

Building Blocks

issue 15

A NEWSLETTER PROMOTING CHILDREN'S HEALTH FROM THE ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Have Fun Using MyPyramid for Your Preschoolers

▲ **Pyramid Plan:** Go to MyPyramid.gov/preschoolers and enter in each child's first name, age, sex and level of physical activity and print out an individualized full-color MyPyramid Plan for Preschoolers for each child.

▲ **Color MyPyramid:** Go to MyPyramid.gov/downloads/PreschoolersColoringSheet.pdf and print out the coloring sheet. Talk to children about the food and drinks they have consumed at your site and what food group each belongs to.

▲ **Read The Two-Bite Club:** Go to Teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/2biteclub.html and download this educational storybook that introduces MyPyramid for Preschoolers to young children. Laminate the story or place pages in sheet protectors so you can read it again and again.

▲ **Throw a Tasting Party:** Building Blocks Issue 13 includes five easy steps for a tasting party. You can request the issue from Learn To Live at 410-222-7979 or download it from LearnToLiveHealthy.org. Click on "Raising Healthy Kids" under "More Ways to Health" and scroll down to "Childcare Newsletters."

Help Preschoolers Learn to Enjoy a Variety of Fruits and Vegetables

Preschoolers need 2 to 3.5 cups of fruits and vegetables each day. Fruits and vegetables contain many vitamins and minerals that help children grow and stay healthy. Encourage children to try fruits and vegetables and eat them yourself.

Tips

- Fruits and vegetables may be fresh, canned, frozen or dried, and may be whole, cut-up or pureed.
- Choose canned fruits packed in juice instead of syrup.
- Serve preschoolers no more than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup to $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 to 6 ounces) of juice a day. Choose 100% fruit juice — check the label to be sure.
- Include fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks every day.

What Counts as a Cup?

Veggies

- 1 cup of raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup 100% vegetable juice
- 2 cups of raw leafy greens

Fruits

- 1 cup of fruit
- 1 cup 100% fruit juice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of dried fruit

Learn To Live
Anne Arundel County Department of Health
LearnToLiveHealthy.org



COPY THE ENCLOSED INSERT AND GIVE IT TO PARENTS.

Help Raise Fit (Not Fat) Kids!

Obesity is a major health issue for adults, but the problem even reaches to preschoolers ages 2 to 5 years. Nationally, the number of overweight children has more than doubled in the past 30 years. And a 2006 study by the Anne Arundel County Department of Health found that 32.9% of young children were overweight or at risk of becoming overweight.

Almost 80% of children 5 and younger with working mothers are in child care for 40 hours a week on average¹. Child-care providers are sharing responsibility with parents for children during important developmental years. Your facility can help develop healthy eating and physical activity habits among the children in your care.

What can you do to help keep kids fit and healthy?

The food and drinks you serve at your facility are part of a child's daily intake of calories. Consider the quality and quantity of the food and drinks

when planning your weekly meal, snack and drink menus. Since preschoolers may eat less than a standard serving size in one sitting, it may be necessary to include healthy snacks in addition to their meals to get the nutrients they need. There are many ways to divide the number of servings recommended from each food group into daily meals and snacks.

For help in planning healthy meals and snacks, go to MyPyramid.gov/preschoolers. MyPyramid encourages daily physical activity and healthy food choices. The pyramid includes five food groups: grains, fruits, vegetables, dairy, and meat and beans. Standard serving sizes for each food group were developed to help you learn how much your children need to eat. Eating the recommended number of servings and choosing a variety of healthy foods from each food group will provide the nutrition children need for healthy bodies.

1. From the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine

Playing Safe In The Sun

During all seasons, you and the children in your care spend lots of time outside. Playing outside is important, but children need to be protected from the sun. Too much exposure to the sun's damaging ultraviolet (UV) rays early in life can increase the risk of skin cancer. Skin cancer is the most common cancer in the United States. It is also one of the most preventable cancers.

Review the tips on this page to help reduce sun exposure. Print sun safety activity sheets for your children from aahealth.org/Alex.asp.

Sun Safety Tips

- Remind parents and guardians to apply a sunscreen with an SPF 15 or higher that protects against UVA and UVB rays (called "broad spectrum" protection on the label) to children before dropping them off.

- Encourage parents to provide sunscreen and written permission allowing you to reapply sunscreen to their children before going outdoors.
- When possible, conduct outdoor activities in the shade.
- Encourage children to wear wide-brim hats when outdoors. (These can be brought in from home.) The hats will help shade their faces, eyes, ears and back of the neck from the sun's rays. Kids will also think the hats are fun, especially if you wear one, too.
- Remind children of the importance of sun safety through class activities.

And for more on sun safety, call Learn To Live at **410-222-7979** or visit **LearnToLiveHealthy.org**.



Keep Your Kids Hydrated

Kids can quickly get dehydrated, which can lead to serious health problems. You can help prevent this by encouraging kids to:

- Take water breaks during the day.
- Take a sip from the water fountain every time they pass it.
- Drink water before, during and after active play.
- Bring a bottle of water with them to daycare and on field trips.

Are Kids Drinking their Calories?

High-calorie drinks can add a lot of calories to children's daily intake without satisfying their appetite. Soda, fruit-flavored drinks, sports drinks and energy drinks are high in sugar and caffeine and low in the essential nutrients kids need. *The American Journal of Public Health* found that children age 2 to 19 get about one-quarter of their daily calories from soda.

Phony 'Fruit' Juice

Just because a drink is labeled "100% natural fruit drink" doesn't mean that it is fruit juice. Fruit "drinks," "beverages," "-ades" and "cocktails" are not fruit juice. They may have some juice added. Before you buy a fruit drink, read the label carefully and see if it really is 100% fruit juice.

Drink it Up the Healthy Way!

These drinks and foods will help keep the children in your care hydrated and ready to go:

- **Water** – Give kids water for most of their fluid needs
- **Milk** – Fat-free or 1%¹
- **100% fruit juice**²
- **Fruits and vegetables**
– Like a juicy orange, watermelon, peach, tomato or celery
- **Fruit smoothie**
– See recipe in right column
- **Soup** – Try vegetable or minestrone

1. Children ages 1 to 2 should drink whole milk. Children ages 2 to 5 should be gradually switched to fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.

2. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 1 to 6 drink only 4-6 ounces of juice each day and children ages 7 to 18 drink only 8-12 ounces.



Annie's Fruit Smoothie



This shake makes a quick and easy snack and is a great way to try tofu for the first time.

- 1 12.3 ounce package firm light silken tofu
- 1 12 ounce bag unsweetened frozen strawberries
- ½ of a ripe banana (frozen)
- ½ cup apple juice concentrate
- 1 Tbsp honey
- ¼ cup water (optional, to thin to desired consistency)

Combine first 5 ingredients in blender. Pulse to combine. Scrape down sides of blender with a spatula. Blend until smooth. Shake will be very thick. Thin with water, if desired. Makes 4 servings. Per serving: 168 calories. Fat: 1.6 grams. Sodium: 55 milligrams. Fiber: 4.5 grams.

Options: A 16-ounce bag of frozen peach slices or unsweetened mixed berries can be substituted for the strawberries. Or fat-free yogurt can be substituted for the tofu.

For more great-tasting smoothie recipes go to LearnToLiveHealthy.org. Click on "Healthy Meals and Snacks" under "Food and Fitness" and type "smoothie" into the search field.

Kid-Tested Snack Ideas

Veggie Pizza

Top 100% whole-wheat English muffins with tomato sauce, low-fat cheese and veggies. Heat in an oven or microwave until the cheese is melted.

Fruit Kabobs

Use thin pretzel sticks and push 3 or 4 pieces of cut-up fruit onto each stick to make a kabob. Good fruits to use include chunks of melon, banana, mango, kiwi, pineapple, peach, nectarine and strawberry.

Trail Mix

Mix whole-grain cereal with raisins, dried cranberries, almonds and soy nuts. Add a quarter cup of each ingredient to a plastic bag, seal and shake!

Ants on a Log

For a classic treat, top celery with peanut butter and raisins.

Woven Wheat Nachos

Top 100% whole-wheat crackers with a dollop of low-fat cheese and salsa. Heat in an oven or microwave until the cheese is melted.

Sweet Potato Oven Fries

Cut sweet potatoes into chip or wedge slices. Lightly brush or spray with vegetable or olive oil. Season with taco seasoning or salt. Place in 425-degree oven for 20 minutes or until soft on inside and browned on the outside.

Banana Pops

Wash and peel one large banana. Cut banana in half, put a popsicle stick in the cut end, wrap and freeze.

Optional: Coat the banana with chopped walnuts before freezing.

Need More Help?

If you need more information about children's health and safety, here are some local resources:

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Behavioral Health ▶ 410-222-6785

Communicable Diseases ▶ 410-222-7256

Healthy Babies ▶ www.aahealthybabies.org

Healthy Start ▶ 410-222-7177

Immunizations ▶ 410-222-4896

Lead Poisoning ▶ 410-222-7003

Injury Prevention ▶ 410-222-4223

Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program ▶ 410-222-6797

Maryland Children's Health Program (MCHP) ▶ 410-222-4792

Office of Emergency Preparedness and Response ▶ 410-222-4115

Smoking Cessation ▶ 410-222-7979 or www.myquitkit.org

Smoking Stinks Web Site for Kids ▶ www.smokingstinks.org

Department of Health Web Site ▶ www.aahealth.org

Family Fitness Challenge ▶ www.aahealth.org/fitnesschallenge

THE TOT'S LINE FOR ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY:

1-877-817-TOTS(8687)

The Tot's Line is a free, confidential helpline for pregnant women, parents and caregivers of children from newborn to 5 years old. Call the helpline for advice and referrals to county services.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY FIRE DEPARTMENT

Office of Injury Prevention
and Public Safety Education ▶ 410-222-8303

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY POLICE

Community Relations ▶ 410-222-8562

ANNAPOLIS CITY POLICE

Community Safety ▶ 410-268-9000

MARYLAND POISON CENTER

1-800-222-1222 or www.mdpoison.com

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Centers for Disease Control ▶ www.cdc.gov

Small Step Kids ▶ www.smallstep.gov

Building Blocks is published by the Learn To Live program of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health, 3 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401, 410-222-7979. The services and facilities of the Anne Arundel County Department of Health are available to all without regard to race, color, religion, political affiliation or opinion, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or disability.

Learn To Live

Anne Arundel County Department of Health
LearnToLiveHealthy.org

1,500/11-09