

### New Physical Activity Guidelines For Preschoolers



The Department of Health and Human services creates physical activity (PA) guidelines. These guidelines tell us the amount of PA that is recommended to prevent disease and keep us healthy. Young children usually don't have adult diseases, but they are becoming unhealthier. The use of screens to entertain children is also becoming very common. Children are playing outside less and are getting less exercise throughout the day. Obesity, high insulin levels, and other risk factors that may cause adult diseases are a lot more common in young children.

Because of these new trends, for the first-time PA guidelines have been established for children as young as 3 years old! Children who are regularly active have a better chance of growing up healthy. Preschool-aged children should be encouraged to move and participate in active play as well as teacher led activities.

**The recommendation:** 3 hours per day of activities that are aerobic, muscle strengthening, and bone strengthening. The intensity of PA should be varied from light, moderate, and vigorous.

**What is intensity and how is it measured?** Intensity is the effort you make to do an activity. It can be measured by heart rate or breathing rate.

- Light intensity- Breathing and heart rate are normal; able to talk as usual. Some examples are slow walking, playing dress up, playing with blocks.
- Moderate intensity- Increase in breathing and heart rate; able to talk in short sentences. Some examples are walking fast, riding a tricycle, playing on the slide, tossing a ball.
- Vigorous intensity- Significant increase in heart and breathing rate; difficult to talk. Some examples are running, playing tag, fast paced teacher led activity.

#### Examples of Aerobic, Muscle-Strengthening, and Bone-Strengthening Physical Activities for Children

Type of Physical Activity	Example of Activity
Moderate to Vigorous intensity aerobic	• Games such as tag • playing on a playground • tricycle riding • walking, running, skipping • playing games that require catching, throwing, and kicking • tumbling
Muscle strengthening	• Games like tug of war • climbing on playground equipment
Bone strengthening	• Hopping, skipping, jumping • running • gymnastics

#### How can you help your preschoolers meet the daily recommended PA?

- Short activities count! Add more PA into the school day at the rate you are comfortable.
- Observe DRDP measures while leading your class in fun physical activities. PA curricula like CATCH can make it easy to lead children in games that will help them stay active and meet your daily observation goals at the same time!
- Get parents involved! Let parents know the importance of PA for their children. Send them to the move your way campaign website for some tips on getting their children to move at home. The website is also available in Spanish. [www.health.gov/moveyourway/#parents](http://www.health.gov/moveyourway/#parents)
- Help families start a walking club. Partner with motivated parents and encourage walking to and from school or walking trips to the park, help build a healthy community!

Adapted from: [https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical\\_Activity\\_Guidelines\\_2nd\\_edition.pdf](https://health.gov/paguidelines/second-edition/pdf/Physical_Activity_Guidelines_2nd_edition.pdf)

# Helping Your Preschoolers Have A Positive Attitude About Food



Introducing children to nutrition education at an early age is very important. They see unhealthy messages about food and drinks on TV, and are surrounded by unhealthy food in their environment. They also need to hear messages about sensible eating and healthy food. One way to help children become healthy adults is by teaching them to have positive attitudes about food. Just like learning how to tie their shoes, children must learn to have positive attitudes about food from the adults around them. Preschoolers are too young to understand that there are vitamins in foods that are going to prevent them from getting sick later in life. Teach healthy food attitudes, not complex nutrition concepts. Focus on introducing them to new foods. Teach them where food comes from, and how it is produced. Show excitement and curiosity while eating with them. Tell them how food can help them now. Say things like “eating fruits and vegetables help you run faster, have eyes that sparkle and skin that glows!”

## Here are a few tips that you can use to promote positive food attitudes:

- Let children learn about food by looking and touching. Focus on the enjoyable aspects of eating. Help children discover the smells, textures, and sounds that food make.
- Focus on the positive, praise them for making good food choices. Children may get scared by talk about good-food and bad-food, we want them to have a positive attitude about food. Saying that a food is bad can shame the child if they eat this food at home and it may cause them to lose trust in their parents.
- Be descriptive with your praise, say things like “I see that you dipped a sweet crunchy carrot in your soft applesauce, good job on trying a carrot for the first time. How did that feel in your mouth?” This will help them focus on the enjoyable aspect of eating.
- Be a good role-model. If children see that adults around them eat fruits and vegetables and enjoy them, they will likely want to do the same!
- Make it fun! Use creativity to create games about Fruits and Vegetables or sing songs about them.
- Combine nutrition lessons with other subjects. Use fruit and vegetable books to teach the alphabet. Go to [foodhero.org](http://foodhero.org) and type in storybook ideas on the search bar to find a list of books that combine nutrition with other subjects.
- Focus on helping children make changes in their behavior. A child knowing that a carrot can help their eyes see clearly is different from them wanting to eat a carrot. Successful behavior change will happen when children have real-life experience with food. Provide this experience with a food-tasting or allowing them to help prepare a simple snack that they get to eat. Try something simple like having them spread a nut butter on a whole wheat cracker topped with a banana slice!

Adapted from: <https://www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Handout-Healthy-eating-at-school.pdf> & Liakos Evers, Connie. *How to teach nutrition to kids.*

## Cucumber Caterpillar Snack



**Serves: 4 Prep Time: 15 minutes**

### Ingredients

- 1 medium – cucumber
- 1 small – red bell pepper
- 4 tablespoon – ranch dressing, or other dip. Try almond butter or hummus!

### Directions

1. Cut half the red pepper into thin strips, take each strip and cut into 4 small pieces for the legs. Take other half and make 1 circle with a round cookie cutter or pairing knife.
2. Peel cucumber and cut into slices.
3. Layer the cucumber slices to resemble a caterpillar on a plate. Add the red pepper circle for head, add the slices of pepper for feet. Use leftover pieces for eyes and antennae.

Adapted from: [superhealthykids.com](http://superhealthykids.com)

## March Is National Nutrition Month Celebrate By Having An Election!



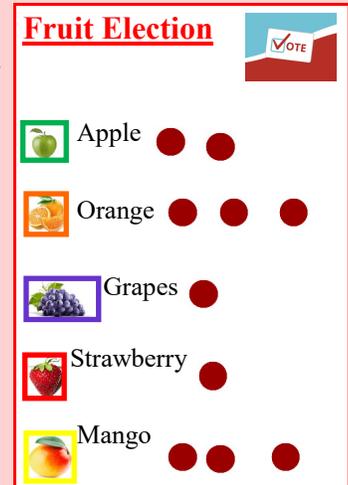
The preschool setting is the first place outside of the home where children learn what it is to be a responsible member of a group. Self-regulation, motivation to compromise, negotiation, bargaining, and turn-taking are some of the skills required for children to master being responsible members of the class. These skills are learned by doing, help children master them by exposing them to situations that require them to practice these skills!



Celebrate National Nutrition month this March by creating a formal activity that helps children learn about the election process while practicing these important skills! Help your preschoolers accept the judgment of the majority by asking them to vote for their favorite fruit and vegetable! This activity is also a wonderful way to introduce math concepts. Celebrate the winners by having a taste-testing! To enhance the activity, teach the children how the winners are grown and where they come from.

Here are some ideas on how to setup the Fruit and Vegetable Election:

- Start by asking the children to name their favorite fruits. Write the names down on the board or somewhere large enough for children to feel that their answers matter and are important enough to be written down. Do the same for Vegetables.
- Explain to children that the most popular answers will be the “candidates” that they will vote for.
- Make a list of the candidates. No more than 5 per category to avoid overwhelming children with too many choices.
- Set up separate poster-size ballots for both the fruit and vegetable candidates with pictures of each. You can use both sides of one poster.
- Give each child one stickers to use for placing their vote for one fruit. They can then vote for the vegetable with another sticker.
- Plan ahead what you would like to do in case there is a tie.
- Before announcing the winners take the time to remind kids that accepting the majority decision is being a responsible group member!



\*To extend this activity you can have a few children run campaigns of their favorite Fruits and Vegetables to convince others to vote for them. They can give speeches and make posters.

Adapted from: [https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/dhmc-internet-upload/file\\_collection/fruits-veggies%20in%20preschool.pdf](https://www.dartmouth-hitchcock.org/dhmc-internet-upload/file_collection/fruits-veggies%20in%20preschool.pdf)

## Make Physical Activity Enjoyable!

Have some fun this spring pretending to be on a warm beach with your class! Lead a structured physical activity while the children have fun, learn about coastal animals, increase the strength in their upper body, and use their imagination!

**NAME OF ACTIVITY:** ‘Crabs and Seagulls’

**EQUIPMENT:** 1 poly spot per child

**SKILL THEMES:** locomotor and non-locomotor movements; transferring body weight; balancing

**ORGANIZATION:** Children are scattered throughout the activity area, each standing in their poly spot.

**DESCRIPTION:** 1. Children imagine that they are crabs out for a day on the beach (children will crab walk around their spots). However, a hungry seagull lurks nearby and the crabs must hurry home if the seagull flies too close. 2. At the teachers signal, the crabs begin the day’s journey around their beach house (poly spot) or all over the activity area. 3. While the crabs are venturing from their spots have them:

- waive hello to a friend
- carry a picnic basket
- reach to the sky with a foot
- jump the waves
- put on sunscreen
- dig for sea shells
- shake out a beach towel
- eat some fruit
- pretend to catch a flying disc

**TEACHING SUGGESTIONS:**

1. The objective is to have children develop upper body strength by supporting their body weight on their hands. Keep the story fun and encourage creative interpretation.
2. Encourage children to do all the actions without letting their bottoms touch the ground.

\* Need more physical activity ideas and materials? Talk with your nutrition educator to receive activities and equipment for free! \*

