

Visible Classroom Support for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

Tip Sheet

Nutrition and Physical Activity Self-Assessment Child Care (NAP SACC)

Healthy Child Care Project

FORWARD DuPage

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Best Practice: Provide visible support for healthy eating and physical activity in all 2- to 5-year-old classrooms and common areas through use of posters, pictures, and displayed books.ⁱ

Rationale: Environmental variables can influence healthy eating behaviors and behaviors related to physical activity. Therefore, it is important to tailor children's environments to help support healthy eating and physical activity. Simple acts of displaying posters, discussing, and asking questions, demonstrating positive support, and being happy during mealtimes and active playtime will show children that this part of their day is valuable to them and others.

Tips and Strategies adapted from NAP SACC and beyondⁱⁱ:

1. Work with your local library branch to borrow books on a biweekly basis. This can be a free resource for all classrooms to take advantage of and can allow children to read action books that require them to move or books with healthy eating messages or messaging opportunities.
2. Select books to display on your bookshelves or book baskets that reinforce healthy eating and physical activity. Rotate books throughout the year.
3. Look for the pages and messages within books that lend themselves to a discussion about physical activity and healthy eating.
4. Order free posters online and hang them on the wall. My Plate, 54321 Go! Let's Move, Go, Slow, Whoa Foods, Rethink Your Drink, Exercises, Healthy Bodies, etc.
5. Display photos of children. Snap photos of the children during cooking projects, outdoor times, snack and meals, movement circle times and so on.
6. Display children's work. Art projects, science projects and math projects (graphs and other comparisons) that reinforce healthy eating or physical activity when posted on the wall remind children of the work they have completed and give staff additional opportunities to reinforce these messages. Have children create their own pictures of themselves being active with their families and friends
7. Mark your calendar and make plans to rotate photos and posters at the beginning of each season. Children are more likely to notice new posters and messages and ask about them. If you keep the same displays up year-round, children stop seeing them and they blend into the background. Shoot for at least one display/poster/photo/etc. that supports healthy eating or physical activity.
8. Add a variety of healthy eating props and messages to your snack table or snack area and to the home living center. Food models, menus, My Plate placemats, healthy food boxes and containers, etc.
9. Set up a gross motor activity during the main free play of the day. Activities that

lend themselves to indoor use include bean bag toss (and like games), ring toss, balance beam, hula hoops, jump the brook (jump ropes), small climbers, slides, rocking boats, stairs, tunnels, teeter totters, push pull toys, sit and spins and so on.

10. When purchasing puzzles, look for those that promote healthy eating and physical activity. Rotate puzzles in and out of the classroom to keep them interesting but always plan to have one or two available to the children.
11. Look for games and table toy activities that promote/suggest healthy eating or physical activity. For example: My Plate resources (placemats and foods or My Place Sorting Magnets, *Hi Ho Cheerio*, *Hungry Hippos*, *Yeti in my Spaghetti* and so on.
12. Highlight on your lesson plans the physical activities you have planned. List the specific skills you are developing.
13. Post the center menu and continue to mention to families your commitment to introducing healthy foods into their children's routine.

For free downloadable and printable resources and information on staff support for physical activity and nutrition, visit:

1. My Plate: <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/printable-materials>
2. Nutrition Education Store: <https://nutritioneducationstore.com/pages/free-posters>
3. The Walking Classroom: https://www.thewalkingclassroom.org/free-health-message-art-for-your-classroom/?gclid=CjwKCAjw8_nXBRAiEiwAXWe2yS33nzU7u_bBHCZV6k8XWvgIWYSMEVC_R3_b48Y6676RzV3P_8hhzMhx0C7ygQAvD_BwE
4. Pinterest: 10 Food and Nutrition Activities for Preschoolers (free printables too) <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/161637074100086406/?lp=true>
5. Pinterest: Health Posters and Printables: <https://www.pinterest.com/capnpete/health-posters-printables/?lp=true>
6. Healthy Eating Made Easier: <https://www.healthyeating.org/Healthy-Kids/Kids-Games-Activities>
7. Nemours Foundation Kids Health. *Motivating Kids to be Active*. <http://www.kidshealth.org>
8. Patty Kimbrell. *Children's Action Books* <http://www.pkimbrell.com>
9. The National Food Service Management Institute's Memos for Child Care. 2006. <https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/mealtime-memo/>
10. Let's Move (Archive): <https://letsmove.obamawhitehouse.archives.gov>
11. Teachers Pay Teachers: <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Browse/PreK-12-Subject-Area/Health/Type-of-Resource/Posters/Price-Range/Free>
12. We Can: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/>
13. Eat, Play, Grow: <http://www.eatplaygrow.org/>
14. Eat, Play, Grow: Creative Activities for A Healthy Start: <http://cmom.org/wp->

[content/uploads/2017/02/EatPlayGrowTM_Curriculum.pdf](#)

15. Rethink Your Drink posters:
https://www.google.com/search?q=rethink+your+drink+for+preschoolers&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjmo8ni-I_bAhU00VMKHeNCAXkQsAQIOQ&biw=1600&bih=794
16. Active for Life: Raising Physically Literate Kids:
https://activeforlife.com/activities/?gclid=CjwKCAjw8_nXBRAiEiwAXWe2yebEk3leuyGUpcYoMM0Lt8PwhkKcV4OUhKBj1GEKiMg4z3ieagIqtxoCb_AQAvD_BwE
17. Health Promotions Now: https://www.healthpromotionsnow.com/browse/health-education-materials-and-products_40086?cat=97&&gclid=cjwkcaiw8_nxbraieiwaxwe2ywprzwlydrmbzyhyf5pcdz8umpx5jit02gxhpajhc1ciq-q8qexhjboctgigavd_bwe
18. Iowa Department of Education: <https://www.pinterest.com/IAhealthyschools/>

ⁱ NAP SACC Consultant Technical Assistance Manual, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Page 42 and 69.

ⁱⁱ NAP SACC Consultant Technical Assistance Manual, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Page 42 and 69.

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