

Starting Early

Keeping **Your Preschooler**
at a Healthy Weight



Unité sanitaire
de Windsor - comté d'Essex

WINDSOR · ESSEX · LEAMINGTON
www.wehealthunit.org

**EASY HELPFUL ADVICE ON ACTIVE LIVING AND
HEALTHY EATING FOR YOUR ONE TO FIVE YEAR OLD**



Starting Early

Keeping Your Preschooler at a Healthy Weight

Healthy preschoolers come in all shapes and sizes. However, more and more children are becoming overweight.

Below are some of the reasons why so many children are gaining too much weight.

Children are taking in:

- More calories.
- Larger servings.
- More restaurant food.
- More convenience foods.
- Fewer fruits and vegetables.
- Less milk and more juice and pop.

Children are less physically active due to:

- More “sitting” activities (like watching television, playing on the computer, and playing video games).
- Less outdoor play.
- Parents’ concern with safety in neighbourhoods.

How much sleep does your child get?

Young children who do not get enough sleep are at a greater risk of becoming overweight or obese.



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Health Effects of Obesity

Childhood obesity is a major health concern. In Canada, 26% of children less than 18 years old are overweight or obese. Because of this, more and more children are developing chronic diseases usually found in adults.

Did you know...

- 60% of obese children between the age of 5 and 10 have at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol and high blood pressure.
- In obese children aged 6 to 17 years, research shows new cases of type 2 diabetes have increased from 4% in 1990 to 45% in 2001.
- Approximately 33% of obese preschool-aged children and 50% of obese school-aged children remain obese as adults.

Also, overweight or obese children experience emotional pain. This may cause them to have poor self-esteem and be less confident. This can have a negative effect on their relationships and success in school.



This booklet will help you keep your children at a healthy weight.



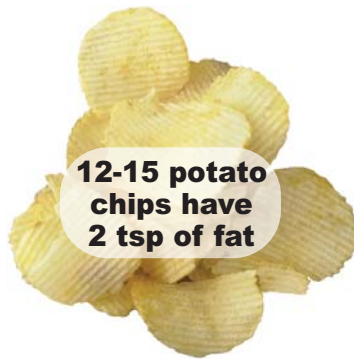
Family Food

Children are not born knowing which foods are healthy.

- Parents should give healthy food choices during the day (three meals and three snacks).
- Parents should eat with their children.

Young children know when they are hungry and when they are full. Parents should not try to control how much a child eats.

Parents and children are more likely to become overweight if they eat high-sugar and high-fat foods often. Examples are:



Children learn healthy eating and physical activity behaviours from their parents.





Listen to Your Body

Parents can help their child learn about the signals the body sends about food.

1. Help your toddler understand hunger and fullness by saying:
 - My tummy is hungry. Is your tummy hungry? Is it time to eat?
 - My tummy is full. Is your tummy full? Is it time to stop eating?
2. Make meals fun by talking and laughing to help your child eat more slowly.
3. Sometimes children think they are hungry when they are *just thirsty*.



Children may not feel full if they are:

- Eating in front of the television.
- Eating too fast.

Parents should not:

- Use food as a reward (For example, “Eat your carrots and you can have a cookie”).
- Make children eat everything on their plate.
- Give food to calm an upset child.



Stress and conflicts can cause overeating.



I'm Thirsty

Water is important for children's health.

Parents need to be good role models by drinking water more often.

- Teach young children to drink water when thirsty.
- Keep a pitcher of water in the fridge.

Where does juice fit in?

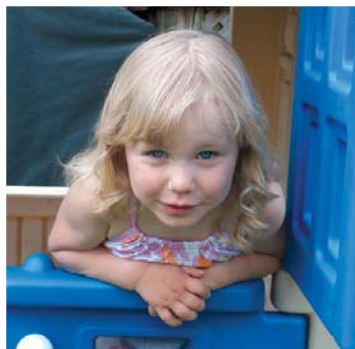
- Limit juice to 1/2 cup (120 mL) per day.
- 100% fruit juice tastes sweet and most children like to drink it.
- 100% fruit juice is a healthy choice, but drinking too much will add extra calories.
- Some children will not have room for meals and snacks if they fill up on juice.

Eating fresh fruit is always better than drinking juice. Fresh fruit contains fiber, vitamins, and minerals. Be sure to cut fruit and vegetables into small pieces.



Snacks for thirsty children:

- **Water, milk**
- **Fruit such as apples, grapes, melons, pitted cherries, and oranges**
- **Vegetables such as tomatoes and cucumbers**
- **100% fruit juice - 1/2 cup (120 mL) per day**





Healthy Choices at Home

Parents decide what food is in their home.

Keep healthy foods in view — washed and ready to eat.

- Keep a bowl of fruit on the counter.
- Keep freshly cut vegetables and dips in the fridge.

Make meal and snack times fun.

- Serve three healthy meals and three healthy snacks every day.
- Keep portions small.
- Let children help prepare food.
- Serve everyone the same meal.

Offer a trip to the park or a bike ride as a reward for a job well done — not food.





Healthy Choices Away From Home

Today, more meals are eaten outside the home, often at fast food restaurants. Restaurant meals don't usually provide enough vegetables or fruits.

Make restaurant eating a once-in-a-while treat.

- *"What should I have to drink?"*
Order milk or water, not pop.
- *"Would you like fries with that?"*
Instead of fries, try one of these:
 - baked potato
 - side dish of fruit salad
 - salad



Would you like to Super-Size your combo meal?

- Say, "No!" Research shows that older preschool children are influenced by large portion sizes.
- Older children may eat past the point of being full when there is more food on their plate.
- Ask for extra lettuce, pickles, and tomatoes.

Pop Fact

In 1950:

A bottle of pop was 195 mL (7 oz).

Today:

A bottle of pop is 591 mL (20 oz).

That's more than three
times the size!



1950



Today



Sample Menu For Your 1 - 2 Year Old Child

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) iron-fortified cereal • 30 - 60 mL (2 - 4 tbsp) fruit pieces (melon, banana, or peeled apples) • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of breast milk or homogenized milk
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) melon or banana • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) cottage cheese • Water
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/4 - 1/2 salmon sandwich on whole wheat bread made with 30 g (1 oz) canned salmon and mayonnaise • 30 - 60 mL (1/8 - 1/4 cup) zucchini strips and avocado slices • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of breastmilk or homogenized milk
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 mL (2 tbsp) hummus • Whole grain pita pieces • Water
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) whole grain macaroni with tomato and meat sauce including 30 - 40 g (1 - 1 1/2 oz) of meat • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) cooked green beans • 125 mL (1/2 cup) breastmilk or homogenized milk
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheerios® 7 - 15 g (1/4 to 1/2 oz) • 125 mL (1/2 cup) breastmilk or homogenized milk



Sample Menu For Your 2 - 3 Year Old Child

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 g (1/2 oz) bowl of whole grain cereal • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of milk (2%, 1%, or skim) • 1/2 banana
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 cup cut grapes • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) yogurt • Water
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 125 mL (1/2 cup) chili with meat • 1/2 slice whole wheat bread with non-hydrogenated margarine • 60 mL (1/4 cup) red pepper strips and cucumber slices • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of milk (2%, 1%, or skim)
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 mL (1/4 cup) carrot sticks and broccoli florets with ranch dip • 4 whole grain crackers (15 g) • A few kidney beans, cooked, and cooled • Water
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 g (1 1/2 oz) chicken • 60 mL (4 tbsp) peas and corn • 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) brown rice • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of milk (2%, 1%, or skim) • 60 mL (1/4 cup) dried figs, pitted
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1/2 whole grain muffin • 1/2 cup of chopped (1 slice) pineapple • 1/2 hard boiled egg, chopped • 125 mL (1/2 cup) of milk (2%, 1%, or skim)



Sample Menu For Your 4 - 5 Year Old Child

Breakfast	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 125 - 175 mL (1/2 - 3/4 cup) of hot cereal• Orange slices (1/2 - 1 orange)• 125 mL (1/2 cup) of milk (skim, 1%, or 2%)
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 125 mL (1/2 cup) mixed berries• 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) yogurt
Lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Banana Roll-up:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 small (35 g) whole grain tortilla• 1/2 banana• 15 mL (1 tbsp) peanut butter• 125 mL (1/2 cup) milk (skim, 1%, or 2%)
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60 - 125 mL (1/4 - 1/2 cup) carrot and celery sticks with ranch dip• 1/4 bagel with non-hydrogenated margarine• A few peanuts or almonds• Water
Dinner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 125 - 250 mL (1/2 - 1 cup) beef stir fry:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40 g (1 1/2 oz) beef• 125 mL (1/2 cup) mixed vegetables• 125 mL (1/2 cup) whole wheat couscous• 125 mL (1/2 cup) milk (skim, 1%, or 2%)• 125 mL (1/2 cup) unsweetened applesauce
Snack	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 whole grain crackers• 125 mL (1/2 cup) milk (skim, 1%, or 2%)



Family Activity

Less than half of Canadian children are active enough for healthy growth and development (Active Healthy Kids Canada, 2006). Early childhood is the best time to learn how to be physically active.

The U.S. National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2002) says the only time preschoolers should be inactive for more than one hour is when they're sleeping. Preschoolers need structured physical activity that adds up to at least 60 minutes per day and lots of unstructured physical activity.



**Role models are important.
Be active as a family.**

Encourage activity for all the children in the neighbourhood by planning:

- Walking or biking groups.
- Games like soccer, tag, catch, and T-ball.

**Chores count as activity too!
Children can help you with:**

- Cleaning up toys.
- Dusting.
- Sorting laundry.
- Raking leaves.
- Planting in the garden.





Fun With Your Child at Home

Children enjoy being active when they are having fun with the people they love. These fun times will build affection and trust.

Tips for being active and having fun.

- Choose a time when your child is happy, fed, and rested.
- Begin with hugs and talking.
- Encourage your child to try different things.
- Reward all efforts with hugs and praise.
- Watch for signs of being tired and thirsty.

Watch your child's behaviour to see what he likes. If your child laughs and smiles, do the activity again. One child may love bouncing games, while another prefers slower rocking movements.



Need ideas for fun activities?

For fun activities to do with your children, visit:

- Fun & Physical Activity
www.city.toronto.on.ca/health
- Kids in Action: Fitness for Children Birth to Age Five
www.fitness.gov
- Comfort, Play & Teach
www.investinkids.ca





Fun Indoor Activities

Sing and Dance

Play and move to your child's favourite songs such as Hokey Pokey; Wheels on the Bus; Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes.

Pretend Zoo

Call out the names of different animals and ask everyone to move around the room like each animal.

Indoor Skating

Put a piece of paper under each shoe. Then slide forward and backwards as if you were skating.

Obstacle Course

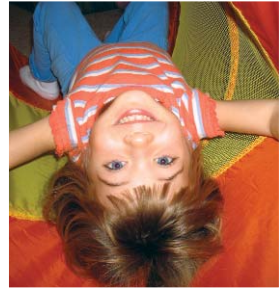
Create an obstacle course by using boxes, chairs, pillows, and other items to jump over, crawl under, and move around.

Build a Fort

Drape blankets or sheets over a table. Clip them together with clothespins to create a fort for children to play in.

Hide and Go Seek

Children hide in different parts of the house and one child or parent looks for them.





Fun Outdoor Activities

Fun Hockey

Play hockey using pool noodles and a soft ball.

Play Ball

Kick, bounce, roll, throw, or catch a ball.

“I spy” Walk

While walking, one person takes a turn calling “I spy with my little eye, something that is _____”. Then the next person walks or runs to that object.

Treasure Hunt

Look for interesting stones, leaves, and feathers to put into a treasure box.

Bubbles

Get out the bubble solution and blow bubbles. Try to catch and pop the bubbles.

Chalk Play

Use chalk to draw pictures on the sidewalk or draw animal footprints and follow them.

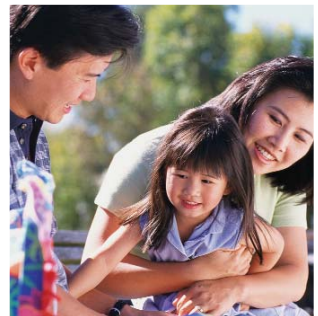




Fun With Your Child in The Community

Explore what your community has to offer!

- Go to playgrounds, park areas, community pools and arenas.
- Use local walking and bike paths.
- Find parks and recreation areas in Windsor or Essex County.
 - For City of Windsor locations, visit www.citywindsor.ca
 - For County of Essex locations, visit www.erca.org
- Sign up at your local community centre for classes such as swimming, gymnastics, and dance.



Ontario Early Years Centres

Go to your local Ontario Early Years Centres. These centres have many programs and fun activities for your child. For a centre near you and a list of programs:

Phone: 519-255-5344

Website: www.ontarioearlyyears.ca

Reading Rhythm and Movement

Borrow the “Reading Rhythm and Movement: Alternatives to TV” resource kit from your local public library or Ontario Early Years Centre.

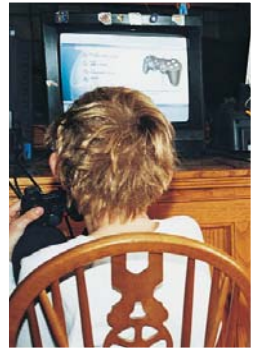


Screen Time

Screen time (TV, computer, all video games) should be limited to one hour or less per day. Start setting good habits early.

Children who watch a lot of TV and play a lot of video games are less active. Watching TV may lead to unhealthy eating because:

- Many food advertisements are directed to children.
- Advertised foods are high in fat and calories.
- Children under 4 or 5 years can't tell the difference between TV advertising and TV shows.
- Children may not notice they are full when they are eating in front of a TV.



Don't put a TV or a computer in a child's bedroom.



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