout our lives, plays a critical role in the creation of nerve cell networks which are actually the essence of learning. We also know that physical activity plays a critical role in preventing diseases like heart disease, stroke, and some forms of cancer. Therefore, it is essential that children be allowed to explore every aspect of movement and balance in their environment.

This body/mind connection is critical. For example, we know that children who miss the crawling stage, a cross-lateral movement, may experience learning difficulties later on in school.

National recommendations call for two kinds of physical activity for young children: structured and unstructured. Structured physical activity is led by a teacher, where unstructured physical activity is led or controlled by the child's exploration of movement.

Below are the recommended time targets per day for structured and unstructured physical activity.

Age	Structured Physical Activity	Unstructured Physical Activity
Toddlers (1-3 years old)	30 minutes	90 minutes
Preschoolers (3-5 years old)	60 minutes	120 minutes

Both structured and unstructured physical activity are important. In structured activity, children learn movement skills that will allow them to be active in a variety of leisure, sports and fitness activities as they grow older. With unstructured physical activity they learn social skills, how to share and relate to other children during active playtime. Providing both types of activity during the day also helps with sleep patterns at night.

According to recent research, children in early care centers typically only get about 10 minutes of structured or teacher led physical activity per day and only about 33 minutes of outside play. Overall, children spend the majority of their time sedentary, with little time spent in activity that raises the heart rate. The more active a child is at an early age, the more likely they will remain active throughout childhood and into adulthood.

Clearly, movement is an area where early care professionals can make a difference. Since today's children spend so much of their time in early care settings, integrating more physical activity into the center day is important for the development of healthy, achieving children.

Considering children learn through movement, using movement as an instructional strategy can also help improve health and learning.



Conversation Starters: Movement

	Dancing	Outside Time	Bath Time
Talking Tips	Using singing, music, and dancing is a fun way to continue talking with your baby/child, while introducing new sounds and movements at the same time. Put some music on and dance around with your baby/child while talking about what you are doing.	Being outside, rather than indoors, provides lots of opportunities to talk about new observations. Watch what your baby/child is attracted to and help them describe their new surroundings.	A lot of babies/children love the bath and since you need to be constantly engaged with your baby/child, there are lots of opportunities to talk. Your baby/child will likely be active and happy in the bath, so use this time to describe their motions and identify their body parts.
You could say things like:	<p>“Ooh, I love this song. It makes me want to dance! Would you like to dance with me? Let’s dance together! We can sway our hips back and forth to the beat. Do you like that?”</p> <p>“I see you are bouncing to the music! Do you like this song? Wow! Look at you moving your arms while you bounce! Great movements! You seem to really like listening to this music!”</p>	<p>“Do you hear that? Sounds like birds chirping and singing in the trees. Let’s flap our arms and pretend we are flying like birds.”</p> <p>“Look at all the green grass in front of us. Would you like to walk on the grass? Let’s take off your shoes so you can feel the grass under your feet. Ooh, feel that? Let’s walk and run in the grass”</p>	<p>“The water is nice and warm. Do you like the water? Look at these bubbles the soap makes. Bubbles are round and go pop! When we touch them.”</p> <p>“Wow! You are making big splashes with your hands! Can you feel the water splashing all around you? Great job moving your arms around to make splashes!”</p>
	On a Walk		
Talking Tips	Whether you’re in your neighborhood or out in about in the city, walks can be both stimulating and soothing for babies/children. Describing your surroundings helps your baby/child process what’s going on around you and gives them words to describe their feelings.		
You could say things like:	<p>“The city is noisy, isn’t it? Do you feel safe? I’m here, you’re safe, we’re just hearing the sounds of our city. Let’s keep walking together, okay?”</p> <p>“Look at all the mailboxes! This is our mailbox. Let’s see if we have any mail today. Ooh, we do! Would you like to hold a piece of mail? Thank you for helping me carry in the mail!”</p>		

Healthy Tips for Active Play

Why is active play important?

- Active children are more likely to be happy and feel good about themselves.
- Children feel proud when they learn a new skill, like how to catch or kick a ball or ride a tricycle or bike.
- Active children learn better.
- Active children are less likely to be overweight.
- Active children have lower chances of developing diseases like Type 2 diabetes or risk factors for heart disease.
- Active play promotes the growth and strengthening of bones and muscles, especially weight bearing activities like running, jumping and climbing.
- Active play enhances creativity by playing pretend games.

Children need to be active throughout the day. Active play for children can happen in short bursts of time and can be led by you as the teacher or by a family member or by the child. Active play can include playing on the playground, pretending to be animals, dancing, playing chase with friends, or throwing and catching a ball.

Ideas for families

- Encourage the whole family to play together. Let everyone help plan the activities.
- Focus on fun, not performance. All children like to play. They will “win” when they just move, have fun and are active daily.
- Set limits on TV and screen time. Limit TV and other screen time to less than 2 hours a day, as advised by many doctors. During inactive time, try reading, completing art projects or cooking activities.
- Be active yourself. It’s not only good for your health but it provides good role modeling for your child. Active families tend to raise active children. You influence your child’s behavior, attitudes, and future habits. So be more active and limit your own TV watching.
- Set the example for safety by using proper gear, like bike helmets.



Ideas for indoor and outdoor play

Indoor play

Act out a story

Pretend to move like different animals

Dance

**Exercise while sitting in a chair
(run, jump, hop, etc.)**

Play follow the leader

Balance on different body parts

Your ideas: _____

Outdoor play

Play catch with a soft ball or bean bag

Take a color walk where you look for different colors

Garden

Kick a ball

Ride a tricycle or other

Play shadow tag – try to catch your shadow

Your ideas: _____

Adapted from Choose My Plate – Healthy Tips for Active Play. Retrieved from www.ChooseMyPlate.gov.

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Development Milestones: Movement



5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands on one foot for 10 seconds or longer Hops; may be able to skip Can do a somersault Uses a fork and spoon and sometimes a table knife Can use the toilet on his or her own Swings and climbs
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hops and stands on one foot up to 2 seconds Catches a bounced ball most of the time Pours, cuts with supervision, and mashes own food
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climbs well Runs easily Pedals a tricycle (3-wheel bike) Walks up and down stairs, one foot on each step
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands on tiptoe Kicks a ball Begins to run Climbs onto and down from furniture without help Walks up and down stairs holding on Throws ball overhand Makes or copies straight lines and circles
18 months/ 1 ½ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walks alone May walk up steps and run Pulls toys while walking Can help undress herself Drinks from a cup
1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets to a sitting position without help Pulls up to stand, walks holding on to furniture (“cruising”) May take a few steps without holding on May stand alone
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stands, holding on Can get into sitting position Sits without support Pulls to stand Crawls
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rolls over in both directions (front to back, back to front) Begins to sit without support When standing, supports weight on legs and might bounce Rocks back and forth, sometimes crawling backward before moving forward
4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Holds head steady, unsupported Pushes down on legs when feet are on a hard surface May be able to roll over from tummy to back Can hold a toy and shake it and swing at dangling toys Brings hands to mouth When lying on stomach, pushes up to elbows
2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can hold head up and begins to push up when lying on tummy Makes smoother movements with arms and legs

Adapted from CDC Developmental Milestones checklists. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf

Success Story: Move

In 2015, Little Ones Learning Center completed a healthy eating and physical activity self-assessment and based on their results decided they wanted to increase teacher-led physical activity for their children. With no trained physical education staff and a shortage of outdoor equipment, Early Childhood Program Administrator Wande Okunoren-Meadows knew that some major changes had to be made. She partnered with HealthMPowers, a non-profit organization devoted to promoting healthy habits and transforming environments where children live, learn and play.

Through trainings and on-site visits, HealthMPowers' health educators demonstrated physical activities that can be incorporated into a classroom setting and provided resources. The staff and children were fully engaged in the exercises, and the classroom teachers noted that the lesson spurred several new ideas to integrate physical activity into their daily routines.

Encouraged, Ms. Okunoren-Meadows made it her personal goal to increase the physical activity of the children by making the following changes:

- Purchased more outdoor physical activity equipment such as tether balls and poles, bouncing balls, and trikes
- Hired a part-time yoga instructor in addition to the existing part-time dance instructor
- Incorporated indoor movements taught by HealthMPowers into math, science, and literature lessons
- Supported teachers in their efforts to lead children in physical activity games and to integrate physical activity into the daily classroom routine

The most significant result of this initiative was that the teachers now have the knowledge and resources necessary to lead children in physical activity throughout the day. The yoga instructor has taught the children balance, flexibility, and controlled movement. Ms. Okunoren-Meadows has also observed an increase in both student activity and teacher engagement in outdoor play.

“During the training I enjoyed learning that through certain techniques, even small and simple ones, you can get the children to fully engage and participate with different movement exercises,” stated one teacher. HealthMPowers' guidance, combined with the efforts of the Little Ones' staff, has provided classroom teachers with the resources to create a more active learning environment for their students. These changes will continue to benefit the center for years to come.

“The more physical activity events and trainings in which teachers participate, the more they become engaged and staff buy-in increases. It’s such a great thing when teachers willingly incorporate physical activity into more than just outdoor activities.”

Ms. Okunoren-Meadows

General Information on Language Nutrition

Language Nutrition is the use of rich and abundant language, beginning before birth, to nourish a child's language, social, and brain development. This not only feeds the child's brain, but helps to develop their vocabulary and their ability to comfortably interact with others. Reading, singing and telling stories are also ways to enhance Language Nutrition.

In addition to healthy nutrition and physical activity improving a child's ability to learn, research has shown that early language exposure is one of the strongest predictors of third grade reading proficiency.

Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is an important indicator of later academic achievement, including the highest predictor of graduating high school and significantly impacts health and economic outcomes.

Back and forth interaction, also known as serve and return, is the best way to advance language acquisition and will teach young children how conversation works. Avoid using TV, digital games or audio recordings for language development. These techniques do not have the same benefit as adult-child language interactions.

Language Nutrition is effective in any language. Teachers should encourage families who speak a language other than English at home to speak with their children in their home language, or the language they feel most comfortable speaking, so they can be empowered to be their child's best teachers. All babies have the ability to learn more than one language, and learning and developing in two languages has many benefits for children. It allows them to maintain close ties to their families and culture, and it makes their brains very active and flexible, and leads to increased job opportunities as adults.

The most effective action early childhood educators and families can take to help create a bright future for their children is to talk with their babies/children. Early childhood educators can model Language Nutrition for families so that families are empowered to talk, read, sing and tell stories with their babies and children at home as well.



Language Nutrition Skills Checklist

Connect

- Get on the child's level
- Greet the child first (use the child's name) and pay attention to what the child is doing- connect!
- Use eye contact
- Use touch, gestures, facial gestures and a loving tone
- Use child-directed speech - Song-like tone and higher pitch (i.e. "How are YOUUUU?")

Take Turns

- Ask questions – pause – allow child to answer and/or answer yourself
- Use back and forth communication, giving turns to infants and toddlers, even before they can talk
- Short, simple and complete sentences
- Use lots of interesting words and repeat! Repeat! Repeat!
- Explain word meanings

Keep Talking

- Follow the child's lead
- Narrate your actions and the child's actions and emotions
- Respond to the child's attempts to communicate- verbal and nonverbal
- Keep asking questions or interacting – pausing- and allowing child to answer in his or her own way
- HAVE FUN!



13 Easy Ways to Practice Language Nutrition at Home

1. Begin talking with your baby/child before she or he is born. Your baby/child can hear your voice and by the time your baby/child is born, he or she is already equipped to learn language.
2. Your baby/child begins to learn language before birth. Fetuses hear and respond to sound. Once your baby/child is born, your baby's/child's brain is forming connections with every word you say even though he or she cannot talk yet. This is because the brain grows very rapidly in the first three years of life.
3. Talking with your baby/child makes your baby/child smarter by building your baby's/child's brain. Like a house your baby/child needs a strong foundation for future learning to be built upon. Language provides the foundation for a lot of learning to take place, including learning to read later on!
4. Talk with your baby/child in the home language, or the language you are most comfortable using to ensure rich language exchanges. The home language is the language you would say "I love you" and the language you are most fluent in.
5. Talk with your baby/child using parentese or child directed speech. Parentese consists of unique speech features including a high pitch, melodic tone with varied intonation and elongated vowels.
6. Repeat words and short simple sentences over and over again to help your baby/child learn vocabulary.
7. Ask your baby/child questions and encourage your /child to answer with coos, babbles, and eventually words. The serve and return in language interactions makes a difference in your baby's/child's brain.
8. Narrate daily activities to the baby/child, such as changing diapers, feeding, getting dressed or ready for bedtime. Describe to your baby/child what you and your baby/child are feeling and doing.
9. Respond to your baby's /child's lead. Tune into what your baby/child looks at and expressions he or she makes.
10. Encourage others who spend time with your baby/child to talk with your baby/child, including baby sitters, early child care and education staff, hospital and clinic staff, friends, and grandparents.
11. Talk with your baby/child as much as you can, whenever your baby/child is awake. Every word your baby/child hears is critical for his or her brain development and learning.
12. Introduce new vocabulary through singing, reading, telling stories, or as you go about your daily activities. Your baby's/child's brain forms a connection for each word he or she hears.
13. Avoid use of TV or music recordings for language development. Language interactions between adult and child make a difference and TV and recordings do not have the same benefit. Baby's/child's brain forms many connections with every interaction he or she has with you.

The most effective action families can take to increase their baby's/child's educational success and opportunities in life is to talk with their babies/children. Make your promise to talk with all babies!!!

Eat. Move. Talk!

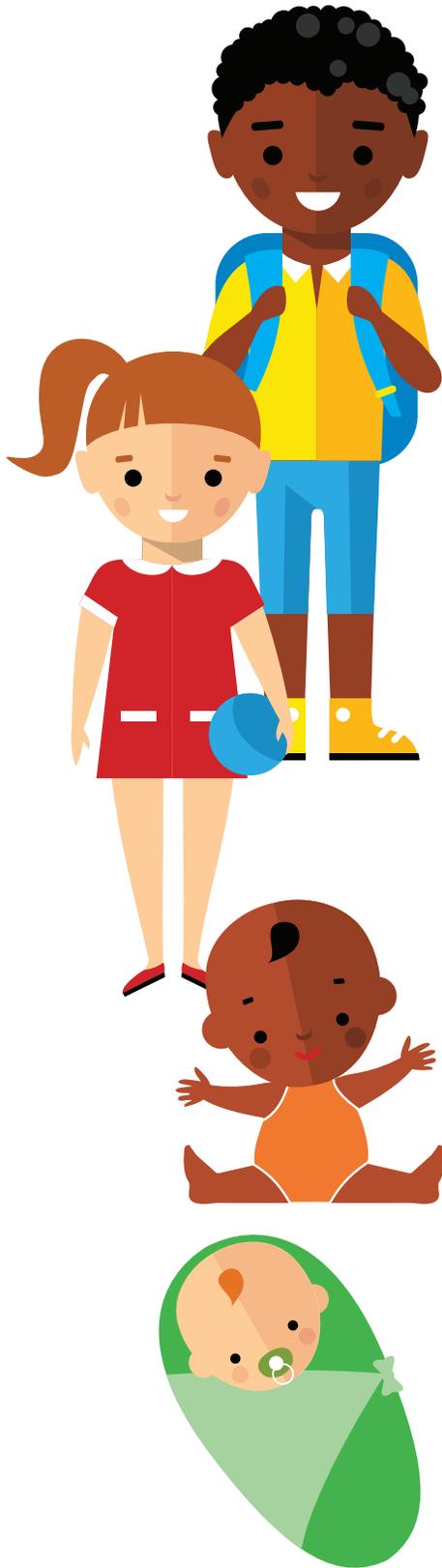


Conversation Starters: Talking

Talking At Home	Reading	Play Time	Clean Up Time
Talking Tips	Even though your baby/child can't read yet, introducing books and stories is an important part of their early literacy. You don't have to feel like you need to read every word on each page. Let your baby/child lead the discussion and watch what catches their interest. Talk about what they are looking at or pointing toward.	Your baby/child is constantly learning and play time is a wonderful time to talk about colors, shapes, actions, and feelings. Pay attention to what your baby is engaging with and let them lead your talking.	Babies/children need to be cleaned up many times a day and having a cold washcloth wiped across their face with no prior warning could be startling. Use this time to tell your baby/child what you are doing before you do it and encourage them to participate in washing up.
You could say things like:	<p>"Which book would you like to read? Can you point to the book you'd like to read? Help me turn the page. Good job turning the pages!"</p> <p>"Do you see the green frog on this page? He lives in that pond! Where do you live? ... You live here, in our home. The pond is the green frog's home."</p>	<p>"Oh! I see you have your toy bunny there. What are you and bunny doing? Bunny has long ears.</p> <p>Where are bunny's ears? Can you show me YOUR ears? You and bunny both have ears but they look different, don't they?"</p> <p>"These are blocks. We have red blocks, blue blocks and green blocks. 1, 2, 3, groups of blocks.</p> <p>Let's stack the block on top of each other to make a pyramid."</p>	<p>"Oh, your hands are all sticky. I'm going to wipe your hands with this cloth. Can you help me by putting your hands out, please? Thank you for your help! All clean now, thank you."</p> <p>"You're looking uncomfortable. I'm going to wipe your neck with this cool cloth and get you feeling cooler. Ok? Here we go. That's better, right?"</p>
Changing Diapers			
Talking Tips	Similar to getting dressed, this every day situation is a perfect time to reassure your baby/child by explaining each of your steps.		
You could say things like:	<p>"Let's get you all cleaned up. I have to wipe your bottom before we put a new diaper on. The wipe is a little cold, are you ready?"</p> <p>"There we go, now you have a clean, dry diaper on. Do you feel better? Let's continue our day!"</p>		

Adapted from Talk with My Baby – Conversation Starters retrieved from www.TalkWithMeBaby.org

Development Milestones: Language and Communication



5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speaks very clearly Tells a simple story using full sentences Uses future tense, for example “Grandma will be here” Says name and address
4 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knows some basic rules of grammar such as “he” and “she” Sings a song or says a poem from memory such as “itsy bitsy spider” or “wheels on the bus” Tells stories Can say first and last name
3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow instructions with two to three steps Can name most familiar things Understands words like “in”, “on”, and “under” Says first name, age, and sex Names a friend Says words like “I”, “me”, “we” and “you” and some plurals (like cars, dogs, cats) Talks well enough for strangers to understand most of the time Carries on a conversation using 2-3 sentences
2 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Points to things or pictures when they are named Knows names of familiar people and body parts Says sentences with 2 to 4 words Follow simple instructions Repeats word overheard in conversation Points to things in a book
18 months/ 1 ½ years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says several single words Says and shakes head “no” Points to show someone what he wants
1 year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to simple spoken requests Uses simple gestures like shaking head “no” and waving “good-bye” Makes sounds with changes in tone (sounds more like speech) Says “mama” and “dada” and “uh-oh!” Tries to say words you say
9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand “No” Makes lots of different sounds like “mamamama” and “babababa” Copies sounds and gestures of others Uses fingers to point at things
6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds to sounds by making sounds Strings vowels together when babbling (“ah”, “eh”, “oh”) and likes taking turns with parent while making sounds Responds to own name Makes sounds to show joy and displeasure Begins to say consonant sounds (jabbering with “m”, “b”)
4 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begins to babble Babbles with expression and copies sounds he hears Cries in different ways to show hunger, pain, or being tired
2 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coos, make gurgling sounds Turns head toward sounds

Adapted from CDC Developmental Milestones checklists. Retrieved from [cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/actearly/pdf/checklists/all_checklists.pdf)

Benefits of Bilingualism

All babies can learn more than one language, and learning and developing in two languages has many benefits for children.

What teachers can do each day:

- Encourage families to use their home language with their children. This allows them to have conversations in the language they know best and feel most comfortable speaking.
- Encourage families to read books, sing songs, play rhyming games, and tell stories in their home language. This keeps their cultural traditions alive and supports early literacy development in the home language and in English.
- Support the home language in your classroom – the home language is the first language children use to learn about the world around them. Allow children to use it to communicate.
- Create an environment that celebrates children’s language and culture – use songs, rhymes, and fingerplays in different languages.

A few of the main benefits of being bilingual are:

- It allows children to maintain close ties to their families and culture
- It makes their brains very active and flexible
- It leads to increased job opportunities as adults



Adapted from Supporting Dual Language Learners: The Benefits of Bilingualism by The Georgia Coalition for Dual Language Learners

Eat. Move. Talk!



Success Story: Talk

At the Mommy and Me Refugee Family Literacy Program in Clarkston, GA refugee women attend English as Second Language classes while their young children attend preschool classes. Mothers receive English instruction, but also attend informational seminars on a variety of parenting topics. This year the center focused on educating families about the importance of Language Nutrition. Mothers also learned how to engage their young children in early literacy activities through the use of songs, chants, storytelling, and reading together.

There are over twenty different languages spoken by students at the Refugee Family Literacy Program in Clarkston, GA. To encourage Language Nutrition, mothers are taught the importance of singing, talking, and reading with their children in the language they are most comfortable. The center provides many picture books and wordless picture books so that mothers can read with their young children without English or printed text becoming a barrier. Mothers are taught specific skills to engage their children with books using their first language, such as pointing and naming pictures, asking a question about a picture, and encouraging children to turn pages in a book while sitting in their mother's lap.

- ✓ The mothers participated in beginning of year and end of year surveys about how often they engage in Language Nutrition activities at home.
- ✓ The percentage of mothers who reported singing to their children daily increased from 48% to 81%.
- ✓ The percentage of mothers who reported reading to their children daily increased from 48% to 68%.
- ✓ The percentage of mothers who reported taking their child to the library at least once a month increased from 33% to 60%.



Additional Professional Development Opportunities

Eat Move Professional Development Opportunity

Course Name	Age Group	Description	Credit Hours
Growing Fit	Infants/Toddler/ Preschool/PreK	Learn how to create a healthy learning environment for Georgia's children.	5 hours

Professional Development Opportunities

Rollins Center Cox Campus for Language and Literacy

Start training at www.readrightfromthestart.org

Course Name	Age Group	Description	Credit Hours
Talk With Me Baby for Infant and Toddler Teachers	Infant/Toddler	Discover a new role as Talk With Me Baby coach for the families of the children you teach. In this course you will learn how to transfer the skills you have developed for making children your conversational partners to families, so they too, can engage in Language Nutrition with their children.	2 hours
Power of Language	Infant/Toddler	In this course, you'll learn how to empower children for a lifetime by becoming their conversational partners.	2 hours
TALK with Me	Infant/Toddler	When you finish this course, you will be able to use the TALK strategy to have meaningful conversations with all infants and toddlers.	3 hours
Read with Me: Part 1	Infant/Toddler	When you finish this course, you will be able to use the TIPS strategy to transform reading books with children. You will have opportunities to have great conversations that will promote their language development and critical thinking every time you read together.	2.5 hours
Read with Me: Part 2	Infant/Toddler	Learn more about the TIPS strategy including how to adapt TIPS with DLLs, plan a TIPS read, and watch a case study of applying the TIPS strategy in the classroom.	3 hours
Power of Language	Preschool/PreK Courses	Learn the importance of language and how to "push-in" and "pull-out" language throughout the day.	2 hours
Meaningful Conversations	Preschool/PreK Courses	Learn the importance of meaningful conversation with children and how to use the TALK strategy.	1 hour
Transforming Story Time	Preschool/PreK Courses	Learn the START strategy, a way of reading books with children that builds comprehension, language, and vocabulary.	4 hours
Building World Knowledge	Preschool/PreK Courses	Understand how world knowledge is necessary for comprehension and how to incorporate informational texts in the classroom.	3 hours
Foundations of Learning to Read	Preschool/PreK Courses	Learn how phonological awareness, alphabet knowledge and concepts of print are necessary skills in preparing children to learn to read.	4 hours
Sharing Ideas Through Writing	Preschool/PreK Courses	Learn the importance of emergent writing and how to facilitate children's use of writing to communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas.	4 hours

Adapted from Read Right from the Start by the Rollins Center for Language & Literacy at the Atlanta Speech School. Retrieved from www.readrightfromthestart.org.

Additional Resources



My Plate – visual reminder to help build a healthy eating style
choosemyplate.gov/MyPlate

Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Families with Young Children - reproducible newsletters that staff can give to families providing helpful hints for healthy eating
fns.usda.gov/tn/nibbles-health-nutrition-newsletters-parents-young-children



Best Practices for Physical Activity: For Organizations Serving Children and Youth – includes physical activity guidelines, sample physical activity policies, resources and tip sheets for families.
d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/media-resources/ECELC/C2P2/LS3/ECE_Program_Participants/English_PhysicalActivityGuide_FINAL.pdf

Go Smart – physical activity app for teachers from the National Head Start Association with simple ways to get young children active. Good ideas to share with families too gosmart.nhsa.org/

Spark PE – physical activity lesson plans
sparkpe.org/early-childhood/curriculum/lesson-plans/



Talk With Me Baby – website includes a wealth of resources including educational videos, printable handouts, additional information and links to other organizations with additional resources.
talkwithmebaby.org

Too Small to Fail: Talking is Teaching – website includes resources such as training materials, tip sheets for parents, tip sheets for preschool and infant/toddler teachers, videos and more. Many of the resources are in both English and Spanish.
toosmall.org/

The Harvard Center on the Developing Child – shares key concepts about the science of child development including how early brain development provides the foundation for learning and health.
developingchild.harvard.edu

NEXT STEPS

	Identify one or two things you will do to build this healthy habit in your Center or Family Child Care Home ?	Identify one or two things you will do to help families build this healthy habit in their Homes ?
		
		
		

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Eat. Move. Talk!

The text 'Eat. Move. Talk!' is rendered in a bold, sans-serif font. 'Eat.' is green, 'Move.' is orange, and 'Talk!' is red. Below the text are three graphic elements: a green spoon, an orange arrow pointing right, and a red smiley face.