

December is Celebrate Healthy Month

During COVID-19, *Celebrate Healthy* takes on a whole new meaning. This year, in addition to looking for healthier food options and fun and engaging physical activities, we are focused on simply staying healthy and COVID free. In addition to these home and school recommendations: reducing the size of your groups/gatherings, limiting the number of households that (come into your program or home), wearing masks whenever possible, moving activities outdoors when feasible, social distancing and hand washing/sanitizing, FORWARD DuPage recommends these simple more traditional celebrate healthy strategies for early childhood providers and families.

For Providers: Celebrate holidays with mostly healthy foods and non-food treats. For parents who want to bring in treats, create and share a [Pinterest Board](#) of healthy holiday snacks (Santa Hats w/ strawberries and bananas; string cheese snowmen, broccoli and cauliflower trees, etc.). Have the children help assemble the healthy snacks. Ask parents to bring in festive plates, cups and table décor for your special holiday party. Add themed physical activities (ring toss w/ green painted Styrofoam cones, dancing to holiday songs, paper plate ice skating on carpeted surfaces, etc.). Challenge staff to put on their creative thinking caps.

For Families: Be the voice of reason (and a healthy-living resource for your families) by recommending the following:

- Create a festive ambiance that feels celebratory and has nothing to do with food (table décor, holiday decorations, decorative placemats and plates).
- Enjoy your favorite holiday foods but consider making these modifications. Click [here](#) for healthier options that reduce the sugar, fat and sodium content. Begin the meal with a healthy and festive soup or a green salad to provide fiber and help fill you up before the more decadent dishes are served. Enjoy your favorite foods in moderation. Resist the urge to over indulge. Consider the three bites rule for mashed potatoes, stuffing, fat-laden dips, or deserts. Savor each bite and then tell yourself you're done. If you have children, up your game by typing healthy holiday treats into the Pinterest search engine.
- Add physical activity into the daily schedule. After breakfast and opening presents, take a family walk to reenergize. During the afternoon, consider getting outdoors to toss the football or engage in a snowball fight. As you settle in for the evening, look for a board game or family game that gets everyone up and moving (Twister, Beat That, The Floor is Lava or even the all-time favorite Tik Tok dances).

For details on these tips and more, join FORWARD DuPage and Early Childhood Healthy Lifestyle Expert, Barbara Taylor for December's free webinar, *Celebrate Healthy: Holiday Choices that Keep You Well*. Join us live on Tuesday, December 15 @ 11:30am (or take advantage of the webinar recording posted on FORWARD's website). Click [here](#) to register for FREE.

JOIN THE HEALTHY MOVEMENT TODAY BY TAKING ACTION!

Families: Commit to one or two healthier eating options and at least one physical activity during your holiday celebration.

Early Childhood Providers: Check out this [Go Nap SACC webinar](#) to help you think about celebrating all holidays in a healthy way.

For information on healthy eating and active living initiatives in DuPage County, check out FORWARD DuPage's website at www.forwarddupage.org. For more early childhood healthy resources for families click [here](#).