



## Healthy Eating Establishing Good Habits Early

In Canada, 26% of children are overweight or obese (Statistics Canada, 2004). Excess weight increases their risk of developing high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease. The sad fact is some children are developing these diseases before they're teens. Eating habits are formed early in life and children need support to learn healthy eating habits.

You can help children in your care develop good eating habits by teaching them about healthy foods. The foods that children reject most are vegetables and fruit, and whole grain breads, cereals and pastas. However, they're more likely to

try these foods in a group setting, as part of an activity like playing a game, or by preparing food.

Offer these healthy foods at meals and during snack time. Encourage the children to try them. Offer them an incentive like two stars for eating whole grain pasta versus one star for eating white pasta. Never force food on a child, but gently encourage them to try healthier foods. Let parents know if their child ate whole grain pasta or a vegetable that they wouldn't eat before. The parents can then reinforce the healthier eating habit by offering the foods at home.

For more ideas on how to introduce healthier foods, check out resources at:

[http://www.wehealthunit.org/family-health/nutrition/booklets/feeding\\_your\\_child\\_insidesncover.pdf](http://www.wehealthunit.org/family-health/nutrition/booklets/feeding_your_child_insidesncover.pdf)

<http://www.wehealthunit.org/family-health/nutrition/booklets/Obesity-Booklet-Single-Pages.pdf>

<http://www.dietitians.ca/healthystart/index.asp>



## Fun Names Get Kids to Eat More Vegetables and Fruit!

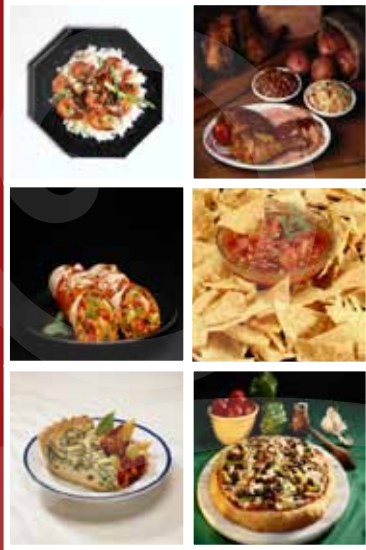


Preschoolers need 4 to 5 servings of vegetables and fruit per day, but few eat this amount. Vegetables and fruit provide essential vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. They can also help keep children at a healthy weight.

A study in the *ScienceDaily*, Mar. 4, 2009 found that giving vegetables and fruit "cool" names like x-ray vision carrots, tomato bursts, broccoli trees, and dinosaur droppings for dates or prunes encouraged children to eat twice as many than when they were called by their normal names. The effect lasted longer than just the one day. The authors said that giving the vegetables and fruit a "cool" name made the children think they were fun to eat.

Try the above activity at your daycare and see if the children eat more vegetables and fruit.

# Celebrating Foods of the World



Food is a great way to teach children about other cultures. It introduces them to new foods and can help them see other cultures in a positive way. Try this activity:

- Have the children collect simple recipes from home. Select recipes that children can help prepare.
- If the food is eaten on special occasions, ask the parents to record the reason why.
- Talk about the different types of food at story time.
- Each week, prepare a different recipe for snack time. For example, fruit kabobs from Indonesia, guacamole dip from Mexico, and hummus from the Middle East.
- Encourage the children to try the food and to talk about their traditions.

For more ideas on introducing different cultures through food check out these websites:

<http://www.kidactivities.net/category/DiversityMulti-Cultural-through-Food-and-Other-Ideas-.aspx>

[www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=207%20](http://www.nfsmi.org/ResourceOverview.aspx?ID=207%20)

## Healthy Growth and Development

### NutriSTEP™ is Here!

#### NutriSTEP™ stands for Nutrition Screening Tool for Every Preschooler.

It helps to identify nutrition issues in children aged three to five years. The preschool years are when children's eating habits are being formed. Identifying nutrition concerns at an early age enables parents to make changes so their child can develop healthy habits.

It takes parents about five minutes to complete the screening tool. Public health nurses review the tool with the parent and address specific concerns parents have or that were identified by the screening tool. Children who require follow-up are referred based on protocol to a dietitian hotline, the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, or to a primary health care provider.

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit will be pilot testing the tool from March to September 2010 in Ontario Early Years Centres. Please encourage your parents to sign up.



### Upcoming EVENTS

#### Vegetable and Fruit Pilot:

The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit will be pilot testing a vegetable and fruit program in daycares in the near future. If your daycare would like to participate, please call 519- 258-2146 ext. 1358.

#### FREE Evening Workshops

Register online at:

<http://www.wehealthunit.org/family-health>

- Toilet Learning, April 22, 2010
- Helping Infants and Children Sleep, May 4, 2010
- Disciplining Your Preschooler, May 13, 2010
- Helping Preschoolers Develop Coping Skills for Life, June 7, 2010

### Do you have questions you'd like answered?

For more information contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.

Phone: 519-258-2146 ext. 1350 (Intake Nurse)

Website: [www.offtoagreatstart.org](http://www.offtoagreatstart.org)

Address: 1005 Ouellette Ave.

Windsor, ON N9A 4J8



## Share this information with your parents.