



GROWING



ACTIVITY



FAMILIES



EATING

**HEALTHY CHILDREN,
HEALTHY WEIGHTS**

Ring of Fun!

INFANT

Healthy Children, Healthy Weights (HCHW) is designed to prevent childhood overweight and obesity by promoting healthy weight and growth in all children, starting with the youngest age group – birth to five years old.

The Ring of Fun is an activity tool to extend our key topics into the classroom:

- Healthy Activity
- Healthy Eating
- Healthy Growing
- Healthy Families

HCHW thanks you for your commitment to growing healthy children.

<http://publichealth.columbus.gov/healthy-children-healthy-weights.aspx>



THE CITY OF
COLUMBUS
MICHAEL B. COLEMAN, MAYOR

COLUMBUS
PUBLIC HEALTH

11/2012

Crossing the Midline

Include activities that help the baby's right arm and leg cross over to the left and the left arm and leg cross over to the right.

- Place the baby in a seated position.
- Sit or kneel in front of the baby hiding a favorite toy behind your back.
- Hand the baby the toy so he/she has to reach across his/her body to get it.

Tips:

- Repeat and encourage the baby to use both hands.
- Make a game of the activity to keep the baby interested.

Adapted from Kids in Action

Let It Pour

Build eye-hand coordination.

- Place a sheet or tablecloth on the floor.
- Seat the baby on top with two large plastic cups.
 - One empty cup and one cup filled with water or sand.
- Demonstrate pouring water or sand from one cup to the other.
- Encourage the baby to try it!
- Also try different shaped cups and that hold the same amount, i.e., one 8-ounce tall cup and one 8-ounce short cup.

Adapted from Kids in Action

Kick, Kick, Kick

Babies learn to use legs and feet.

- Lay baby on his/her back.
- Place a small, soft object by the baby's feet.
- Encourage the baby to kick it.

Tips:

- Try holding the object closer if the baby does not kick it at first, let his/her feet feel it.
- Make sure the baby kicks with both feet.
- Encourage and describe the activity, i.e., "You're kicking the pillow!"



Adapted from: Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute

Maze

Create a simple L-shaped maze on the floor.

- Drape sheets or towels over chairs and tables to make walls.
- Place the baby in a sitting or crawling position at one end of the maze.
- Peek around the corner and say “I see you! Can you come to me?”
- Continue encouraging the child to crawl toward you.

Adapted from: Mississippi early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers



Inch Worm

Help babies learn to move.

- Place the baby on his/her tummy on a smooth floor.
- Place an interesting toy a few inches from the child's head.
- Call attention to the toy.
- Sitting behind the baby, press your leg or hands against his/her feet.
- The baby will push against you moving a few inches toward the toy.
- Move at a pace that is fun and safe for the child.
- Afterwards, allow the baby to examine the toy as long as she enjoys playing with it.

Adapted from: Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute

Move Your Head

- Lay the child on his/her back on a soft surface.
- Place a musical toy or rattle on either side of the baby's head and shake or play it to make noise.
- The infant should turn his or her head in the direction of the toy.

Adapted from: www.headstartbodystart.org



Jump in Place

Build leg strength for babies not yet standing or walking.

- Hold the baby securely under the arms.
- Bounce them gently in place.
- Describe and encourage the activity, “Jump, baby, jump!”

Sit Up

Help develop strength in trunk and motor control.

- Place the baby on his/her back on a soft floor.
- Sit at the baby's feet so that you can easily reach him.
- Support the baby's head and neck with one hand and his/her back and shoulders with the other hand.
- Gently pull the baby forward into a sitting position.

Adapted from: Mississippi early learning guidelines for infants and toddlers

Pull the String

- Place the child on a stable surface on his/her or her belly.
- Place toy on a string at midline between the infant's hands.
- Encourage the infant to reach, grasp, and pull string to reach the toy.

Adapted from: www.headstartbodystart.org



Can you Find Me?

- Lay the child on floor where you can make eye contact with him/her.
- Start with your face above the child, making playful eye contact and soft noises.
- Move your face from side to side so the child will follow you with his/her eyes.
- Move a little more so the baby has to move his/her head to follow.
- Stand up and move a few steps away from the child.
 - Make fun noises, when he/she makes eye contact get excited, provide praise.
- Continue moving around to have the child move and look in different directions.
 - Try moving behind the baby so he/she using his/her body to find you.
- Provide praise and encouragement throughout activity.

Adapted from: www.headstartbodystart.org

Old Mac Donald

Sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” with a twist.

- Insert the baby’s name in place of “Old MacDonald.”
- Insert “has a body,” instead of, “had a farm.”
 - “Baby Maria has a body, E-I-E-I-O. And on her body she has a foot, E-I-E-I -O. With a stomp-stomp here, and a stomp-stomp there. Here a stomp, there a stomp, everywhere a stomp-stomp. Baby Maria has a body, E-I-E-I-O.”
- Gently make a stomping motion with the baby’s foot to follow along with the song.
- Get creative with bending legs, stretching arms and clapping hands.

Adapted from: www.headstartbodystart.org

Where Did It Go?

- Place child on his/her tummy on the floor.
- Place wash cloths on the floor just out of his/her reach.
- Show him/her a toy.
- Place the toy on top of one of the wash cloths.
- Encourage your child to move to reach the toy.
 - Repeat a few times until the child is used to the game.
- Now shake the toy again and hide it under one of the wash cloths.
- Ask the child, “Where did it go?”
- Encourage your child to find it.
- Gently tap each wash cloth so the toy makes a noise.
- Act surprised and show excitement for finding the lost toy.

Adapted from: www.headstartbodystart.org

Setting Up a Lactation Room

Breastfeeding mothers need a clean, private space to feed their children and express milk. The space should include:

1. Electrical outlet
2. Comfortable chair
3. Nearby access to running water

NOTE: The AAP recommends breastfeeding as the sole source of nutrition for your baby for about 6 months. When you add solid foods to your baby's diet, continue breastfeeding until at least 12 months. You can continue to breastfeed after 12 months if you and your baby desire.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics



Starting Solid Foods

The AAP recommends introducing solid foods between 4 and 6 months of age following these guidelines:

- The baby should be able to sit up with good head control.
- If the baby turns his/her head away from food it may be a sign he/she is not ready for solid foods. Try again in 1-2 weeks.
- If the baby pushes food out of his/her mouth he/she may not yet be able to move food through the mouth to the throat for swallowing. This is a normal step in development and takes some practice.
 - Try diluting the food first, then gradually thickening the texture.
 - You may also wait and retry solids in 1-2 weeks.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics

Solid Foods to Try First

Single-grain baby cereal is a good choice for the first solid food.

- Choose cereal made for babies and iron-fortified.
- Baby cereals are available pre-mixed or dry.
- Follow packaged directions for preparation.
 - You can mix dry cereal with breast milk, formula or water.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics



Introducing New Foods

Try one new food at a time. Wait at least 2 to 3 days before starting another. With each new food introduced watch for any allergic reactions (diarrhea, rash, or vomiting). If any of these occur, stop using the new food and consult with the child's doctor

Within a few months of starting solid foods, the baby's daily diet should include a variety of foods each day that may include:

- Breast milk and/or formula
- Meats
- Cereal
- Vegetables
- Fruits
- Eggs

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics

Moving On To Finger Foods

Once babies can sit up and bring their hands and objects to their mouth you can give them finger foods to help them learn to feed themselves. Avoid choking by adding soft, easy-to-swallow foods in bite-sized pieces such as:

- Small pieces of banana
- Well-cooked pasta
- Wafer-type crackers
- Well-cooked chicken finely chopped
- Scrambled eggs
- Well-cooked and cut up yellow squash, peas, and potatoes

NOTE: Do not give babies any food that requires chewing or can be a choking hazard, including hot dogs and meat sticks; nuts and seeds; chunks of meat or cheese; whole grapes; popcorn; chunks of peanut butter; raw vegetables; fruit chunks, such as apple chunks; and hard, goeey, or sticky candy.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics

Should I Give Babies Juice?

Children do not need juice.

- Babies younger than 6 months should not be given juice.
- If desired a child can be given 100% fruit juice after 6 months of age.
- Only offer juice in a cup, never in a bottle.
- Limit juice to 4 ounces a day, more than this will reduce his/her appetite for more nutritious foods.
- Juice can cause diaper rash, diarrhea, weight gain and tooth decay.

Adapted from: American Academy of Pediatrics

Sight Exploration

- Create activities that engage your infant with his/her environment. Allow them to play in the garden not just look at it.
- Sitting, standing and climbing areas in a garden include benches, logs, platforms, and bridges. This offers older infants areas to “pull up” and explore.

Adapted from: Growing Minds Farm to School



Crawling/Walking Exploration

- Consider a variety of places for the infants to walk and move.
- Paths and defined areas may have different types of surfaces, sand, flagstone, wood chips, etc, as well as a variety of inclines, steps, etc.

Adapted from: Growing Minds Farm to School



Smell Exploration

Introduce your infant to the garden through the sense of smell. Consider these sources:

- Various flowers
- Fresh grass clippings
- Mulch
- Soil
- Herbs: mint, basil, parsley, dill, etc.
- Fresh cut fruits and vegetables

Adapted from: Growing Minds Farm to School



Taste Exploration

Introduce fresh foods to children early to create long-lasting healthy habits.

- Select a variety of pureed fruits and vegetables.
 - Add a new fruit or vegetable every few days.
- Remember, it can take up to 15 times for a child to accept a new food.
 - If they don't like it at first, try again in a few days.

Adapted from: Growing Minds Farm to School



Mud Pit

- Include a sand box and/or a designated “dirt digging spot” in a shaded area.
- Allow infants to dig their hands into the soil and explore.

Adapted from: Growing Minds Farm to School



Crunch, Crunch!

In the fall months encourage infants to explore the change of the season, including its sounds.

- Have children crawl, walk or run around outside, crunching as many leaves as they can.
- Encourage them to take notice of the sounds the leaves make below them.



Make Breakfast Count

WHOLE WHEAT SWEET POTATO AND APPLE PANCAKES (makes 10-15 small pancakes)

Ingredients

- 1 ½ cups whole-wheat flour
- 3 heaped tbsp rolled oats
- 2 1/2 oz (about 2/3 cup) wheat germ
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp nutmeg
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 4 oz (1/2 cup) mashed, cooked sweet potato
- 1 apple (sweet), peeled cored and chopped into small bite sized pieces
- Cooking spray

Directions

1. Lightly steam or simmer chopped apples in water until tender.
2. Mix whole-wheat flour, oats, wheat germ, baking powder and spices together in a bowl.
3. Place the sweet potato in a separate bowl and slowly stir in the milk. Add the eggs and mix well.
4. Combine wet and dry ingredients and stir; add cooked apples.
5. Spray pan or griddle with cooking spray, spoon out mixture to create small pancakes.
6. Cook for a few minutes on each side until golden.
7. Cool, cut and serve as a finger food.

Invite parents to share breakfast with their infant.

Adapted from <http://www.homemade-baby-food-recipes.com/sweet-potato-and-apple-pancakes.html>

Make Each Plate a Healthy Plate

Begin building healthy habits during meal times. Start teaching children about MyPlate and food groups as infants.

- Use a MyPlate placemat at meal time so they become familiar with the symbol.
- Talk about the foods you are feeding them and what food groups they belong to.
- Use 'play food' of whole fruits and vegetables so babies can see what they look like.

Display MyPlate posters and send handouts home with parents so they too can learn about the food groups.

Cold Weather Fun

Bundle up and take children outside.

- Play in the snow with sand toys, building blocks, and brightly colored balls.
- Go for a walk around the center and talk about the sights. Use a stroller or buggy for those who cannot walk yet.

Take pictures for a winter collage to display in the center or home for parents to see!



Healthy Celebrations

Ask parents to sign up to provide an item for a party “Nibble Tray”. Fill each section with bite-size pieces of colorful and nutritious foods.

- Cheerios
- Bananas
- Avocado
- Mango
- Peaches
- Pears
- Cooked sweet potatoes
- Cooked squash

Use unusual containers such as ice cube trays and muffin tins.

<http://www.askdrsears.com/topics/feeding-infants-toddlers/17-tips-pleasing-picky-eater>

Growing Great Tasters

Encourage children to try at least one bite of new foods. Model the behavior by trying it with them. Write each new food they try on an "I Tried It!" chart to share with parents.

Examples of new foods to try:

- Cooked zucchini
- Cooked squash
- Pureed pumpkin
- Avocado
- Mango
- Papaya
- Peaches
- Pears

<http://www.childrenshungeralliance.org/ECNE/images/Growing%20Great%20Tasters.pdf>



Build Children Up With Words

Ask parents to share one thing their child is good at (dancing, jumping, drawing, etc.).

- Have the child perform his or her skill for a “talent show”.
- Introduce each act with “(Insert name)’s mommy/daddy say he/she is good at (insert activity)!”
- Cheer and clap loudly for each act!



An Hour a Day to Play

Tummy time prepares babies for the time when they will be able to slide on their bellies and crawl.

- Play and interact with the baby while he/she is on their tummy 2 to 3 times each day.
- Increase the amount of time as the baby shows he/she enjoys the activity.
- Make tummy time fun:
 - Get on the floor with the baby, make faces, talk to them and hold colorful toys in front of them
 - Encourage babies to look up by talking above their head
 - Place the baby in front of a mirror
 - Use a rattle to gain their attention, getting them to move their head from side to side or up and down
- Take photos of tummy time and make a collage for parents to see

Reduce Screen Time

No screen time for children under 2

- Adopt a policy consistent with AAP recommendations (no screen time for children under 2).
- Share this policy with parents through your child care handbook, posters and handouts.
- Encourage families to track their screen time and/or set goals to reduce it.

Good Rest is Best

ABCs of Safe Sleep

Create a written safe sleep policy addressing safe sleep practices for infants. Display a poster to remind staff and parents of these practices.

- **A**lone
- On their **B**acks
- In a safety-approved **C**rib



Water First for Thirst

Encourage young children to explore and enjoy water through fun activities.

- Under close supervision, provide a small bowl of water for the child to play.
- Provide them with sponges and cups.
- Allow children to play in the water, squeezing the sponges or filling and pouring water from a cup.

Send children home with fun water activities to try at home.

- Show infants how to splash in the tub.
- Sign them up for a swim class.
- Add bath toys to tub time or a kiddie pool.

Take Time for Meals

Under close supervision, provide infants with whole fruits and vegetables to handle and explore. Include items with interesting textures:

- Corn on the cob
- Asparagus
- Unpeeled kiwi
- Brussels sprouts
- Star fruit
- Pineapple

Talk about colors, shapes, and textures. Incorporate the foods into a meal or snack. Fashion a small chef hat out of paper and take a picture of each child as they explore to share with parents.

Paper chef hat: <http://education.scholastic.co.uk/content/4859>



Make Snacks Count

Fishing for Colors

- Stir dices of colorful soft fruits and vegetables into a small bowl of cottage cheese.
 - Peaches
 - Pears
 - Peas
 - Cooked carrots
- Challenge children to “fish” them out with their fingers (or spoon) and enjoy!
- Take pictures of the messy fun and create a collage to display!

<http://wholesomebabyfood.momtastic.com/baby-dips-finger-foods.htm>