

## **Family Support Services for Nutrition**

### **The Importance of Physical Activity**

- Early childhood is an ideal time to start healthy habits before unhealthy patterns are set.
- Active play is vital for preschoolers to help develop motor skills and coordination but also for maintaining or reaching a healthy weight.
- At least one hour of active play, every day, is recommended. It doesn't have to be all at one time. Adults can find ways to help children be active 10-15 minutes several times a day.

### **Healthy Eating and How to Select and Prepare Nutritious Foods on a Budget**

- The preschooler is still learning what he likes and doesn't like, and his tastes can change very quickly. Something he refuses to eat this week could be his favorite next week, so don't give up.
- Eat at least 5 fruits and vegetables a day. Do you ever feel like fresh fruits and veggies are too expensive? Try using frozen ones for a few meals every week.
- Try to keep the kitchen stocked with simple, healthy snacks like carrots, sliced apples & peanut butter, or string cheese.
- Even if your family has a hectic schedule, limit fast food. Plan meals and make a grocery list. Planned meals usually have leftovers, so the family can enjoy nutritious foods a second time, avoiding a trip to a fast food restaurant.

### **The Negative Health Consequences of Sugar-Sweetened Beverages**

- Milk and water are the healthiest drink choices for the preschooler.
- Think plain water is too boring? Try adding a fruit slice for natural flavor.
- If you choose to give juice, make sure the label says 100% fruit juice. Limit the amount to 1 small cup per day (4-6 ounces).
- Soda pop, sports drinks, and too much juice add extra calories to the diet. Extra calories can lead to an unhealthy weight. These drinks are also harmful to teeth.

**Your child is learning healthy habits by watching you. Be a GREAT example. If you want further assistance, please contact your Family Advocate.**

*Source: [eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/nutrition](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/nutrition) and the National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness*