

Organization's Name

Manager's Signature

Effective Date

Food will not be a Punishment or Reward for Children

Purpose

Offering food to encourage or reward behavior places unnecessary importance on food and may have negative effects. This action teaches children to eat when they are not hungry and can alter their internal hunger and fullness cues.

Foods commonly used to encourage positive behavior, such as candy or cookies, are often high in fat or sugars with little nutrients. These foods offer little to support proper growth and development. As children become older, rewarding them with food may lead to emotional overeating and excessive weight gain.

Try rewarding children with:

- ★ Favorite book at story time
- ★ More outdoor playtime
- ★ Praise for their actions
- ★ Special privileges such as choosing the next activity or song to sing, line leader, etc.
- ★ Trips to the treasure chest that has stickers, bookmarks, bubbles, art supplies...
- ★ Use a point system where children earn points that add up toward a bigger prize.



Get support from parents

Tell parents about your rewards policy and encourage them to use the same approach at home.

Rewards are so important in building healthy habits.

*Check out this video to learn more: **goo.gl/CICIY7***

Sources: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

<http://www.clemson.edu/extension/hgic>

Image: <http://www.readingrockets.org>

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Water will be available to children for self-serve at all times; indoors and outdoors

Purpose

Children often do not know when they are thirsty and should be encouraged to drink throughout the day. Encouraging sips of water between meals helps to reduce thirst. Children are then able to focus on foods at mealtimes, rather than filling up on milk before eating their meal.

Children play hard and need enough fluid to stay well hydrated. When water is available within easy reach, it will be looked to first to satisfy thirst.

Creative ways to have water within reach for children

- ★ Try child-size water coolers or keep pitchers of water and small paper cups in classrooms.
- ★ Add lemon, lime or orange slices to water to make it tastier for children.
- ★ Encourage children to drink water before or after activities or using the bathroom.
- ★ Remind staff to drink water between meals. They are role models for the children.



Get support from families at home

Let parents know that your facility uses water as the first choice for thirst.

Show children that adults like to drink water too.

Children are less able to focus when they feel even a little bit thirsty.

Sources: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

Image: nutritionfacts.org

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Children can play, learn, and explore in edible gardens

Purpose

Children who grow fruits and vegetables are more likely to eat more of them.

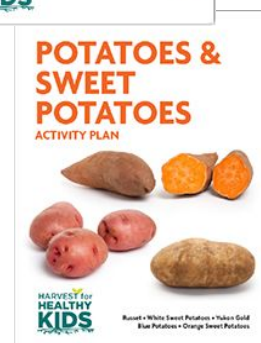
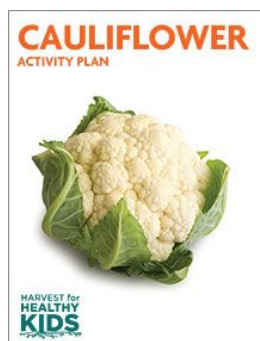
Children remember information better when they design experiments, use more than one style of learning and share their knowledge with others.

Gardens are for more than just eating

- ★ Gardens make great classrooms to discover nutrition, science, and culture.
- ★ Planting, harvesting and weeding are great physical activities.
- ★ Invite special educators to share their garden/outdoor experience with kids.
- ★ Increase parent engagement.
- ★ Of course you can include fruits and veggies from the garden into meals.

Ready-to-go activity kits
English // Español // Русский

www.harvestforhealthykids.org



Source: www.lifelab.org/for-educators/schoolgardens/garden-to-cafeteria

Image: www.public-domain-image.com

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Restricting Promotion of Unhealthy Food

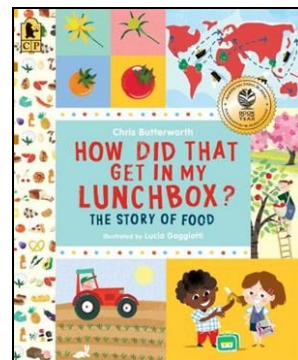
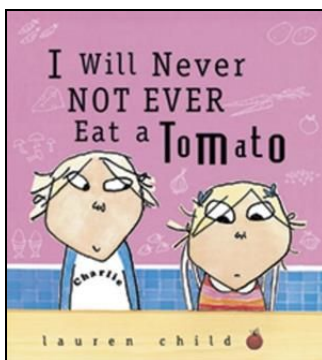
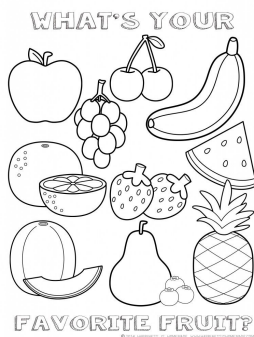
Purpose

Advertising unhealthy foods and beverages in learning environments interferes with messages promoting good health and academic success.

Young children are especially vulnerable to marketing because children under about five years-old lack the ability to distinguish between entertainment or factual content and advertising, and children under about eight years old do not understand the persuasive intent of advertising.

Encourage healthy eating through positive messages

- ★ Healthy eating coloring pages for kids to color and create
- ★ Build nutrition into storytime - goo.gl/dB5Rf0
- ★ Share made-up stories about healthy foods
- ★ Ask questions about the stories, movies, and images they see:
 - Who made this? What is it telling you?
 - What if the character were different? (a woman/man/younger/older)



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Food Field Trips - Nutrition Education

Purpose

Adults are important role models and big role in developing healthy nutrition habits.

Child care centers are ideal places to offer training for children, families, and staff. The more information adults and children get, the more likely they are to make healthy choices and support your nutrition policies.

Learning as a team and with families

- ★ Explore partnerships with community gardens and healthy food retailers for field trips.
- ★ Co-create learning plans for staff members that feature child nutrition
- ★ Include nutrition issues and topics in parent meetings and newsletters.
- ★ Invite special educators to share cooking/nutrition lessons with kids.
- ★ Invite families and staff to bring recipes into a recipe library.

Get support from families at home

Send home easy recipe ideas that parents and children can make together.



Source: *Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services*

Image: [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com), [wikimedia.org](https://www.wikimedia.org)

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Limiting Sugary Beverages

Purpose

Drinking sugary beverages regularly at a young age creates unhealthy habits that can follow children for a lifetime.

Low-fat and skim milk have as much calcium and vitamin D as whole milk without extra fat, cholesterol and calories.

In small amounts, 100% juice is a healthy choice for children, but they tend to drink it in place of water. If consumed in excess, children tend to fill up on juice and may eat less of more nutritious foods during meals and snacks.

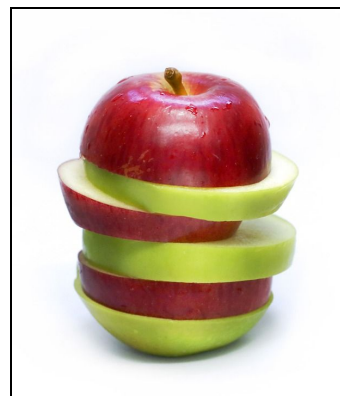
Soda should not be offered to encourage healthy choices and help keep kids' attention.

It is recommended that children drink no more than 4-6 oz. of 100% juice each day.



Drink it up

- ★ Most children cannot tell the difference in taste between different milk varieties
- ★ Show the children that staff members like to drink skim or 1% milk too
- ★ Identify easy-to-eat alternatives to juice like orange slices or banana halves.
- ★ Have water stations easily accessible for children.



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Kids have adequate time for meals and snacks

Purpose

Children at these ages are growing quickly and need lots of nutrition to keep up. Teaching kids to listen to their body and find their hunger cues will help develop healthy eating patterns

Snack time is a great chance to try new foods and take part in important social learning.

Children enjoy their food more and may even try more healthy options if they can relax, eat, and socialize without feeling rushed.

Mealtime success happens together

- ★ Have staff try new foods and share how much they liked it.
- ★ Children can help set the table, serve themselves or prepare simple foods.
- ★ Adults do not force kids to eat if they are not hungry.
- ★ Structure meal options by age so younger children aren't overwhelmed by choices.



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Fruits and vegetables are available at every meal

Purpose

Building healthy eating habits at a young age will follow kids into their later years.

Some of the benefits of offering fruits and vegetables all day are:

- Improved Nutrition
- Decreased Obesity
- Improved Digestive Health
- Better Learning Performance

Throw a tasting party

- ★ Have staff try new foods and share how much they liked it.
- ★ Describe new foods with kids: what color is it? What does it smell like? Does it look like a shape? How does it smell, taste?
- ★ Serve new foods first, while kids are most hungry.

How can staff help?

- ★ Encourage kids to try new foods but do not force them to eat it.
- ★ Staff should be seen eating the same food as kids.
- ★ Meals should be eaten family style.

