



First Years in the First State:

Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care

PARTNERING
WITH FAMILIES



Table of Contents

- INTRODUCTION** 2
 - Introduction..... 2
 - Acknowledgements..... 4
 - How to Use This Guide 5
- BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS** 6
 - Why Partner with Families 7
 - What Families Want to Know..... 9
 - Best Practices in Family-Provider Partnerships 11
 - Effective Communication with Families 13
 - Ideas for Family Events 14
 - Success Stories from Delaware Child Care Providers 15
 - Resources for Family-Provider Partnerships 16
- ASSESSMENT** 17
 - Getting Feedback from Families..... 18
 - Family Survey..... 19
 - Parent Interest Tool 21
 - Family Engagement Checklist 22
 - Action Plan Template 25
- INFORMATION SHARING** 27
 - Information Sharing 28
 - Conversation Starters 30
 - Ideas for Family Activities at Home..... 31
 - Quick Tips 32
 - Curricula & Resources with Connections to Home 36
 - Connecting Families to Resources 38
- RESOURCES** 40
 - How to Use the Sample Resources 41
 - Letter to Families – Feeding Infants in Child Care..... 42
 - Packing Meals and Snacks for Infants in Child Care 43
 - Letter to Families – Feeding Children in Child Care 44
 - Packing Meals and Snacks for Children in Child Care 45
 - Infant Daily Report Template 46
 - Toddler Daily Report Template 47
 - Child Daily Report Template 48
 - Sample Newsletter 49
 - Newsletter Template 50
 - Flyers for Free Resources 51

Introduction

The Partnering with Families Guide is intended to assist child care providers in engaging families as partners to support healthy habits. It will help you understand the benefits of building positive relationships with families and give you tools to engage parents and guardians as partners in making your child care environment the best it can be! Materials in this guide include:

- What Families Want to Know
- Best Practices for Creating Family-Provider Partnerships
- Effective Communication Strategies
- Resources for Family-Provider Partnerships
- Self-Assessment Tool
- Action Planning Template
- Family Feedback Survey
- Parent Interest Tool
- Success Stories from Delaware Child Care Providers
- Ideas for Engaging Families
- Ideas for Extending Center-Based Learning to the Home Environment

Note from the authors: For readability, we have used “parent” instead of “parent/guardian” in many places throughout the guide, but in all situations intend the term to cover both. Similarly, we have used the term “center” to cover both child care centers and family day care homes.

The *First Years in the First State* series includes:

- I. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Administrators’ Guide*
- II. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Menu Planning Guide*
- III. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Shopping Cheat Sheet*
- IV. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Instructors’ Guide*
- V. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Foods that Meet Delaware CACFP/Delacare Rules*
- VI. *First Years in the First State: Improving Nutrition & Physical Activity Quality in Delaware Child Care: Partnering with Families*

First Years in the First State series may be downloaded from the USDA State Sharing site:
http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=1&tax_subject=554

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How to Use This Guide

This guide will help you to assess, plan, implement and evaluate your efforts to create effective partnerships with families. This work is best done in collaboration with families from the very start. Consider using the following steps to guide you through the process:

Step 1: Create a welcoming environment for families. Get to know each of them; learn their interests, hobbies, concerns, strengths, etc. Create a culture of inclusion that allows everyone to feel that they're contributing to the overall health and well-being of the children. Express to each family your desire to build a strong relationship with them.

Step 2: Create an action team focused on family involvement. If you work at a center, the team should include administrative, teaching and food service staff, as well as families. If you work at a child care home, consider asking one or two parents to work with you on this effort.

Step 3: Assess your current practices using the Family Engagement Checklist on page 22. Complete this checklist with your action team in a group setting, where you can discuss each question and its answer, or ask all members of the action team to complete it individually and come together to compare your answers. You will likely find that opinions differ on some questions; be sure to consider all team member points of view and come to an agreement on a group answer.

Step 4: Assess family perspectives on your center/home's efforts to engage families using the Family Survey on page 19. Ask all of your families to complete the survey. Offer the survey electronically on a free survey website (e.g., Survey Monkey) or as a hard copy to accommodate everyone's needs. Create a place (envelope at front desk or on the bulletin board) where families can anonymously return the hard copy of the survey. Electronic surveys can also generate an anonymous response. You're more likely to get honest answers if the surveys are collected in this way.

Step 5: Identify areas for improvement based on the results from the Family Engagement Checklist and Family Survey. Choose three or four areas to focus on, and use the Action Plan template on page 25 to set goals, action steps and responsible parties for each area. Use the information in this guide to come up with ideas and tools for implementation. Remember, it's okay to start small! Make sure your goals are clear and achievable.

Step 6: Present your Action Plan to your families at a meeting, event night or individually—tell them what you heard from them and what you're working on. Ask families whether or not they feel this plan will help to address their needs. Make adjustments based on their feedback.

Step 7: Put your plan into action! Use the tools in this guide as resources. Meet with your action team regularly to discuss progress on the plan. Address challenges and make changes where needed.

Step 8: Celebrate and publicize your successes! Communicate your successes to staff and families and thank them for their involvement. Note your achievements in your center newsletter and hold a healthy family event to celebrate your work together.

Step 9: Add new goals to your Action Plan as you achieve the older ones. Quality improvement is a process that will continue over time. Know that your time and efforts are worthwhile, appreciated by families and supportive of the children in your care.

BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

Why Partner with Families?

System of Care, Education and Support

Families are the primary system of care and education for children beginning at birth. They are present through teen years, adulthood and life's many transitions, and are the most consistent source of support in a child's life. Some families may be engaged and enthusiastic from the start, and easy and fun to work with. Others may seem uninterested and disengaged. They may come from a different background than you, act differently than you expect them to, and have different values and personalities. What you have in common is that you both care about the health and well-being of their child, and this gives you a great opportunity for partnership! Learning about and respecting both similarities and differences can help you understand and relate to each other.

If you're having a tough time engaging a parent, remember that they are under many pressures, the same way you are. Money, work, home life, relationships, caring for a family—these are not easy things to balance without feeling overwhelmed and pulled in too many directions. The interactions you have with families are likely to reflect how they're feeling about these challenges on any given day. When you're feeling frustrated, take a second to stop and remember:

- Parents do care about their children.
- They probably don't realize that their words or actions are frustrating you.
- Seek to understand; there may be something going on that you don't know about – ask.
- Like anyone else, when families feel “heard” and respected, they are likely to appreciate your support and be open to working more closely with you.

You're a resource for them

You work very hard to ensure the health and safety of the children in your care. You want families to see you and your staff as a resource for important information. Although parents are a child's first teacher, child care providers play a large role in supporting a child's development. Many times you will see a child hit a milestone before his/her family does. You are in a unique position in that a parent trusts you to care for their child and to communicate when special events or challenges occur. Parents who feel they are included in learning about their child's daily activities, and are able to come to you with any concerns they have, are more likely to accept any advice and information you share.

Supporting healthy habits

Partnering with families is important when trying to develop healthy habits. Children learn best through repetition and are more likely to make healthy choices if they have the opportunity to do so both at child care and at home. Newsletters, recipes, website links or face-to-face conversations will give parents the knowledge and resources to develop healthy habits at home. Providing parents with ideas on how to reinforce the activities learned in child care while at home will ensure the work you are doing will “stick” through early childhood and beyond.

It's good for business

Partnering with families is important in building and sustaining your child care business. Parents are the customers when it comes to child care. They are paying you for a service, and it's helpful to view them this way when you're thinking about your expectations of them and their expectations of you.

Families who are happy with their child care are more likely to remain customers for a long period of time. Because of this, they will support your business by providing financial resources and potentially recommend your services to family and friends. This exchange of care for money will allow your business to continue, perhaps even grow, based on the quality of care you provide. Having trusting and respectful relationships with families will help them be more open to changes in rates or rules because they will know that you have their best interests in mind.

Collaboration saves time and money

Allowing families opportunities to participate in decisions or changes at your center will create a feeling of partnership. When families feel they are part of your center's community, and see that their contributions are appreciated, they're more likely to become and remain engaged. Families can help you make improvements to your center that you may not have the time, money or skill to do otherwise.

Keeping families involved in their child's daily activities and the center community will lead to a happier and healthier environment for children, families and you. This improved environment will increase the likelihood of continued business through parent loyalty, referrals and a positive presence within the community.

Benefits of Partnering with Families:



Positive Relationships

Financial support from families
Referrals to other families in the community
Community support through fundraising and volunteers
Parent support through volunteers and service lending
Healthier environment
Healthier children
Supportive staff

What Families Want to Know

Introduction

In the spring of 2011, Nemours met with several groups of parents whose children attend child care centers in Delaware. These families represented Delaware's three counties and the City of Wilmington. The purpose of these meetings was to find out:

- What concerns parents have about their children's health
- Where parents search for information about their children's health
- How (if at all) parents are currently communicating with child care providers about their children's health
- What type(s) of information parents would like to receive from child care providers and how

Results

The parents in the discussion groups shared that they were most concerned about their young children's:

- Eating habits
- Physical activity
- Development

In particular, **picky eating**, **portion sizes** and **food allergies** were mentioned as major concerns. Parents reported struggling to motivate kids to eat healthy foods such as fruits and vegetables, especially when these foods are “new” to them. The groups also voiced concerns about their children eating portions that are too big for their age — especially portions of unhealthy foods. When asked about physical activity concerns, family members mentioned needing more information about meaningful, structured physical activity, especially indoors. Finally, children's healthy development was a common concern. Parents shared how they have many questions and concerns regarding their child's physical, mental, emotional and intellectual development, particularly in the critical first five years.

Parents get health information from many different sources including:

- Physicians/pediatricians
- Internet
- Parenting magazines
- Family and friends

Families shared that they currently do not receive much information about children's health from child care providers. However, each group stated that they would like to receive more communication from this source. This research shows that **families are eager to receive information and form closer relationships with teachers, staff and administrators at their children's child care center.**

The types of health and wellness information and materials that families said they would like to receive from their child care provider are:

- Information on motivating picky eaters
- Recipes
- Children’s books on healthy eating and being active
- Monthly menus
- Handouts
- Activity calendars
- Simple tips on incorporating healthy eating into their family’s lifestyle

Parents suggested these materials should be:

- Simple
- To-the-point
- Action-oriented
- Realistic (i.e., taking into consideration time and money)
- Available in many different formats
 - Paper (handed to parents or posted in center/home)
 - E-mail
 - Posted on a website
 - Via text message
 - Shared through face-to-face communication or a phone call

Conclusion

Families are eager to receive information from child care providers related to the health and wellness of their children. They especially want information on motivating picky eaters, serving appropriately-sized portions, managing food allergies, engaging children in meaningful physical activity and supporting optimal child development. However, it is important to take into consideration families’ communication preferences and access to information technology when sharing this information.

To help you communicate and engage with families, we have created a useful “Information Sharing” section beginning on page 28. This section features conversation starters, newsletter templates, letters to parents and information on referring families to simple and inexpensive resources about children’s health. The topics families are interested in are covered in this guide and the *First Years in the First State Administrators’ Guide* and *Menu Planning Guide*.

Best Practices in Family-Provider Partnerships

Below are the major principles of creating effective relationships and collaborations between child care centers staff and families. They range from things you can do yourself to things that require collaboration with families. All are important in maximizing the benefits of strong partnerships.

To think through what you're doing well now and what you could improve related to these best practices, use the Family Engagement Checklist on page 22. To find out how well families think you are doing related to these best practices, use the Family Survey on page 19. Use the results from both surveys to guide your action planning for improving your family engagement strategy (Action Plan template found on page 25).

1–Welcoming All Families into the Child Care Community

Families are active participants in the life of the child care center/home and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to center staff (where applicable), and to what children are doing and learning in child care.

Goal 1: Create a welcoming climate for families

Goal 2: Build a respectful, inclusive child care community

2–Communicating Effectively

Families and child care staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about child learning and development.

Goal 1: Two-way information sharing between the center staff and families

3–Supporting Child Success

Families and child care staff continuously collaborate to support children's learning and healthy development both at home and at child care, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Goal 1: Share information about children's progress

Goal 2: Support learning by engaging families

4–Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children; to ensure that children are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Goal 1: Understand how the child care system works

Goal 2: Empower families to support their own and other children's success

5–Sharing Power

Families and child care staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence and create policies, practices and programs.

Goal 1: Strengthen the family's voice in shared decision-making

Goal 2: Build families' social and political connections

6–Connecting with Community

Families and child care staff collaborate with community members to connect children, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, civic participation, and needed services or resources.

Goal 1: Connect the center and families with community resources

7–Conducting Home Visits

Families and child care staff meet in the family's home environment to connect, discuss challenges and solutions, and expand understanding of the family's home life and cultural background.

Goal 1: Increase understanding of a family's home life and culture, and how these impact relationships, behavior and learning

Goal 2: Extend the child care learning environment into the home

8–Offering Parenting Classes or Adult Education

Families are offered educational opportunities to increase knowledge, skills and social connections related to parenting skills or personal growth.

Goal 1: Provide resources to help parents successfully cope with life and parenting challenges

Goal 2: Provide opportunities for parent-to-parent sharing

9–Reducing Barriers

Barriers to family participation in center or community events are addressed through provision of child care, meals and/or transportation services.

Goal 1: Engage families in discussions about how to best address barriers

Goal 2: Provide support, as needed, to enable their participation in child care center events

10–Home Educational Resources

Families and child care staff collaborate to extend center-based learning to the home environment.

Goal 1: Provide families with the skills and materials to continue early learning at home

Goal 2: Increase parent understanding of and engagement in child care learning standards

Adapted from: *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide*. Accessed July 11, 2011 at http://www.pta.org/National_Standards_Implementation_Guide_2009.pdf

Family Engagement, Diverse Families, and Early Childhood Education Programs: An Integrated Review of the Literature. Accessed July 18, 2011 at <http://www.naeyc.org/files/naeyc/file/research/FamEngage.pdf>.

Effective Communication with Families

Forming positive partnerships with families can be challenging, but like any other relationship they take time to develop, and are an ongoing process. Good communication is at the heart of an effective partnership and involves multiple methods of information sharing related to a child's healthy behaviors, developmental milestones, and social and emotional well-being. Therefore, it is important to learn how to engage each family in communication. What works for one family may not work for the next, but remember—parents want to hear from you!

Listening and exchanging ideas in a respectful way can help families understand that you're working *together* to help their children grow up healthy. Below are general tips to help facilitate communication between you or your staff (if applicable) and the families you serve¹:

- Provide information in your family handbook on the importance of a strong partnership, why you value their involvement and what you can do to work together.
- When families sign up at your center, ask them to indicate how they would like to receive information and when and how they would like to get involved. You may discover valuable resources and advocates in the family members of the children at your center.
- Share information with families through a variety of avenues such as daily sheets, newsletters, bulletin/white boards, electronic methods and face-to-face conversations.
- Schedule parent-teacher conferences at least twice a year.
- Ask families to update you on their child's behavior, preferences and health following holidays, vacations or other periods of time during which he/she has been away from child care.
- Encourage parents to interact with you via a variety of channels: face-to-face, over the phone or via e-mail.
- Create a Family Engagement plan for parents/guardians to sign that establishes expectations for parental involvement.
- Motivate staff (if applicable) to follow your lead and engage parents in conversation on a regular basis.
- Keep conversation light and ask open-ended questions – be curious, not judgmental.
- Assure parents that you are actively listening by reflecting, restating and validating their concerns.
- Use language that families will understand in documents and in conversations.
- Have information and resources available for parents (e.g., handouts, websites, videos, referrals for social services, etc.).
- Cultivate a culture of openness and respect that encourages frequent communication, input and feedback.
- Let parents know that you value and appreciate their input.
- Inform families about and invite them to participate in all center events.

¹ Keyer, Janis (2006). *From Parents to Partners: Building Family-Centered Early Childhood Programs*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Ideas for Family Events

Family events are a great way to share information about lessons and healthy habits being taught in child care. Information sharing helps to keep messaging consistent from child care to home. In addition, family nights and other events give children the opportunity to build ownership of their work by proudly showing it off to family members. Families who attend events at child care will be able to stay up-to-date on daily activities and have the opportunity to network with other families. Be sure to consider parents' time and cost of materials when scheduling activities. Activities are more fun when they include all families. Use the ideas below to host events for the families in your child care center:

Host a family adventure walk: Plan a family walk event by mapping out a course around your center or home or by using a neighborhood trail or walking path. This can be anywhere from one to three miles. Encourage all family members to participate with strollers, wagons, pets, etc. Create a scavenger hunt and let families work together to find the items along the walk.

Invite families to a cooking class: Schedule a lunch or dinner where family members can learn to cook the healthy recipes that their children enjoy in child care. Walk families through the recipe from start to finish by showing them how to wash, measure and cook each ingredient. After cooking, allow family members to enjoy the meal with their children. Share a copy of the recipe with each family. Your local Cooperative Extension is a great resource for this type of activity.

Create a culture and hobby day: Invite families to come to your center to speak to children about their culture, religion or hobbies that involve food, physical activity or health. This can be done in the classroom to enhance learning or as a separate special event.

Have an adventure week: Make pick-up and/or drop-off times at various community locations like parks, museums or libraries to show families places they can visit that foster healthy habits.

Host family potluck nights: Invite families to bring their favorite healthy recipe for a potluck dinner. Create themes such as "recipes from around the world," "crock-pot meals," "no-bake recipes," etc., to help families try new foods together. Create a family cookbook that includes all of the recipes shared at the potluck. Hosting these events throughout the year will give parents a chance to talk to one another, visit the center and share ideas about trying new foods.

Hold a family fun night: This can be done in the center or by partnering with a local YMCA, neighborhood school, library or park. Create stations showing families how developmentally-appropriate games used in child care can be used at home (hula-hoops, bean bag tosses, jump ropes, tag games, etc.). Have the families move from station to station so they can try them all!

Have a TV turn-off week: Commit to a week of no screen time at your center and invite families to commit to no screen time at home. Align your week with the bi-annual national event. For dates and an Organizer's Kit, go to www.screentimeinstitute.org.

Success Stories from Delaware Child Care Providers

Many of Delaware's own child care providers have developed creative strategies for successfully engaging families and exchanging information. Read the success stories below for ideas to inform your child care center or home's family engagement strategies:

“When we started our physical activity program, we wrote a letter to our parents asking them to please make sure their child had a pair of sneakers (and socks) at school daily. In addition to the letter, we put a ‘curiosity’ sign by the front entrance. It's a piece of paper folded over. On the outside in big letters it says REMEMBER. When you lift it up, on the inside it says sneakers and socks. Most everyone reads a curiosity sign (smile), and most children come with their sneakers everyday.”

– *Glenna Kemp, Director, Dover Early Learning Center*

“We have a large variety of communication methods — the intent being parental information. We have the standard weekly lesson plans posted in each classroom, daily notes for younger children and monthly updates for all rooms.

A few new initiatives include:

- A double-sided, legal-sized mini-newsletter called Chit Chat distributed to parents every two months. Included in this is a featured classroom or group of rooms discussing an activity, curriculum area or event; a healthy child-friendly recipe; and staff updates, etc.
- A new bulletin board by the front door, created monthly by a different classroom, focusing on nutrition. For example, “Marching into Health” had pictures of foods (children cut out from magazines) in different colors arranged in a rainbow pattern ending in a pot of gold. Children love showing their work to their parents.
- A daily wipe-off board of the day's menu. It's great to hear the parents and children chatting as they read it upon arrival and then talking about how they liked it as they leave.
- Monthly menus are posted in each classroom and are available to take home.
- Similar postings and verbal communication are frequent regarding children's physical activity. We also try to have visitors come into the center who provide additional opportunities for physical activity (African drumming and dancing, storytelling with animal moving and dancing, etc.).

“Most of our classroom events have a parental involvement invitation and the refreshments are nutritionally sound (‘monster face pizzas’ for Halloween with veggies for toppings).”

– *Bobbi Budin, Director, Newark Day Nursery and Children's Center*

Resources for Parent-Provider Partnerships

The following resources have a wealth of information to support child care providers in developing effective family partnerships.

Parent-Provider Partnerships by Purdue University: Information for child care providers on working with parents, and how they can talk to parents about a number of different issues including growth and development, guidance and discipline, and health and safety. Includes printable materials to share with parents. <http://www.extension.purdue.edu/providerparent/>

A Place of Our Own: Contains questions and comments from child development experts, child care providers and parents on topics including behavior management, parents' expectations, at-home activities and more. <http://www.aplaceofourown.org/topic.php?id=6#sub39>

National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention: Contains resources on meaningful parent leadership, parent education, successful strategies and models, stories of parent leadership and promising practices for engaging parents. <http://www.friendsnrc.org/cbcap-priority-areas/parent-leadership-and-involvement>

Delaware Child Care Resource and Referral: A website that provides information, resources and referrals for parents looking for child care resources, child care providers looking for help with their work, and community organizations involved with children. <http://www.delawarechild.org/rrhome.html>

Child Care Aware®: A program of the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies, it helps families learn more about the elements of child care and how to locate programs in their communities, and provides child care providers with access to resources for their child care programs.

<http://childcareaware.org/child-care-providers/program-planning/family-involvement>

Books and Manuals:

Keyser, Janis. *From Parents to Partners: Building a Family Centered Early Childhood Program*. 2006.

Diffily, Deborah & Morrison, Kathy. *Family-Friendly Communication for Early Childhood Programs*. 1996.

Parent Services Project. *Stronger Together: Family Support and Early Childhood Education*. <http://www.parentservices.org/stronger.php>

Getting Feedback from Families

While sharing information with families is essential, encouraging families to give you feedback and ideas throughout the year is an important part of building and strengthening relationships. Here are a few ideas for soliciting feedback from parents:

- **Intake interview:** Once a family decides to enroll in your child care, it's helpful to schedule a meeting to learn more about what's important to the family. Topics of discussion include: special needs of the child, how the child reacts in particular situations, child's favorite things, specific information about the family, etc.
- **Face-to-face:** During drop-off and pick-up times, share a friendly greeting. When appropriate, share something the child accomplished during the day. During these informal conversations, ask the parents for feedback on a specific topic related to your center or their relationship with a teacher or administrator.
- **Suggestion box:** Encourage families to share thoughts and ideas with you. Remind families that they do not have to sign the suggestion slips if they prefer. Check the box every week. For fun, have the children help to decorate the box and put it in a visible location.
- **Parent advisory board:** Ask a few parents to be members of an advisory group, board or decision-making body. They will give you a parental and customer point of view you may not have considered. Ask them to discuss important agenda items with other parents and to act as a representative of families during decision-making.
- **Family group/Parent café:** Collaboration between parents is a great way to build new ideas, discuss current topics of interest and build capacity. Host a potluck family night or other social event to allow families the opportunity to work together to share ideas, solve a problem, network and offer suggestions for how to best communicate and partner with other families at your center.
- **Surveys:** Hand out family satisfaction surveys every quarter to get feedback and ideas about various aspects of your center. Think about providing incentives for completing a survey.
- **Ideas for recipes or menu items:** Parents may know some healthy and easy recipes you haven't tried yet. Their recipes may also be ones the kids will eat! Create a box or other container where families can leave their recipe ideas. Remember that you can adjust certain ingredients so the recipe meets the nutrition Rules.
- **Electronic communication:** Have families share thoughts and ideas with you through electronic methods such as a website, e-mail, list-servs, blogs or social media sites such as Facebook® or Twitter®.
- **Daily journal:** To provide consistency throughout the day, ask parents to use a daily journal to log their child's behavior and activities at home such as meal and bed times. This will give you an idea of the routine at home so you can adapt during the day if necessary.
- **Daily communication sheet:** A form of two-way communication similar to the daily journal; encourage parents to log their child's behavior and activities at home on the top portion of the daily communication sheet. During the day, you will fill out the bottom half of the sheet with details about the child's day and give it to the parents at pick-up. For more information see "Information Sharing" on page 28.

Remember, if you ask for suggestions, let families know what ideas you have received and how you plan to respond. This information can be given through an e-mail, note, memo, etc. Even if you can't act on all suggestions, it is important for families to know that you've heard and considered their ideas. If families aren't informed, they will assume their ideas have not been heard and will be less likely to suggest anything in the future.

Family Survey

Dear Families,

The best way to make sure every child in our center succeeds is to build a strong partnership among families, the center and the community. The survey below gives you the opportunity to tell us what our center is doing well to support this partnership and what we can do better. We appreciate your feedback.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
My child care center has a welcoming atmosphere and feels like a place where parents “belong.”				
The center’s policies and programs reflect, respect and value the diversity of the families in the community.				
Children at the center are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.				
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The center keeps all families informed about important issues and events.				
The center makes it easy for families to communicate with staff.				
The center communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).				
I can talk to the center director when I need to.				
My child’s teacher communicates with me every day.				
Information from the center is provided in my language.				
The center asks for my thoughts, ideas and opinions.				
SUPPORTING CHILD SUCCESS	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
My child’s teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in child care.				
My child’s teacher understands and supports my child’s strengths.				
My child’s teacher understands and appropriately addresses my child’s weaknesses.				
My child’s teacher gives me useful information and directs me to resources about how to help my child make progress.				
SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
If the child care center can’t help me, they will connect me to someone who can.				
My child is treated fairly and has access to learning opportunities that support his/her success.				
I feel empowered to advocate for my own child’s and other children’s success in child care.				
SHARING POWER	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The child care center consults with me and other families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, center policies).				
Family input in decision-making is valued and taken into consideration.				

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The center connects me to learning opportunities, community services and community improvement initiatives.				
The center staff participates in events in my community.				
The center staff understands my culture and community.				
CONDUCTING HOME VISITS	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
Child care staff make an effort to visit me in my home.				
Visits to my home help child care staff understand my child and family.				
During home visits child care staff share with me what I can do to help my child learn.				
OFFERING PARENTING CLASSES OR ADULT EDUCATION	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The center provides training/education around nutrition, physical activity, child development and/or positive parenting strategies.				
The center offers or connects me to helpful classes that meet my needs.				
The center offers or connects me to classes that help me be an effective parent/guardian.				
The center offers opportunities for me to connect with other parents/guardians.				
REDUCING BARRIERS	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
I have transportation that allows me to attend center events.				
I can find care for my child that allows me to attend center events.				
I am more likely to attend center events if food is provided.				
Center events are held on days and times when I am able to attend.				
HOME EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
The center tells me what my child learns and does while in child care.				
The center shares with me what I can do at home to help my child learn.				
The center loans me books, toys or other resources to help my child learn at home.				
INTEREST	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	NOT APPLICABLE (N/A)
I am interested in becoming more involved in center activities.				

Adapted from PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide. Accessed July 11, 2011 at http://www.pta.org/National_Standards_Implementation_Guide_2009.pdf.

Parent Interest Tool

We would love to make use of your many skills and talents to make our child care center the best it can be! Volunteering can be on an as-needed basis, and you are welcome to turn down the opportunity if the time isn't right. Many of the below options can be done at home, if that's easier for you than working on them at the center. Check each of the following areas in which you would be interested in volunteering.

Administrative & Planning

- filing, typing, mailings, etc.
- serving on a committee
- serving on a parent group
- hosting a parent night
- designing or managing center website

Daily Activities

- read aloud or tell a tale
- preparing activities
- arts and crafts
- music activities
- providing needed materials
- helping during parties/events
- sharing a hobby
- recording a story or song for the class

Outdoors

- leading active play activities
- leading nature activities
- chaperoning a field trip

Fundraising

- planning healthy fundraisers
- staffing fundraisers

Food

- planning healthy menus
- creating kid-friendly healthy recipes
- helping with cooking activities

Repair

- furniture
- sewing
- playground equipment
- plumbing
- electrical
- carpentry
- book or toy

Other

I'd like to volunteer on a regular basis. These days and times work for me:

I'd like to volunteer on an "as-needed" basis.

I am unable to volunteer at this time. Please ask me again soon!

(Name of child)

(Name of parent/guardian)

(Name of child)

(Name of parent/guardian)

Family Engagement Checklist

Before you use the materials in this guide, please complete this engagement checklist based on the communication practices/family engagement strategies at your child care center. For each question, determine whether you are already doing the practice listed, are working on it, or have not yet considered doing it. Put an “X” in the box that matches your answer. Then, consider how you might expand or improve your efforts for each question. If you work at a child care center, make sure to involve teachers and other staff in completing the checklist and brainstorming steps for improvement.

WELCOMING ALL FAMILIES	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Our child care center has a welcoming atmosphere and feels like a place where parents “belong.”			
The center’s policies and programs reflect, respect and value the diversity of the families in the community.			
Children at the center are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.			
COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center keeps all families informed about important issues and events.			
The center makes it easy for families to communicate with staff in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).			
The center communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).			
The center director is available to talk to families whenever they desire.			
Teachers communicate with families daily.			
Information from the center is provided in all of the languages spoken by families.			
The center asks for families’ thoughts, ideas and opinions.			
SUPPORTING CHILD SUCCESS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Teachers keep families well informed about how their child is developing and what goals s/he is working on in child care.			
Teachers understand and support each child’s strengths.			
Teachers understand and appropriately address each child’s weaknesses.			
Teachers give families useful information and direct them to resources about how to help their child make progress.			
SPEAKING UP FOR EVERY CHILD	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center connects families to community resources based on their needs.			
All children are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that support their success.			
Parents are empowered to advocate for their own child’s and other children’s success in child care.			
SHARING POWER	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The child care center consults with families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, center policies).			
Family input in decision-making is valued and taken into consideration.			

CONNECTING WITH COMMUNITY	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center connects families to learning opportunities, community services and community improvement initiatives.			
The center staff participates in events in the community.			
The center staff understands the cultures and communities in which the children live.			
CONDUCTING HOME VISITS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Center staff conduct home visits to families.			
During home visits, child care staff share with families what they can do to help their child learn.			
OFFERING PARENTING CLASSES OR ADULT EDUCATION	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families are provided with opportunities for training/education around nutrition, physical activity, child development and/or positive parenting strategies.			
The center offers or connects families to helpful classes that meet their needs.			
The center offers or connects families to classes that help them to be effective parents/guardians.			
The center offers opportunities for families to connect with each other.			
REDUCING BARRIERS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center offers transportation to help families attend center events.			
The center offers child care to help families attend center events.			
The center provides healthy food at events as an incentive for families to attend.			
The center holds events at times when families can attend.			
HOME EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
The center shares with families what their child learns and does while in child care.			
The center tells families what they can do to support learning at home.			
The center loans families books, toys or other resources to help children learn at home.			
NUTRITION	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families receive written nutrition policies upon enrollment.			
Menus are posted for families to review.			
Families are provided with information about their child's daily nutrition while in child care.			
If food is brought from home, families are provided with the Delaware CACFP/Delacare Rules on nutrition so they can pack meals aligned with these Rules.			
Families are provided with general information on child nutrition.			
Families are provided with information that encourages healthy eating at home.			
Families receive policies about the center's breastfeeding support upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with a supportive breastfeeding environment.			

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families receive written physical activity policies upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information about their children's daily physical activity while in child care.			
Families are provided with information on developmentally-appropriate physical activity options.			
Families are provided with information that encourages physical activity at home.			
SCREEN TIME	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families receive written screen time policies upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information on the benefits of limiting screen time.			
Families are provided with information that encourages them to limit screen time at home.			
CELEBRATIONS	ALREADY DOING THIS	WORKING ON THIS	HAVE NOT YET CONSIDERED THIS
Families receive written policies for healthy birthdays, holidays and celebrations upon enrollment.			
Families are provided with information that encourages healthy celebrations at home.			

Adapted from "A Guide to Engaging Parents in Public-Private Child Care Partnerships," published by the Child Care Partnership Project and "Self-Assessment Questionnaire" published by the Contra Costa Child Care Council.

Action Plan Template **Directions:**

- Using this form as a template, develop an action plan for improving your family engagement strategy. If you work at a center, collaborate with staff to develop the plan. Identify two to four goals you wish to achieve and how you plan to do this. Consider which individuals will be involved, what resources are at your disposal and any potential barriers. Also, create a timeline for achieving these goals and the ways in which you will measure your progress. Modify the form as needed.
- Keep copies handy to bring to meetings to review and update regularly. You may decide to develop new action plans for new phases of your quality improvement effort.

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	BARRIERS / SOLUTIONS	MEASUREMENT
EXAMPLE	<p>What steps will you take to achieve your goal?</p> <p>Determine what information/resources should be posted on the board.</p> <p>Publicize the new bulletin board through a variety of sources (face-to-face conversation, e-mail, newsletter, etc.).</p>	<p>Who will do it?</p> <p>Director/ Administrator and teachers</p> <p>Director/ Administrator and teachers</p>	<p>By when? (Day/Month)</p> <p>Within 60 days.</p> <p>Within 60 days.</p>	<p>What resources will help you achieve your goal?</p> <p>The Partnering with Families guide (i.e., resource flyers, Quick Tips, Information Sharing, etc.)</p>	<p>Who or what may prevent you from achieving your goal and how will you overcome this?</p> <p>Lack of time to create the bulletin board. Will work on board during nap time.</p> <p>Parents/guardians might not be interested in the bulletin board. Will mention the board and what it covers to families at pick-up and drop-off.</p>	<p>How will you measure your progress toward your goal?</p> <p>PROGRESS ON THE ACTION STEPS:</p> <p>Review plan with staff (if applicable) within two weeks.</p> <p>Get agreement on materials to include on board.</p> <p>Each week ask families if they are aware of the bulletin board and ask for feedback.</p>
GOAL 1						

Adapted from: Healthy Lifestyle Initiative. University of Missouri-Extension. <http://extension.missouri.edu/healthylife/Action%20Plan%20Template2.doc>

GOAL	ACTION STEPS	RESPONSIBILITIES	TIMELINE	RESOURCES	BARRIERS / SOLUTIONS	MEASUREMENT
GOAL 2	What steps will you take to achieve your goal?	Who will do it?	By when? (Day/Month)	What resources will help you achieve your goal?	Who or what may prevent you from achieving your goal and how will you overcome this?	How will you measure your progress toward your goal?
GOAL 3						
GOAL 4						

Adapted from: Healthy Lifestyle Initiative. University of Missouri-Extension. <http://extension.missouri.edu/healthyife/Action%20Plan%20Template2.doc>

INFORMATION SHARING

Information Sharing

We know from our listening sessions with families that they want to hear from you! You spend so much time with their children that you become a resource for families on many levels. Families' needs for health, child development and center information varies, so we have listed helpful ways in which you can distribute information and resources that reach all of the families you serve. You may find that one method for sharing information works better than another depending on the families' needs. Feel free to try each option to see what works best.

Face-to-Face

Although it might be a bit overwhelming to rely on face-to-face communication with your families, it can sometimes be the most effective way to share important information about a child's day, behavior changes, mealtime issues, etc. Encourage staff (*if applicable*) to share information, photographs of children's activities, artwork or any other exciting projects with families at the end of the day, as well. No matter how busy a parent might be, most people enjoy a friendly greeting and a quick update about their child at the beginning or end of a day. We have included conversation starters on page 30 for you to use with families you may be struggling to reach.

Daily Communication Report

This is a great way for parents to learn about their child's daily activities at your center. Depending on the ages of children you serve, you may want to have separate daily sheets for infants, toddlers and children as their needs and experiences in child care are different. Examples of items to include on a daily sheet are: child's mood, how often and what food(s) the child ate, minutes and type of physical activity, goals reached, educational games played, lessons learned, bathroom habits (for younger children) and nap times. Additional information can include ideas for what the child and family can work on at home, materials needed for projects, replenishment of diapers, wipes, etc. We have included blank daily sheet templates for infants, toddlers and children on pages 46 – 48.

Newsletter

Families enjoy hearing about what is happening in your center. Create a newsletter that includes information such as special events happening at your center or in the community, child recognition awards, birthdays, weekly menus, healthy recipes, ideas for physical activity at home, what the children are learning, administrative information or reminders, and even fun health tips found in the "Quick Tips" section of this guide. Distribute your newsletters by e-mail or as a hard copy on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis. We have included a sample newsletter and a blank newsletter template on pages 49 – 50.

Bulletin/White Board

Similar to the information included in a newsletter, posting information on a bulletin/white board is another effective way to communicate with families. Have the children add a special touch to the bulletin board or decoration to the white board for excitement. In addition to the items mentioned in the newsletter section, you can post upcoming events, a healthy "recipe of the week," promote a family involvement activity with flyers and a sign-up sheet, use the "Quick Tips" on page 32 to leave daily or weekly health tips for families to read, or post flyers to advertise free resources (*see examples on page 51*). You can make your boards interactive by leaving slips of paper and pens so that families can pin up comments or suggestions or answer trivia questions posted by you or your staff.

Memos/Letters Home

Use these methods to highlight urgent or extremely important information that might go unnoticed if only posted on a board. This includes information on special events or activities that might require a permission slip or money; changes or amendments to nutrition, physical activity or screen time Rules; changes to your center policies; center closing information; or personal letters written to families. We have included letters to families regarding compliance with the DE CACFP/*Delacare* nutrition Rules (infants and children) on pages 42 and 44 and family-friendly checklists for packing a healthy meal on pages 43 and 45.

Electronic Communication

Share information with families via e-mail, text messaging, list-servs, blogs, website or social media sites such as Facebook® and Twitter®. You might find that many of your families appreciate receiving their information through these channels.

Conversation Starters

Face-to-face communication is one of the best ways to form better relationships with parents and provide them with important information about their child's health and activities during the day. To help you feel more confident in approaching parents, we have created a few sample questions for you to ask during times when parents are generally at the child care center. We've also included some sample comments you can make to help open up conversations with parents.

During morning drop-off

- Has Jessica already had breakfast this morning? What did she have to eat?
- How is Jamal feeling this morning? Is there anything I should know before you leave?
- How did Eric sleep last night?
- Has Gabriel watched any TV yet this morning? We're trying to limit the amount of time that the kids spend watching TV or playing on the computer.
- It looks like Katie has juice in her sippy cup. Our center has a policy about juice – we only allow kids to have one small serving at lunch. Would you mind either pouring out the juice or taking it with you?

During afternoon pick-up

- Cassie was a good eater today! She tried everything on her plate at lunch – brown rice, broccoli, peaches and chicken.
- Today Keisha's class worked on learning their colors using finger paints. Have you been working on her colors at home?
- Juan had a lot of energy today! He ran around the playground for all of recess, and after naptime, he spent most of the afternoon in our activity corner jumping rope and dancing to music. What kinds of activities do you generally do at home to help him burn off his energy?
- Earlier today, Lin and her friend got in an argument over a doll. I was very proud of Lin because she stayed calm and solved the issue without involving the teacher. She's really great at managing her emotions!
- Today during lunch, I noticed that Preston had Oreos® and a Capri Sun® in his lunchbox. Our center is required to follow the State's child care nutrition policies; so unfortunately, I have to send these items back home with you. The kids are only allowed to have cookies once every two weeks, and the juice they drink has to be 100% fruit or vegetable juice.

Other conversation topics

- Serving sizes/portion control
- Introducing solid foods to infants
- Food allergies
- Developmentally-appropriate beverage containers (i.e., transitioning from bottle to sippy cup, and from sippy cup to an open-top cup)
- Family meals
- Preparing a healthy breakfast

Ideas for Family Activities at Home

Families often want to help reinforce what you're teaching their child during the day, but aren't sure how to do it. Think about ways that you can give parents opportunities to continue educational and experiential learning at home. Here are some suggestions you can give parents to support their efforts to learn about and practice healthy habits at home.

- Have kids pack a family member's lunch. You may be surprised by what children choose. Have a discussion about whether or not each of the items is a healthy choice.
- Create a scavenger hunt around the house or neighborhood: Can you find three things that make it easy to be healthy and three things that make it hard?
- Prepare healthy snacks and meals as a family. See the *First Years* toolkit for ideas on dishes and preparation tasks that include children in the process.
- Encourage family field trips to a local orchard, park, museum or farm and link these suggestions to activities that kids have done in child care.
- Take a favorite family recipe and make it healthier by substituting similar ingredients: use low-fat instead of full-fat cheese or sour cream, natural applesauce instead of oil for baking, or whole wheat instead of regular pasta. Ask the family to share their healthier recipe and experience with your center.
- Create a sticker chart to work on healthy goals. Each member of the family picks a goal or you can pick a goal as a family. Make sure your goal is clear and achievable, such as "be active as a family for 15 minutes each school night." Ask the families how it went.
- Engage the kids in grocery shopping. Give them a choice in what fruits and vegetables they want to eat this week, and which new one they want to try. If kids have tried a new vegetable in the center, have parents ask kids if they want to try it at home.
- Practice movement activities, including some movements that the child is good at and some that he is learning. Do these movements in a follow-the-leader fashion or include them in a clean-up game.
- Share the high and low parts of your day during dinner. Use feeling words like "happy, sad or angry." Reassure children that it's okay to share their feelings.
- Create a list together of fun things to do instead of watching TV. When the one-hour limit for TV time has been reached, look at the list and let the child choose a fun alternative.
- Read books together each night. This can be a helpful part of a calming bedtime routine. Let the child borrow a book she liked from the child care center to share with her family.
- Give your child 10 minutes of "special time" each day when he gets your undivided attention. Use toys that lend themselves to quiet activity and let your child decide what he wants you to do together during that time. Praise often and ignore "bad" behavior unless it's unsafe.
- Look for colors, shapes and number connections at home. Ask your child to identify the colors and shapes of certain objects you see around the house. Ask her to count out food for each family member's plate at dinner: one roll, three pieces of broccoli, six carrots, etc.

Quick Tips

Offering good information to parents doesn't have to be difficult or time consuming. The following are *Quick Tips* to support healthy behaviors you can add to weekly newsletters, post on bulletin boards or white boards, drop in conversations, send as text messages or post to Facebook® or Twitter®.

Healthy Growth and Development

- Got a doctor's appointment coming up? Bring any questions you have to the appointment. It is up to you to prepare and voice your concerns.
- Hearing an echo? Your one-year-old learns by imitating things you say and do. Set a good example by using kind language.
- "Terrible Twos"? Around age two children begin to show more independence and even defiant behavior. Give your child choices, so that either option is an acceptable answer. For example, "Do you want to put your pajamas on yourself or do you want me to help you?"
- Starting at age three, your child should begin to match objects around the house with pictures in books and magazines. Point to chairs, tables or sofas in magazine photos and let your child point out the objects in your own home.
- Between ages four and five, your child should begin to differentiate between letters and numbers, recognize some letters and letter sounds, and rhyme. Let your child help you read shorter words in their bedtime story.
- How many fingers? Around age five children can usually count to 10 or higher. Try counting stairs as you walk them together.
- Looking for help around the house? Children ages three to five can follow clear, one-step instructions and help with simple chores such as picking up toys or bringing dishes to the sink.
- How do you teach the values of sharing and friendship? By encouraging your children to talk and play with others.

Physical Activity

- You don't have to pay expensive gym fees to be active! Let kids use their imaginations and you will be amazed by what they do with cardboard boxes, empty milk and juice containers, a pot and spoon or taped up balls of newspaper.
- Use the outdoors to have fun for free! Let kids play in piles of leaves or splash through puddles in the rain.
- Tough to fit in an hour of physical activity each day? Take a 10-minute dance break! Breaking the recommended hour into six 10-minute blocks makes it easier to achieve.
- Don't let cold weather get you down. Bundle up and build a snowman!
- Do your kids love video games? Choose active games for Wii or Playstation to help get your kids up and moving.
- Take advantage of nice weather. Take a walk after dinner and save clean-up for when the sun goes down.
- Let children help while you complete household chores like vacuuming, sweeping and folding clothes.
- Take advantage of commercial breaks during your child's favorite show. See how many laps around the house you can complete during each commercial. Chase your child and see who "wins!"
- Plan play dates with other families at your child care. This is fun for kids and can give parents a needed break.

Healthy Eating

- It can take 15 – 20 tries for your child to learn to like a food. If he doesn't like a food the first time around, try again!
- Get free recipes! Visit http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/pubs/pub_gen.htm **recipe** to get meal ideas sent right to your home. (*Note: this is best as a text or e-mail so parents can click on the link.*)
- Kids know when they are full. If they're showing signs like shaking their head no, saying "all done" or simply losing interest in eating, let them stop. Don't ask kids to clean their plate or eat if they're not hungry.
- Don't let meals be a power struggle. A parent's job is to decide what will be served and when; it's a child's job to decide what and how much to eat.
- What do hot dogs, salami and deli meats have in common? They're all considered "processed meats." These foods are high in salt and saturated fat and should be limited in kids' diets.
- Where do I get healthy fats? Fish and nuts contain the healthy polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Trans fats and saturated fats in fried food and animal products should be limited.
- When it comes to providing food for children, it isn't necessary to buy organic. Instead, focus on regular produce that are fresh, locally-grown and free of bruises, cracks or dents.
- Grab a piece of fruit. Fruits and vegetables are naturally low in calories and provide essential nutrients and dietary fiber. They also make quick and easy snacks.
- When selecting and preparing meat, poultry and beans, make choices that are lean, low-fat or fat-free.
- Whole grains are a good source of dietary fiber, several B vitamins and minerals. Look for whole grains to be listed as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient, after water. Some examples of whole grains include oatmeal, whole wheat flour and brown rice.
- Diets high in fiber can lower risk for heart disease and prevent constipation. Fruits, vegetables and beans are great sources of fiber.
- Is your child picky when it comes to eating his fruits and veggies? Get creative! Try blending fruit, yogurt and low-fat milk into a delicious smoothie. You can also let him make his own kabob with fruits and veggies that he has helped pick out.
- Did you know that you can get milk and apple dippers instead of soda and fries with a Happy Meal at McDonald's? Aim for healthy choices, even when you're on the go.

Beverages

- Juice is high in sugar and should be limited in kids' diets. Avoid serving juice to infants and limit kids aged one to five to 4 oz. of 100% juice a day.
- Got milk? For many kids, sugary drinks have taken the place of milk. Skip the soda and fruit drinks and serve milk at meals.
- Water and milk are the healthiest beverages for children. Kids aged one should drink whole milk, while kids two years and older should drink 1% (low-fat) or fat-free.
- Re-think your drink! When thirsty, think water. To spice it up, try flavoring water with fresh fruit or vegetable slices.
- If you're like most Americans, giving up soda would cut 66,000 calories from your diet each year. That's the total number of calories you should eat in a month and equates to 19 pounds of body fat. Choose water or fat-free milk instead of soda.
- Soda, sports drinks (e.g., Gatorade®), sweet teas, lemonades, coffee drinks and powdered drink mixes (e.g., Kool Aid®) usually have added sugars that can greatly increase a child's caloric intake. Choose water or 1% (low-fat) or fat-free milk instead.
- Artificially sweetened drinks should be limited so they don't take the place of healthier drinks, such as water and milk.

Beverages (cont'd)

- If your child normally drinks large amounts of sugary beverages, artificially sweetened drinks may work well as a transition to healthier options, with the end goal being mostly fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk and water.
- Coke Classic and Pepsi (pH 2.5) are almost as acidic as car-battery acid (pH 1)! Serve water or 1% (low-fat) or fat-free milk.

Shopping Tips

- Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can be cheaper than fresh fruits and vegetables. When you do choose frozen, canned or dried products, choose those without added sugars, sauces or seasonings.
- Shopping for cheese? Make sure you read product labels carefully and avoid buying anything labeled “cheese food” or “cheese product.” These products are not considered “real” cheese and are high in salt, fat and fillers.
- Cereals should have no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving. A few examples include: Cheerios,[®] Kix,[®] Honey Kix,[®] Wheaties,[®] Wheat Chex,[®] Total,[®] Shredded Mini Wheats,[®] and Rice Krispies.[®]
- You don't always have to buy fresh. Frozen and canned fruits are healthy, too. Look for fruit canned in 100% fruit juice, or if it's canned in syrup, drain and rinse before using.
- Purchase canned vegetables that are low in sodium or say “no salt added.” Avoid cans with dents, bumps or holes to be sure that your food will be safe from bacteria that could be harmful.
- Look for 100% whole grain or 100% whole wheat breads, crackers and pasta.
- High fructose corn syrup is just like any other sugar and should be limited in kids' diets. Check to see if it's hiding in the breads, crackers and sweets you buy.
- Where is the more reliable nutrition information located on a food package? The Nutrition Facts label! Compare similar food items and choose the ones with lower amounts of sugar, fat and sodium.
- To make a healthy choice on grains, look for the word “whole” in the first ingredient of grain products. For example, “whole grain corn” or “whole wheat flour” instead of “corn” or “wheat flour.”

Healthy Celebrations

- Birthday or holiday celebration coming up? Plan a pajama party, read-a-thon, or game day to make the celebration about more than food.
- Need a healthy birthday treat? Fill small ice cream cones with pudding made from fat-free milk and top with fruit.
- Healthy holiday idea: celebrate with fruits and veggies in the holiday's traditional colors; like baby carrots on Halloween and cherry tomatoes at Christmas.
- Making a birthday cake? Use natural applesauce instead of oil. It's more nutritious and just as delicious. No one will know the difference!

Snack and Meal Ideas

- Trying to keep your child busy while you're fixing dinner? Let your three-year-old help with mixing and mashing ingredients while cooking.
- Trying to keep your child busy while you're fixing dinner? Let your four- to five-year old use measuring spoons and cups to add ingredients while cooking.
- Want a quick on-the-go snack? Keep healthy cereal in small baggies to take on the road with you. For older children, try small boxes of raisins or trail mix.
- Make a healthy pizza: toast an English muffin, drizzle with pizza sauce and sprinkle with low-fat mozzarella cheese and veggies.
- Make your own parfait: layer yogurt and bite-size fruit pieces.

Snack and Meal Ideas *(cont'd.)*

- Make fruit fun! Fill a waffle cone with bite-size fruit pieces.
- Make your own fruit popsicle. Dip a peeled banana in yogurt. Roll in crushed cereal and freeze.
- Need a new snack idea? Stuff a whole grain pita pocket with ricotta or cottage cheese and apple slices. Top with a dash of cinnamon.
- Make a quick and healthy breakfast: toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and canned, fresh or frozen fruit.
- Want an EASY anytime snack? Cut up veggies right after you buy them so they are easy to grab in a hurry. Store in the fridge where kids can reach them.
- Need to whip up a quick breakfast for the kids? Try original/plain instant oatmeal with any fruit and a dash of cinnamon.

Curricula & Resources with Connections to Home

The following curricula and resources are designed to promote and support healthy eating and physical activity in early childhood settings. Of all similar resources, these are listed specifically because they include family engagement components.

Choosy Kids, available for a fee

Choosy Kids offers I Am Moving, I Am Learning (IMIL) materials developed for Head Start to a wider audience. The program includes information for families and teachers, as well as games and activity CDs to keep children moving, learning and making healthy choices.

<http://www.choosykids.com/CK2/>

Color Me Healthy, available for a fee

A program developed to reach children ages four and five with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. The kit contains lessons, picture cards, posters, a music CD and family newsletters. <http://www.colormehealthy.com/professional/index.html>

Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH®) Early Childhood Program, available for a fee

Modeled after the original coordinated school health program, this program is designed to nurture a love for physical activity, provide an introduction to classroom-based gardening and nutrition, and encourage healthy eating in children ages three through five. The kit includes parent tip sheets that encourage family involvement. <http://www.catchinfo.org/pdf/cec%20flier.pdf>

Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings, free download

An intervention that provides nutrition and physical activity education to preschool children, their parents and child care staff. The curriculum focuses on improving the nutrition and physical activity behaviors of preschool children and their parents/guardians, and influencing food and activity practices in child care settings.

<http://www.health.state.ny.us/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/ewphccs.htm>

Sesame Street: Healthy Habits for Life, free download

A 100-page guide — available in English and Spanish — with resources to help you incorporate healthy physical activity and nutrition habits into your everyday life. Features poems, songs, posters, activities, family newsletters and more!

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/initiatives/health/healthyhabits/>

Grow It, Try It, Like It!, free download or hard copy

A garden-themed nutrition education kit for child care center staff that introduces children to three fruits and three vegetables. The kit includes seven booklets featuring the fruits and vegetables with fun activities and a DVD with Cool Puppy Pup's Picnic and Lunch Parties. Each set of lessons contains: hands-on activities, planting activities and nutrition education activities that introduce MyPlate for Preschoolers. The kit promotes learning at home with fun parent/child activities and family-sized recipes that give tips for cooking with children.

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/growit.html>

Power Panther Preschool Implementation Guide, free download

A 10-lesson guide designed to encourage consumption of fruits and vegetables and promote physical movement for preschool-age children. The kit includes classroom activities, music CDs, newsletters for parents and six children's books. http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=2&tax_subject=552&level3_id=0&level4_id=0&level5_id=0&topic_id=2193&&placement_default=0

Animal Trackers, available for a fee

A physical education program for preschool children ages three to six. Featuring more than 60 activities spread out over 10 units, and filled with colorful characters and tons of games, songs and stories, children will learn to associate developing motor skills and coordination with fun! The kit includes a teachers' activity book, music CD, a poster set and 10 family take-home activities. <http://www.healthy-start.com/preschool-teaching-aids/animal-trackers.html>

5-A-Day the Preschool Way, free download

Inside this module you will find many tools to assist in improving the child care center nutrition environment. There are circle time and classroom activities, coloring sheets, parent handouts, kid-friendly recipes and other resources. Some of the activities explore or introduce the concepts of counting or color matching using fruits and vegetables. http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nal_display/index.php?info_center=14&tax_level=2&tax_subject=552&level3_id=0&level4_id=0&level5_id=0&topic_id=2153&&placement_default=0

Early Sprouts, available for a fee

This program aims to increase children's food preferences for fruits and vegetables, and to promote family-based dietary changes through a seed-to-table curriculum and working garden. The program addresses children's fear of new foods through multiple exposures to targeted fruits and vegetables including sensory exploration, tasting sessions, cooking activities and family recipe kits. <http://www.earlysprouts.org/index.htm>

Best Practices for Physical Activity: A Guide to Help Children Grow Up Healthy, free download

This guide presents a comprehensive overview of physical activity recommendations for children and youth, as well as useful terms defined, frequently asked questions, parent tip sheets, handouts, and creative ideas for engaging children and their families in physical activity. <http://www.nemours.org/service/preventive/nhps/resource/publication.html>

I am Moving, I am Learning (IMIL), must attend training

IMIL is a proactive approach for addressing childhood obesity in Head Start children. Launched in 2005, this program seeks to increase moderate to vigorous physical activity, improve the quality of movement activities intentionally planned and facilitated by adults, and promote healthy food choices. <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ecdh/Health/Nutrition/Nutrition%20Program%20Staff/IMIL/IamMovingIam.htm>

Connecting Families to Resources

Families are often looking for the most up-to-date and reliable health and development information for their children. Many times they turn to the Internet for answers. However, the Internet can be overwhelming and doesn't always provide accurate information. Therefore, we've taken parents' most frequently mentioned needs and created the following list of the most current and accurate resources for you to share with them.

National Organizations and Initiatives:

KidsHealth.org

The most-visited website on the Internet for information about children's healthy growth and development, KidsHealth provides health information from top doctors in a fun and educational way. The website is separated into different sections for parents, teens and kids.

<http://www.kidshealth.org>

“Just in Time Parenting” Newsletter

Just in Time Parenting is a free parenting e-newsletter designed to keep you up-to-date on health and development information related to your child at a specific age. Parents will need to register to receive these newsletters, however, registration is free!

<http://www.extension.org/pages/22110/just-in-time-parenting-e-newsletters>

Myplate.gov

The United States Department of Agriculture replaced the Food Guide Pyramid with MyPlate in June 2011. Information regarding the food groups, tips, interactive tools and other useful resources can be found on this website. <http://www.choosemyplate.gov>

Let's Move! Child Care

Launched by First Lady Michelle Obama, this program is a nationwide call-to-action that empowers child care providers to make healthy changes for children. Parents/guardians and child care providers can benefit from the healthy lifestyle tools, tip sheets and other resources provided on this website. <http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org/welcome.html>

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

The parenting section of this website provides information regarding healthy living, safety at home and the community, immunization schedules and developmental milestones.

<http://www.cdc.gov/parents/index.html>

The Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Sharing Gallery

WIC provides information and resources about healthy eating, family meals, active play and activities for families.

http://www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks/Sharing_Center/gallery/sharinggallery.htm

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition

Team Nutrition is a USDA initiative to support childhood nutrition through educating and supporting parents, children, providers and other community members. Resources include free bedtime stories, meal ideas and activities for children. <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/library.html>

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) “Parenting Corner”

This website offers current and reliable information on almost all health topics, specifically developmental milestones, healthy living, safety and prevention, and family life. Tips, tools and current news are also available. <http://www.healthychildren.org>

California Childcare Health Program

The California Childcare Health Program offers tip sheets that cover a variety of health topics including picky eaters, beverage choices and food allergies. Tip sheets are in English and Spanish. <http://www.ucsfchildcarehealth.org/html/pandr/factsheetsmain.htm>

Sesame Street Workshop

Using the Sesame Street characters, this website provides information related to healthy development, life-skills, good nutrition and physical activity. <http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents>

Zero to Three: Family, Friend & Neighbor Care

A national non-profit agency that promotes the health and development of infants and toddlers. This website showcases resources around early brain development, behavior and temperament, healthy eating, school readiness, screen time, play skills and much more. <http://www.zerotothree.org/early-care-education/family-friend-neighbor-care/family-friend-neighbor.html>

Delaware Resources:

Department of Education, Parents as Teachers

Provides parent education services to parents with first-born children ages birth through 36 months. A trained parent educator makes monthly home visits to provide information to parents about their children’s health and development. Services are offered in New Castle, Kent and Sussex counties. Phone number: (302) 735-4210 http://www.doe.k12.de.us/infosuites/students_family_earlychildhood/parentsasteachers.shtml

Spark Magazine

A local publication that announces activities and events around the state of Delaware. To request FREE copies, refer to the “contact us” section of the website, or pick one up at the grocery store. www.sparkweekly.com

MetroKids

A local magazine for families that highlights activities and events happening in the region. To request copies, e-mail info@metrokids.com. www.metrokids.com

El Tiempo Hispano

A statewide, weekly, bilingual newspaper that offers international, national and local news geared toward the Hispanic community. www.eltiempohispano.com

Hoy en Delaware

A statewide, monthly, bilingual publication that features information about events, education, finance and health. www.hoyendelaware.com

RESOURCES

How to Use the Sample Resources

The following section includes a variety of resources, sample templates, and materials you can use to help engage families in healthy habits, based on their needs. Listed below are the resources included in this section and ideas for using each.

Letters to parents of infants and children regarding nutrition Rules and helpful tips for packing meals and snacks (pages 42 – 45)

- Hand out to new families when they enroll in your center.
- Use as a “talking piece” at your next family event. Promote healthy eating for the entire family.
- Hand out to families who are interested in learning more about preparing healthy meals and snacks.
- Refer to the “Information Sharing” section of this guide for more ideas.

Daily reports for different ages: infant, toddler, child (pages 46 – 48)

- Each report provides a section for parents to fill out about their child the night before coming to child care and a section for providers to fill out about activities during the day. This will help to encourage two-way communication between you, your staff (if applicable) and the parent.
- You can put a stack of these in a notebook to give to each family as a two-way communication tool. Exchange the notebook every morning and evening with each family.
- For more ideas, see the “Information Sharing” section of this guide.

Sample monthly newsletter and newsletter template (pages 49 – 50)

- Use the template to create your own child care newsletter. Parents enjoy reading about what their children are doing while in your care.
- Post these on your bulletin board.
- Send newsletters out as a hard copy or electronically.

Flyers for free resources (pages 51 – 54)

- We’ve included four flyers promoting free materials that you or your families can order online. Each flyer comes with a hard copy of the resource for you to display so that parents can look through it.
- Before hanging up the flyer, cut each tag on the dotted line from the bottom of the page up to where the dotted line ends. Have parents tear off a tag if they would like to order one of the resources.
- Create your own flyer to promote community events or other resources.

Hard copy samples of resources provided in this packet include:

- “Just in Time” parenting newsletter
- Delaware Department of Education’s activity calendar for preschoolers
- Either “Delicious Heart Healthy Latino Recipes” OR “Heart Healthy Home Cooking African-American Style”
- USDA’s “Two Bite Club” book
- “Metro Kids: Delaware’s Family Resource Magazine”

Letter to Families — Feeding Infants in Child Care

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Greetings from your child care provider, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL). You are receiving this letter because your infant is enrolled in a Delaware-licensed child care facility. All child care facilities in Delaware are required to follow nutrition Rules which help to ensure that all children get the nutrition they need to grow up healthy.

We are working hard to ensure that children are receiving only the healthiest meals and snacks, and know you want this for your child, too. You can support this mission by carefully choosing the foods you pack for your infant. All foods eaten at child care must follow the nutrition Rules listed below, even if they are brought from home.

Infants – Birth through 11 months

- Juice is not allowed.
- Only real cheese may be served. Cheese products and cheese foods are not allowed.
- Processed meats (e.g., hot dogs, sausage, bologna, etc.) are not allowed.
- Fried or pre-fried and then baked meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, fish sticks) are not allowed.
- Fried or pre-fried and then baked fruits and vegetables (e.g., French fries, tater tots) are not allowed.
- Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
- A whole grain product must be served at least one time each day for infants from eight through 11 months of age if they are eating bread, crackers, etc. The food label for whole grain products lists a whole grain as the first ingredient or the second ingredient, after water. Examples include: whole wheat flour, oats, barley, brown rice and rye.
- Sweet grains/baked goods (e.g., cookies, cakes, donuts, Danishes, etc.) are not allowed.
- Combination foods, a mixture of two or more different meal components, (e.g., turkey and rice) are not allowed. Only combinations of fruits and/or vegetables are allowed (e.g., sweet potato and corn).
- Desserts, cobblers, puddings and jarred cereals with fruit are not allowed.

We know — it's a lot to think about! To make it easier to meet the guidelines when packing your infant's meals and snacks, we have provided a chart with the amounts and types of food needed for each meal/snack on the next page.

Early childhood is a critical time to teach healthy behaviors, and we are proud to partner with you to make sure that Delaware's children, including yours, grow up healthy! If you have any questions, please contact your child care provider.

Your partners in good health,



David Bowman,
Department of Education



Patricia Quinn,
Office of Child Care Licensing

DIRECTOR NAME,
CENTER NAME

Letter to Families – Packing Meals and Snacks for Infants in Child Care

All food served to infants in child care must meet the Delaware CACFP/*Delacare* Rules for nutrition. Serving these foods ensures infants are receiving the nutrients they need to grow up healthy. Use the checklist below to pack the foods needed to meet meal/snack requirements:

BIRTH THROUGH 3 MONTHS		
BREAKFAST <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA	LUNCH/SUPPER <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA	SNACK <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA
4 THROUGH 7 MONTHS		
BREAKFAST <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA <input type="checkbox"/> INFANT CEREAL*	LUNCH/SUPPER <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA <input type="checkbox"/> INFANT CEREAL* <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT OR VEGETABLE*	SNACK <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA
8 THROUGH 11 MONTHS		
BREAKFAST <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA <input type="checkbox"/> INFANT CEREAL <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	LUNCH/SUPPER <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA <input type="checkbox"/> INFANT CEREAL <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT OR VEGETABLE <input type="checkbox"/> MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE*	SNACK <input type="checkbox"/> BREAST MILK OR IRON-FORTIFIED FORMULA <input type="checkbox"/> BREAD OR CRACKERS*

* These foods should only be sent to child care after being introduced at home. Solid foods such as infant cereals and puréed fruits/vegetables should be introduced gradually at six months of age for breastfeeding babies and four to six months of age for formula-feeding babies.

Some ideas of food items that meet the Rules and are healthy options for growing children are listed by category below. These foods are great ideas to pack for child care or to serve at home.†

FRUIT/VEGETABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruits and vegetables, plain, not mixed with any other food 	
GRAIN/BREAD**	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain bread (rolls, breadsticks) • Whole grain pita 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain crackers • Graham crackers
MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean or very lean meat, poultry or fish • Beans • Egg yolk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese • Cottage cheese

† All food should be mashed/puréed or finely chopped to avoid choking.

** The food label for whole grain products lists a whole grain as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient, after water. Examples include: whole wheat flour, brown rice, rye, whole grain wheat, cracked wheat or crushed wheat, whole wheat flour, stone ground whole wheat flour, whole white wheat, oatmeal or rolled oats, whole corn, whole corn flour, whole cornmeal.

Letter to Families — Feeding Children in Child Care

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Greetings from your child care provider, the Department of Education (DOE) and the Office of Child Care Licensing (OCCL)! You are receiving this letter because your child is enrolled in a Delaware-licensed child care facility. All child care facilities in Delaware are required to follow nutrition Rules which help to ensure that all children get the nutrition they need to grow up healthy

We are working hard to ensure that children are receiving only the healthiest meals and snacks, and know you want this for your child, too. You can support this mission by carefully choosing the foods you pack for your child. All foods eaten at child care must follow the nutrition Rules listed below, even if they are brought from home.

Children: One year of age and older

- No more than one serving per day of 100% juice may be served to children (1 – 18 years).
- All juice must be 100% fruit/vegetable juice. Non-100% juice (i.e., juice drink or cocktail) is not allowed.
- Children 12 through 23 months of age must be served whole milk.
- Children 24 months of age and older must be served fat-free or 1% (low-fat) milk.
- Processed meats (e.g., hot dogs, sausage, bologna, etc.) may be served only one time every two weeks.
- Fried or pre-fried and then baked meats (e.g., chicken nuggets, fish sticks) are not allowed unless no more than 35% of their total calories come from fat.
- Only real cheese may be served. Cheese products and cheese foods are not allowed.
- Fried or pre-fried and then baked fruits or vegetables (e.g., French fries, tater tots) are not allowed unless no more than 35% of their total calories come from fat.
- A whole grain product must be served at least one time each day. The food label for whole grain products lists a whole grain as the first ingredient or the second ingredient, after water. Examples include: whole wheat flour, oats, barley, brown rice and rye. Whole grains are strongly encouraged for all meals/snacks.
- Cereals must contain no more than six grams of sugar per serving.
- Sweet grains/baked goods (e.g., cookies, cakes, donuts, Danishes, etc.) may be served one time every two weeks for snack only (not for breakfast, lunch or dinner).

We know — it's a lot to think about. To make it easier to meet the Rules listed above when packing your child's meals and snacks, we have provided a chart with the types of food needed for each meal on the next page.

Early childhood is a critical time to teach healthy behaviors, and we are proud to partner with you to make sure that Delaware's children — and yours — grow up healthy! If you have any questions, please contact your child care provider.

Your partners in good health,



David Bowman,
Department of Education



Patricia Quinn,
Office of Child Care Licensing

DIRECTOR NAME,
CENTER NAME

Letter to Families — Packing Meals and Snacks for Children in Child Care

In order to ensure children are receiving proper nutrition throughout the day, all food served to children in child care must contain the foods outlined in the Delaware CACFP/Delacare Rules meal pattern. Use the checklist below to pack the appropriate foods for meals/snacks:

BREAKFAST	LUNCH/SUPPER	SNACK (choose 2)
<input type="checkbox"/> MILK <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT/VEGETABLE <input type="checkbox"/> GRAIN/BREAD <input type="checkbox"/> MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE (optional)	<input type="checkbox"/> MILK <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT/VEGETABLE #1 <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT/VEGETABLE #2 <input type="checkbox"/> GRAIN/BREAD <input type="checkbox"/> MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE	<input type="checkbox"/> MILK <input type="checkbox"/> FRUIT/VEGETABLE <input type="checkbox"/> GRAIN/BREAD <input type="checkbox"/> MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE

Some ideas for food items that meet the Rules and are healthy options for growing children are listed by category below. These foods are great ideas to pack for child care or to serve at home. The notes listed in [brackets and italics] indicate items that are lower in fat, sugar and salt, and are the best options for growing children. The bracketed notes are suggestions, but not requirements.

MILK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole for age 12 through 23 months • 1% or fat-free for ages two and older
FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh (sliced, diced or whole) • Canned fruit [in 100% juice or if in syrup, drained] • Canned vegetables [without added salt or fat] • Frozen fruits and vegetables [without added salt, sugar or fat] • Applesauce [unsweetened or no sugar added] • Salsa • Salads [with low-fat/fat-free dressing]
GRAIN/BREAD*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain bread (rolls, breadsticks, pita) • Whole grain mini-bagels or English muffins • Whole grain pancakes or waffles • Whole grain tortillas • Whole grain crackers • Brown rice or whole grain couscous • Oatmeal • Low sugar cereal (no more than six grams of sugar per serving) • Graham crackers
MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beef, ham, lamb, pork or veal [lean or very lean] • Chicken or turkey [boneless, skinless] • Fish • Canned tuna [packed in water, made with low-fat mayonnaise] • Real cheeses (e.g., cheddar, provolone, parmesan, Gouda, mozzarella, Swiss or ricotta) [low-fat] • Cottage cheese [low-fat or fat-free] • Yogurt [low-fat or fat-free]

* A whole grain product must be served at least one time each day. The food label for whole grain products lists a whole grain as the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water. Examples include: whole wheat, brown rice, rye, whole grain wheat, cracked wheat or crushed wheat, whole wheat flour, stone ground whole wheat flour, whole white wheat, oatmeal or rolled oats, whole corn, whole corn flour, whole cornmeal.

TODDLER DAILY REPORT

PARENT/GUARDIAN SECTION

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Time your child went to bed last night: _____

Time your child woke up this morning: _____

How did your child sleep last night? _____

Last time your child ate ____ : ____ a.m. / p.m.

What did your child eat? _____

Medicine given (type, amount, reason): _____

Pick-up time today?

PROVIDER SECTION *(To be written about the child)*

Teacher's Initials _____

My mood was: Happy Mad Sad Tired

Not feeling well

Encourage your child to use feeling words when talking about his/her day.

I napped:

From: ____ : ____ to ____ : ____

From: ____ : ____ to ____ : ____

I did not nap today

My diaper changes or toilet times:

Time ____ : ____ Dry Wet BM (normal / loose / hard)

Time ____ : ____ Dry Wet BM (normal / loose / hard)

Time ____ : ____ Dry Wet BM (normal / loose / hard)

Time ____ : ____ Dry Wet BM (normal / loose / hard)

Time ____ : ____ Dry Wet BM (normal / loose / hard)

I ate:

Breakfast:

All Some I wasn't hungry

What: _____

Morning Snack:

All Some I wasn't hungry

What: _____

Lunch:

All Some I wasn't hungry

What: _____

Afternoon Snack:

All Some I wasn't hungry

What: _____

I was active for _____ hours/minutes today. I...

Ran

Played on playground

Jumped

Went for a walk

Cleaned up

Made a new game

Danced

Sang an active song

Played ball

Other _____

Aim for at least one hour of active play at home!

You are running low on the following item(s).

Please bring to child care:

Diapers

Clothes

Sunscreen

Wipes

Other: _____

Ointment

New food(s) I tried today:

Try this new food/recipe at home!

Special Notes: _____

CHILD DAILY REPORT

PARENT/GUARDIAN SECTION

Child's Name: _____ Date: _____

Time your child went to bed last night: _____

Time your child woke up this morning: _____

How did your child sleep last night? _____

Last time your child ate ____ : ____ a.m. / p.m.

What did your child eat? _____

Medicine given (type, amount, reason): _____

Pick-up time today?

PROVIDER SECTION *(To be written about the child)*

Teacher's Initials _____

My mood was: Happy Mad Sad Tired
 Not feeling well

Encourage your child to use feeling words when talking about his/her day.

I napped:

From: ____ : ____ to ____ : ____
From: ____ : ____ to ____ : ____

I did not nap today

I was active for _____ hours/minutes today. I...

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ran | <input type="checkbox"/> Played on playground |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jumped | <input type="checkbox"/> Went for a walk |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cleaned up | <input type="checkbox"/> Made a new game |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Danced | <input type="checkbox"/> Sang an active song |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Played ball | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Aim for at least one hour of active play at home!

I ate:

Breakfast:

All Some I wasn't hungry
What: _____

Morning Snack:

All Some I wasn't hungry
What: _____

Lunch:

All Some I wasn't hungry
What: _____

Afternoon Snack:

All Some I wasn't hungry
What: _____

I had _____ minutes of screen time today. I...

- Watched an educational TV program
- Watched an educational DVD/video
- Played an educational computer/video game

Try to limit screen time to one hour a day at home!

New food(s) I tried today:

Try this new food/recipe at home!

Special Notes: _____

CHILD CARE News

JULY 2011

Community Activities for the Family

Summer Festival

Riverfront / July 20

Walk the Park

Brandywine Park / July 25

Family Day

Brandywine Zoo / July 30

For more information about these events, check out our Family Fun Board!

◆ REMINDERS ◆

- Turn in your family activity sheets by August 1 to be entered in the raffle for the grand prize!
- Enrollment forms are due by August 31.
- We will be closed on Labor Day (Sept. 5).
- Please put your child's name on everything you send in.

MEAL IDEA: BROCCOLI Pizza

Make mini pizzas with veggies when you need a quick dinner!

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Top a whole wheat bagel or English muffin with tomato sauce.
3. Sprinkle with low fat mozzarella cheese
4. Place in oven until cheese begins to melt.
5. Meanwhile, cook broccoli (fresh or frozen) according to package instructions.
6. Top mini pizzas with broccoli and return to oven for 5 minutes.

Family Activity

Take a walk around your neighborhood after dinner. Bring your pets and make it a family event!

BOOKS WE ARE READING:

- *Oliver's Vegetables* by Vivian French
- *Grandpa's Garden Lunch* by Judith Caseley
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by Lois Ehlert

Ask us for a book to borrow and read at home or bring one in to share.

Miss Natalie's Newsy Nibbles

Summer is a great time to get outside and enjoy the warm weather! We have been playing outside quite a bit this month. Room 2 created a fun, new game called "Catch a Monkey by his Toe" that we all have enjoyed playing. Room 3 will create a new game for August. As a reminder, please be sure that your child has enough sunscreen, bug spray, and a change of clothes in his/her cubby at all times as we want your children to be protected from the elements.

Miss Gina has been cooking healthy and delicious meals for lunch and snack. She included her favorite recipe in this newsletter for you to try at home. The children have really enjoyed trying new foods, such as broccoli, this month! Many of you have probably noticed the weekly recipes that we've been sending home. Use these recipes to cook something healthy and new that the entire family can enjoy.

We also had a wonderful time at the Children's Museum at the end of June. The children learned exciting things about the human body and ways to stay healthy and safe this summer. They are looking forward to our next field trip to the Farmer's Market later this month.

As always, it is a joy to share time with your children. We appreciate all that you do. If there is anything we can do to help you, don't hesitate to ask.

Happy Summer! Miss Natalie

FEELING WORD OF THE MONTH:

Excited!

Encourage your child to use feeling words when talking about his/her day.

BIRTHDAYS

July 5 – Mike (4)
 July 11 – Kati (2)
 July 25 – Kevin (1)
 July 30 – Ryan (3)

FUN FACTS

- > It can take 15-20 tries for your child to learn to like a food. If s/he doesn't like a food the first time around, try again!
- > Is it tough to fit it an hour of physical activity each day? Take a 10-minute dance break! Breaking the recommended hour into six 10 minute blocks makes it easier to achieve.

CHILD CARE News



**Community Activities
for the Family**

Newsy Nibbles
— From the Director —

◆ REMINDERS ◆

MEAL IDEA:

Family Activity

BOOKS WE ARE READING:

Ask us for a book to borrow and read at home or bring one in to share.

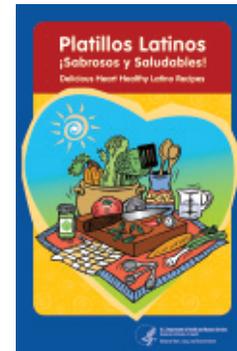
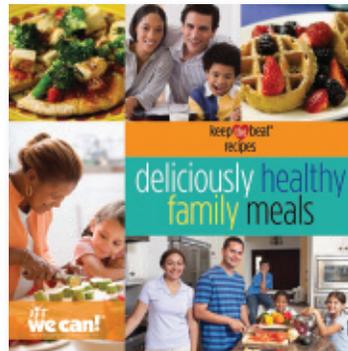
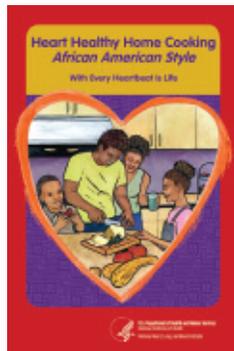
FEELING WORD OF THE MONTH:

Encourage your child to use feeling words when talking about his/her day.

BIRTHDAYS

FUN FACTS

FREE! Healthy Cookbooks for You & Your Family



A variety of cookbooks to chose from including:

- *Heart Healthy Home Cooking: African-American Style*
 - *Deliciously Healthy Family Meals*
 - *Delicious Heart Healthy Latino Recipes*

All cookbooks include quick-and-easy meal ideas the whole family can help to prepare!

Visit the website to order: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/pubs/>

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/pubs/>

Click on: Patients/General Public,
then on recipe Collections

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FREE! *Just in Time* Parenting Newsletter



Just in Time Parenting newsletters are delivered each month based on your child's age. The newsletters offer reliable information about health and development from parenting experts who are parents themselves!

Features of the email newsletter include:

- Downloadable PDF files for sharing
- Audio podcasts for baby's first 12 months
- The opportunity to ask your questions to experts across the country

Visit the website to order: <http://www.extension.org>

<http://www.extension.org/>
Search: "Just in Time Parenting"



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