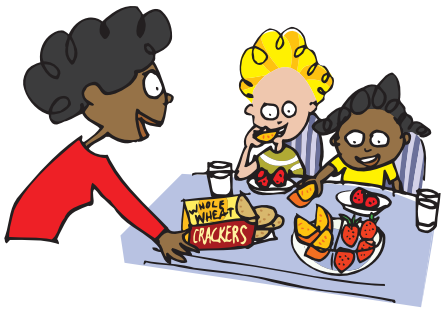
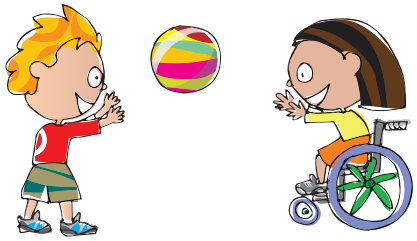
How to Use This Handbook

Tip Sheets

This handbook contains tip sheets on nutrition, active play, and screen time. These tip sheets can be used together or one at a time. They can be used as part of trainings for child care providers and staff, or as a handy resource when planning meals for children ages 2 to 6 years old. They offer practical information to help you plan and prepare meals, provide opportunities for active play, and encourage children to adopt healthy behaviors.

- **The nutrition tip sheets present strategies for purchasing, preparing, and offering meals** consistent with CACFP meal service requirements and recommendations from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Many of the nutrition tip sheets include ways to ensure foods are prepared and served safely to children. A separate tip sheet is also included in the handbook to provide general and practical tips on food safety.





- **The active play and screen time tip sheets present recommendations for young children, encouraging physical activity, reducing screen time,** and adopting written policies and practices on physical activity that are consistent with guidelines from *Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards; Guidelines for Early Care and Education, 3rd Edition.* These tip sheets offer strategies for adding more opportunities for active play to the child care program.

Each tip sheet focuses on a specific topic and includes ideas for improving the nutrition and wellness of children in child care. These tip sheets also include Web links for resources that provide more information and ideas. Take a look at each tip sheet's *How Can I Put This Information Into Practice* practical application section. Think about how you can apply the tips to your child care program. For example, review your child care menu and look for ways to apply the tips. Can you plan specific menu items that include dry beans and peas, or serve and talk about a different "fruit of the week"?

Each of the nutrition, physical activity, and screen time recommendations has an explanation of why it is important. These explanations can help you understand and adopt best practices in nutrition and wellness. You might want to share some of these explanations with families, perhaps on your menus or as you talk with them about their child's day. When families and providers model these healthy behaviors, children will be more accepting of the foods prepared and served, as well as the activities available for active play during child care.

Symbols Used in the Tip Sheets

Many of the nutrition tip sheets include a section on making sure foods are safe to eat. A caution symbol next to a food indicates that it may cause an allergic reaction or pose a choking hazard. A crediting symbol next to a food calls attention to information about crediting foods within the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) meal.

This symbol means the food may cause an allergic reaction in some children.

This symbol means the food may cause children under 4 years old to choke.

This symbol appears next to tips for crediting foods within CACFP meals and snacks.

Best Practices: CACFP Success Stories

This section shares the best practices and successful tips of nine CACFP child care programs from across the United States. They include stories from various parts of the country and diverse communities. These child care programs have tried new and exciting ways to improve the food that they serve children and the activities that they plan. Each story is unique, yet practical and applicable for many providers. Together, these stories provide inspiration for anyone who wants to create healthy environments for children and child care programs everywhere.

Appendices

Appendix A includes information about choking hazards for children under the age of 4 years. Child care providers can use these tips to reduce the risk of choking in their day care homes and centers.

Appendix B includes information about common food allergies, as well as information on what child care providers should do if a child in their care has a food allergy.

Additional Resources

This section includes additional resources on active play, child care policies and practices, nutrition, food safety, choking hazards, food allergies, and screen time. These resources include tool kits, checklists, child care self-assessment tools, wellness policy resources, ideas for child care activities, nutrition education materials, gardening education resources, nutrition program information, food safety materials, and national guidelines and recommendations reports pertaining to wellness in child care.