

WORKING WITH FAMILIES WORKSHOP

1) Objectives

- a) Describe the role of child care staff in helping families address healthy weight behaviors
- b) Describe the key messages they can send home to families
- c) List strategies child care staff can use in communicating healthy weight information to families

2) ACTIVITY: How well does your center communicate with parents?

- a) Have participants fill out the How well does your center communicate with parents form

3) Why maintaining a healthy weight is important

- a) More than 60% of adults and 20% of children are overweight
- b) Overweight children are twice as likely to become overweight adults
- c) Parents are probably the most important role models a child has in developing healthy (or unhealthy) behaviors.

4) Working with Families

- a) The role of child care is to provide quality care that contributes to a child's health and development
- b) Development of a healthy weight is an important goal shared with the family
- c) Developing communication between school and home can help meet this goal

5) How Can You Reach Parents?

- a) Send home handouts or information packets
 - i) *Examples: recipes, suggestions for increasing activity, charts to assist with menu planning, or grocery lists*
- b) Hold parent workshops
 - i) *Hold workshops or discussion groups, present ideas about how to improve nutrition and physical activity, consider offering incentives such as a raffle for a gift certificate.*
- c) Speak with parents at drop-off or pick-up times
 - i) *Ask if they've read the materials sent home, see how it's going*
- d) Organize family events and activates that your families can participate in

i) *Examples: health fairs, carnivals, or field days*

6) Communication Techniques

- a) Be positive and encouraging
- b) Be careful not to sound judgmental
- c) Focus on setting specific, reasonable goals. **Can anyone think of an example of a specific, reasonable family goals?**
 - i) *Examples: Serve fresh fruit at least five days a week. Get the kids outside to play at least once a day. Cut back to two sodas per week or less. Switch from whole milk to 1% or skim.*

7) We will talk about four key messages to focus on when talking with parents about making a healthy home environment:

- a) Healthy Eating at Home
- b) Increasing Activity at Home
- c) Keeping Screen Time in Check
- d) How to Celebrate Healthy

8) Importance of Family Meals

What ways can Family Meals can be helpful to children as they grow and get older?

- a) Family meals improve dietary quality and promote healthy weight
 - i. Increase intake of fruits, vegetables, grains, calcium-rich foods, protein, iron, fiber, and Vitamins A, c, E, B-6 and folate
 - ii. Lower intake of soft drinks and snack foods
- b) Family meals lower risk-taking behaviors
 - i. Kids who eat dinner with their families 5 times a week or more are least likely to take drugs, feel depressed, or get into trouble
- c) Family meals improve family relationships and emotional health
 - i. Emotionally content and positive peer relationships
 - ii. Work hard in school
 - iii. Improved family communication and stronger family ties
- d) Family meals improve academic performance
 - i. Improved vocabularies and reading skills
 - ii. Improved achievement test scores
 - iii. Higher grades

9) First Message: Healthy Eating at Home

Encourage parents to:

- a) Prepare meals at home and enjoy them as a family
- b) Replace sugary or high fat snacks with healthier ones such as fruits, nuts, yogurt, or carrot sticks
- c) Involve the whole family in meal preparation

10) Can anyone think of some common objections to cooking at home?

- a) *“I don’t have time”*
 - i. A healthy, balanced meal can be prepared at home in about the same amount of time it takes to order a pizza or go through a drive-through
- b) *“I never have what I need”*
 - i. Planning ahead is essential!
 - ii. Parents can plan for the next 2 days or the next 2 weeks- whatever works for them.
 - iii. All family members should be involved in planning meals and choosing what will be prepared.
 - iv. A helpful tip is to plan to cook twice as much food as you need for the night, then save or freeze the rest for an easy meal in the future.
- c) *“My family doesn’t like what I fix”*
 - i. Include everyone in meal planning. Let each family member suggest something he/she would like to try for dinner, then post the menu for the week on the fridge.
 - ii. Let children help with meal preparation. Give them age-appropriate tasks such as tearing up lettuce, setting the table, or adding ingredients.
 - iii. Try healthier versions of fast-food favorites. If the kids love chicken fingers, make breaded and baked chicken strips at home- far less fattening, but they have a similar taste to appeal to picky eaters. If they love cheeseburgers, make burgers at home with 96% lean beef, whole wheat buns, and reduced fat cheese.
 - iv. Keep a list of recipes that worked great for your family handy for future use.
- d) *“It’s too expensive”*
 - i. A meal prepared at home actually costs less than a similar meal from a fast food restaurant
 - ii. Watch for store sales, especially on frozen foods, and stock up.
 - iii. If you eat fast food several nights a week, you will PAY with your health. Typical fast food meals contain nearly all or more than the recommended daily amounts of saturated fat and calories

- e) *“I don’t know how to cook”*
 - i. Cooking can actually be very easy- anyone can do it!
 - ii. Start simple with a few easy recipes to build your confidence. Many grocery store items are sold nearly meal-ready – just add water and heat! Simple stir fry mixes are also sold in the frozen food section. All you have to do is put them in a skillet.
 - iii. You will gradually gain confidence making a variety of healthy meals for your family.

11) Healthy Eating at Home Recap

- a) The most important overall messages to send to parents are:
 - 1) the importance of planning ahead
 - 2) involving the whole family in menu planning and preparation
 - 3) keeping family meals a happy, stress-free time for the whole family to spend together
 - 4) keeping the TV off so that the family can enjoy this quality time together

12) Second Message: Increasing Physical Activity at Home

- a) The next main message to emphasize is about increasing physical activity at home. Key points include:
 - 1) Every little bit counts! Making small changes to help the family move more can make a big difference over time.
 - 2) You don’t need a gym or special workout clothing or gear to get more active.
 - 3) Focus on playing and having fun rather than exercise, especially with children this age.
 - 4) Activity is important for everyone, adults and kids, regardless of size and level of fitness or ability. Getting more active is a goal for the whole family, not just the kids!

13) Can you think of some ways to “sneak in” activity with things you are already doing?

- a) *Take the stairs*
- b) *Park farther away and walk*
- c) *Carry grocery bags in one at a time*
- d) *Wash the car at home*
- e) *Walk around while talking on the phone*
- f) *Do sit-ups or jumping jacks during commercials*

14) What are some other ways to increase activity?

- a) *Walk the dog*
- b) *Vacuum, clean the house*
- c) *Take a walk as a family after dinner*
- d) *Dance to music*
- e) *Work in your garden*
- f) *Play outside with your children*

15) It might be helpful to remind parents that activity is good for them too. Can you think of some benefits of physical activity?

- a) stress management
- b) sleeping better
- c) feeling better overall
- d) improved self-esteem
- e) healthy bones, muscles, and joints
- f) helps with weight control

16) Increasing Physical Activity Recap

- a) The most important overall messages to send to parents are:
 - 1) Play and have fun as a family! Family activity shouldn't be a burden or a chore.
 - 2) Activity doesn't have to be strenuous and doesn't have to be all at once. You can accumulate activity throughout the day.
 - 3) Every little bit counts, so sneak in activity or movement whenever you can.

17) Third Message: Keeping Screen Time in Check

- a) **What is "screen time"?**
 - 1) *Screen time is time spent watching TV, working at a computer, or playing video games.*
- b) TV time is usually the biggest problem for families with children
- c) It is important to set and keep limits on TV and screen time to keep a healthy lifestyle. This means that adults and children alike must observe the rules that are set.
- d) **How much TV time per day is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics?**
 - 1) *NO TV AT ALL for children under 2, and a maximum of 1-2 hours per day for older children.*

18) Some facts about Screen Time

- a) Most TV commercials targeting children advertise soft drinks, candy, sugar cereals, or fast food. Young children often cannot distinguish between a program and a commercial. This can make grocery shopping with children much harder!
- b) On average, American children spend 900 hours a year in school and 1,023 hours a year watching television.
- c) Watching less TV is associated with better performance in school and higher reading ability.
- d) TV does not help develop reading or social skills.
- e) TV is thought to promote ADD in children.

19) DID YOU KNOW?

- a) 2 out of 3 children under 6 live in homes where the TV is usually left on at least half the time, even if no one is watching
- b) 1/3 of children under 6 live in homes where TV is on “almost all” or “most” of the time
- c) Children who live in homes where TV is on most of the time appear to read less than the other children and tend to be slower in learning how to read
- d) Increased TV viewing equals higher percent body fat
- e) In 2005 the Kaiser Family Foundation found that children ages 2-7 are exposed to over 4,427 food ads per year which is about 29 hr and 31 mins per year
- f) 43% of 4-6 year olds have a TV in their bedroom and spend more time watching TV then children without a TV in their bedroom

20) How to Control Your Screen Time (Not give it up entirely!)

- a) Take TVs out of children’s bedrooms. This gives them too much opportunity to watch and isolates them from the family.
- b) Leave the TV off during meal time.
 - 1) Watching TV during meals encourages mindless eating, and unhealthy habit that can lead to overweight.
 - 2) Meals should be focused on family.
- c) Plan your TV watching each day.
 - 1) Turn the TV on only for the show you want to watch. Don’t get into the habit of mindlessly channel surfing!
- d) Watch TV as a family. Talk to your child about the characters and help your child learn from them.
- e) Set clear limits as a family and KEEP them! **Can you think of some examples?**

- 1) *No TV after 7 pm. No TV on school nights. 1 hour limit in the afternoon.*
- 2) Remember that these limits apply to everyone!

21) Can you think of some alternative activities you could suggest to take the place of TV time?

- a) *put together a puzzle*
- b) *go for a walk or bike ride*
- c) *play "I Spy"*
- d) *do an art project*
- e) *play a board game*
- f) *talk together about your day*
- g) *play hide and seek*
- h) *read a book*
- i) *go to the park*
- j) *play with your pet*
- k) *play with toys*

22) Screen Time Recap

- a) TV time should be limited to 1-2 hours per day
- b) Set and keep limits as a family. Everyone has to follow the rules.
- c) There are tons of fun options to try instead of watching TV

23) Fourth Message: How to Celebrate Healthy

- a) Parties and celebrations are traditionally centered on food (think birthday cake, Halloween, Easter baskets)- but they don't have to be.
- b) Encourage parents to be creative and think of ways to shift the focus away from unhealthy foods. **Can you think of any ideas?**
 - 1) *Plan parties around activities like ice skating, kickball, swimming, slip n slide, basketball, rollerblading, or sledding*
 - 2) *Offer fruit, cut up vegetables, and other healthy options along with less healthy treats. You don't have to eliminate cake and ice cream altogether, but have healthier options and encourage children to eat them.*
 - 3) *Present healthy foods in fun, creative ways. You can encourage children to make a face out of blueberries and carrot sticks or allow children to dip strawberries in a bit of chocolate sauce.*
 - 4) *Always have water as a drink option, and consider replacing fruit punch with 100% juice.*

- 24) **Getting Started**
- a) Remind parents that they don't have to change everything at once.
 - b) Encourage parents to make a few realistic, specific goals at a time.
 - c) Remember that any increase in awareness that you give to parents makes a difference, even if you can't see a big difference.
- 25) **Above all...**
- a) Encourage- Parents will often get discouraged and think they can't accomplish a healthy lifestyle. Remind them that they can always start over and to keep trying.
 - b) Support- In child care, reinforce healthy behaviors being practiced at home by practicing healthy behaviors in child care.
 - c) Suggest- Share ideas about specific goals families could make to increase healthy behavior.
- 26) **ACTIVITY: Brainstorm How your center can help reach out to parents to encourage healthy behaviors at home.**
- 27) **Take a minute to brainstorm. How can your facility reach out to parents to help increase healthy behaviors at home?**
- 28) **Resources**
- a) Families eating Smart and Moving More
 - b) Color Me Healthy Family Newsletters
 - c) We can!
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/>
 - d) Fit Source
<http://fitsource.nccic.acf.hhs.gov/fitsource/>
 - e) Helping Your Child
<http://win.niddk.nih.gov/publications/child.htm>