

# HEALTHY HABITS FOR FAMILIES



THE CHILDREN'S CENTER



Fall 2012

## NUTRITION

The human body is composed primarily of water, which plays many roles that make it possible for your body to function properly. Children especially need to drink water to support their growth and development. Provide children with water frequently throughout the day, not just when they are thirsty.

### Water and Juice Dos

- DO serve tap water. For concerns, check local EPA water reports.
- DO make water readily available indoors and out.
- DO make drinking water fun. Add frozen fruit—berries, lemon, lime or orange slices.
- DO keep water and cups out all day. Let children serve themselves.
- DO serve 100% fruit juice from a cup only. Dilute with water.
- DO limit 100% juice: ages 1–6: 4–6 oz. per day; ages 7–12: 8–12oz. Per day

## RECIPE

### Strawberry Oatmeal Breakfast Smoothie

Makes two servings

1-cup soymilk

½ cup rolled oats

1 banana, broken into chunks

14 frozen strawberries

½ tsp. vanilla extract (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a blender, and blend until smooth.



## SPIRITUAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Developed by Helen Duane, LCSW, the Wellness and Mindful Living for Preschooler program began in March 2012. Community professionals donate their time, talents, and expertise at the preschool level on topics ranging from healthy nutrition, importance of sleep, a variety of exercise, and mindfulness activities.

Helen shares the following quote to describe mindfulness: "Mindfulness training can help children become more focused, and by focusing on themselves, they will learn how their mind works and that will promote self-awareness and increased awareness of the world around them" — Fontana & Slack, 1997.

In recent months, the children have learned that exercise is fun by participating in relay races with Parrish Health & Fitness Specialist Lucas Jordan. Sharon Tolson, Ph.D. with Brevard Public Schools, taught the children "Brain Gym" where the children engaged in crossing the midline of the body exercises. This type of activity stimulates both sides of the brain, which enhances learning. The children are learning that being active is a way of life, and fun.



Brain Game with Sharon Tolson



Dr. Patrick Sonser, physiatrist teaches the kids the right way to stretch before exercising.

## FROM THE PHYSICIANS PERSPECTIVE

This column will focus on the meat and potatoes of pediatric care: proper nutrition and exercise.

As publicized by national media, there is an obesity epidemic in our country that parents and pediatric healthcare professionals must address. Studies have demonstrated that obese children and adolescents are more likely to remain obese as adults. These children are at an increased risk of developing serious health consequences including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and psychological and behavioral problems.

Experts believe that prevention is the key to addressing obesity before the problem develops. Parents are encouraged to teach children proper portion sizes for their smaller bodies. In my clinic, I teach children to use the palm of their hand as a guide for an appropriately sized serving of meat and to use their fist as the guide for an appropriate size portion of starch. I teach my patients that their plate should have one portion of meat, one portion of starch, and the remainder should be fruits and vegetables.

Although a healthy diet is the most critical aspect in obesity prevention, the importance of exercise must not be overlooked. In addition to contributing to ideal body weight, physical activity encourages development of a positive self-image, creates a protective HDL cholesterol level, helps establish good sleep hygiene, and is an appropriate outlet for childhood hyperactivity. Hence, children should aim for one hour a day of cardiovascular exercise.

As role models for your children, I urge you as parents to be a daily example of healthy eating and to make regular physical activity a part of your own life. Together we can help our children learn healthy habits that will last a lifetime.

— Rachel Worley, MD, mother of Moses, 4 and Gabriella, 1

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & PLAY

On September 21 at 10:00 a.m. over 300 Brevard County children participated in the CATCH Early Childhood Kickoff. The children participated in a parachute activity at their school or childcare center. As part of a two-year grant awarded by the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Florida, preschool teachers across the county are being trained to implement CATCH EC, an evidence-based program designed to nurture a love of physical activity, provide an introduction to classroom-based gardening and nutrition, and encourage healthy eating in children ages 3–5. Be sure to ask your child about “Go Foods” and “Whoa Foods.” At The Children’s Center the preschoolers are participating in the CATCH EC curriculum every day, and we have completed nearly nine weeks of the program. Parents, look for post surveys that will be coming home in November. Keep on Moving!

— Kathy Simonsen, BCBSF Grant Coordinator



*CATCH Kick-off at The Children’s Center*

## OTHER RESOURCES

- American Academy of Pediatrics Standards 4.2.0.6 and 4.2.0.7; Water and 100% Fruit Juice
- <http://healthybeveragesinchildcare.org/resources>
- <http://healthykidshealthyfuture.org>
- <http://nrckids.org>
- [www.juicyjuice.com/fruitifuls](http://www.juicyjuice.com/fruitifuls)



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