



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. X, No. 7

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ **Support children's health**
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ Provide a language-rich environment
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care Support Children's Health

Supporting Choosy Eaters

The National Institute of Health defines choosy, selective eating (also known as picky eating) as the unwillingness to eat familiar foods or to try new foods as well as having strong food preferences. Choosy eating is common for many young children as they grow and assert their independence. This phase usually occurs in young children around 2 to 6 years old. Most of the time, it is temporary as long as you continue to offer a variety of foods often and encourage them to try new ones.

Children's perception of taste and texture is different from adults because they have more tastebuds spread throughout their mouth, which makes them more sensitive when eating. Children have 30,000 tastebuds of which only one-third remain in adulthood, so eating can be an intense experience for them.

Ways to support children trying new foods and/or revisit familiar foods:

- **Keep portion size age appropriate.** Children's stomach is the size of their fist, so they cannot eat very much at one time. When the portions are too large, they will choose what they like and skip what they are not familiar with.
- **Eating the same foods at mealtimes.** Children are interested in what adults are doing, so it is important to model by eating the same foods as children during mealtimes.
- **Keep meals and snacks 2-3 hours apart.** Snacks should be small nutritious items offered until meals are served. If children are full from snacking, they may not want to eat at meal time or try new foods.
- **Offer a variety of foods repeatedly and in various ways.** Repeat exposure allow their tastebuds to adjust to a new food's taste and texture. According to experts, it may take more than 10 times before a child may like a new food.

This newsletter will present information that will help you support children's healthy eating and suggest tips and activities for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to try new foods.



Infants

The best way to a healthy start for infants is through responsive feeding. This means learning infants' cues for hunger (e.g., making sucking noises, lean toward food) and being full (e.g., spit out or ignore the bottle or food, distracted easily), and responding appropriately to those cues. Through responsive feeding, infants develop healthy eating behaviors that will lower the level of choosy eating as they get older.

When infants are developmentally ready for solid foods, here are some tips:

- **Introduce one new food at a time** to give infants time to accept the new food and experience the taste and texture. This is the best time to look out for allergies.
- **Slowly add a variety of tastes and textures** when infants maintain a consistent solid food routine. For example, start with pureed foods then slowly offer lumpy and soft finger foods and to chopped food, following infants' readiness through these transitions. Allowing infants to explore new and a variety of tastes and textures from a range of foods support the development of their teeth and jaws, and build other skills that they will need for language development.
- **Offer a variety of soft healthy finger foods** such as steamed vegetables or firmed tofu when infants can pick up food with their forefinger and thumb and let them self-feed as much as possible. This will allow infants to develop their fine muscle skills, self-help skills, and healthy eating habits.



- **Hold off on sweets.** When starting a new food, introduce a single-ingredient food that contains no salt and sugar. Infants need nutrient-rich foods, not empty calories from sweets and high-fat food items.

Toddlers

Toddlers are learning to understand what is around them, use words to communicate, and practice their independence. Eating is one of the first areas where they will try to practice this skill – learning to choose what and how much to eat. You can help toddlers start their healthy habits and encourage eating a variety of foods by:

- **Talking about what they will be eating to prepare for what is coming.** Children react better when they know what is coming next. For example, “We will have some broccoli after our story with chicken, rice, apples, and milk.”
- **Being a role model.** Model the behavior you want to see. Sit together at mealtimes without distraction and talk about pleasant topics so they associate positive feelings and interactions with mealtime.
- **Playing, exploring, tasting, and loving the food with them.** This is the way toddlers learn to like their food. They will likely eat it if they can feel, touch, squeeze, smell, and learn about it. Allowing toddlers to play and explore with their food can help them safely experience new tastes and textures.

- Talking about the new food. They will be excited to try what you are eating while learning new words to describe the color, texture, shape, smell, and how it tastes compared with food they like.
- **Offering toddlers the recommended portions and healthy choices**, then allowing them to decide what and how much they want to eat. Serve a variety of healthy foods, including their favorites and some new foods. It is a normal response for toddlers to eat less at this stage because of their decrease in energy needs. Encourage them to try a bite without nagging or forcing. Forcing and bribing them to eat can result in choosy eating.

Preschoolers

Preschoolers are naturally curious and may ask questions about everything. They are becoming increasingly independent and eager to be your helper with many things. Embrace their new skills and encourage them to ask questions and help with meals. Here are some tips that may help them get excited about meals and new foods:

- **Know facts about the food you want them to try.** Research the food you are serving and share interesting facts with them. Food facts help preschoolers learn



to take care of their bodies and feed their desire to learn. For example, when you offer them broccoli, tell them that it is a superfood. The shape of the broccoli looks like a tree because it has a strong super power like a tree. Its super power will help their vision to see far and clear, bones to grow strong, and immune system to stay healthy. Extend learning by reading more about it from non-fiction books.

- **Engage children in the process before food gets to the table.** Children feel more connected to the meal being served when they help set the table, fill their own plate, and grow their own food. Gardening is hands-on fun learning about foods before they become a meal. They will enjoy eating food they grow and harvest. Start with easy to grow items like herbs, tomatoes, eggplants, beans, sweet peppers, lettuce, and leafy greens in small pots.
- **Include children in the kitchen.** Allow them to do small tasks that you are comfortable with. From taking the zucchini out of the vegetable drawer to measuring half-a-cup of milk to cracking the egg, they will enjoy knowing and learning how the food is made and the outcome of their creation. Once they are used to helping in the kitchen, engage them in sharing their ideas of preparing and cooking food the way they like to eat. They are more likely to want to taste what they make.

Training Opportunity

Effective Practices to Promote Healthy Eating in ECE

This course provides information about the eating preferences and behaviors of children ages 2 to 8.

<https://extension.psu.edu/programs/betterkidcare/lessons/effective-practices-to-promote-healthy-eating-in-ece>

The course is free, however there is a \$5 charge for the certificate.

Featured Activity

Apple Sandwiches

Adapted from: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/apple-sandwiches>



Ingredients:

- 1 medium apple
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter or any nut butter of your choice
- 1 tablespoon raisins or any dried fruits of your choice

Preparation:

1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Pre-cut apples into slices. ¼ inch each.
3. Count the apple slices with children.
4. Have children spread peanut butter on one side of the apple slice and put 4 to 6 raisins on top of the peanut butter.
5. Top with another apple slice, peanut-butter side down. Squeeze gently.
6. Continue with remaining apple slices.
7. Enjoy together!



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Learning to Grow Quality Child Care for Registered Home-Based Providers is a project of University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services ★ 808-462-4700 ★ www.learningtogrowhawaii.org

Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Kai Goes to the Farmers Market in Hawai'i

by Catherine Toth Fox & Mariko Merritt

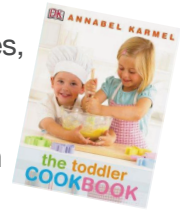
Kai is hungry, but the fridge is bare. Kai and mom walk to the farmers market where they find all kinds of local produce.



The Toddler Cookbook

by Annabel Karmel

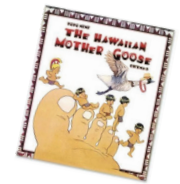
This cookbook includes easy recipes for a wide variety of dishes, from lettuce wraps to crunchy chicken dippers. It contains multiple opportunities for children to lend a hand in the kitchen as they whip up new flavors. This is a fun way to explore learning in the kitchen and encourage children to try new foods and skills.



Eating the Alphabet

by Lois Ehlert

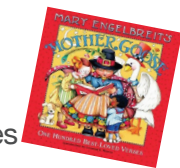
An introduction to fruits and vegetables of different origins beginning with each letter of the alphabet.



I Can Eat the Rainbow

by Olena Rosa and Indira Zuleta

I Can Eat a Rainbow shares with children the importance of incorporating fruits and vegetables into their diet. This colorful book will keep children engaged and entertained along the way, complete with a rainbow of fruits and vegetables of their own to color!



Citations

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