

A Newsletter from your Technical Assistance Center, PCA-NJ

Good Nutrition and Exercise are Fundamental Ingredients for Healthy Kids

According to the Center for Disease Control, childhood obesity in the United States affects nearly 17% of all children, resulting in detrimental effects on health and well-being, which can persist into adulthood. Increased consumption of unhealthy snacks, expanding portion sizes and sedentary lifestyles are some key contributors to this epidemic. While the statistics are alarming, the good news is that we have resources to help us move toward solutions!

What can we do? In 2010, First Lady Michelle Obama launched the Let's Move! (www.letsmove.org) initiative to help end childhood obesity by getting children and families to eat healthier and lead a more active lifestyle. Child care programs are encouraged to be a part of the solution by joining Let's Move! and pledging to provide nutritious food and at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day for preschoolers. Grow NJ Kids programs that complete the Let's Move Child Care Checklist(*) and implement an action plan based on the self-assessment not only meet GNJK standard 1.2.2, but more importantly, promote healthier childhoods.

Following the USDA guidelines for portion sizes and providing meals/snacks that encompass all of the five (5) food groups daily is an important aspect of healthy nutrition (GNJK standard 1.3.3). For centers implementing a healthy food program for the first time, it is important to remember that children (and families) may need time to get used to the changes.

Below is a fun recipe provided by the USDA that includes all 5 food groups, which teachers and parents can make with children to encourage healthy eating.

Tips to encourage healthy eating for children

1 Let children serve themselves

Children will learn about portion control, being responsible for choices and develop fine motor skills.

2 Serve a variety of foods

Children may learn to like new foods by seeing it frequently, having it prepared in different ways, and seeing other children and adults eating the food.

3 Get children involved

Allow children to help prepare the meal and set the table.

4 Family-style dining

Adults and children eat together and keep meal time relaxed with pleasant conversation.

5 Don't force children to eat

Children will eat the amount they need and their appetites may vary. Listen when they say they are full.

<http://www.letsmove.gov/blog/2012/07/02/helping-kids-learn-make-healthy-food-choices-5-easy-steps>



Food Group Friend

<p>1 Get a Head</p>  <p>Put a grain on your plate.</p>	<p>2 Make a Face</p>  <p>Pick fruits, vegetables, and a protein food to make eyes, nose, and a mouth. Have fun and be colorful!</p>	<p>3 Hair or Hat?</p>  <p>Choose a dairy food and cover the head.</p>	<p>4 Name Your Friend</p>  <p>Have you used a food from each food group? If so, enjoy!</p>
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*[http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/documents/lmcc/LMCC%20Technical%20Assistance%20\(short\)%20Form.pdf](http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/shapingnj/documents/lmcc/LMCC%20Technical%20Assistance%20(short)%20Form.pdf)

Spring Forward with Active Play

Children who experience daily physical activity in early childhood (0-5 years) gain a vast number of benefits, not only in their early years, but well into their adulthood. Some benefits include:

- Learning key fundamental movement skills essential for active sports and recreation later on in life
- Increased school-readiness
- Development of healthy social-emotional and cognitive skills
- Increased capacity to learn
- Improved physical and mental health
- Better concentration, self-confidence and coordination

SHAPE (Society of Health and Physical Educators) America guidelines for early childhood physical activity include the following:

- Toddlers and Preschoolers should be engaged in structured physical activity for 30 minutes and 60 minutes, respectively, each day. Additionally, Toddlers and Preschoolers should have at least 60 minutes of unstructured physical activity daily with no more than 60 minutes at a time spent sedentary.
- Infants should be placed in settings that encourage and stimulate movement throughout the day to promote large muscle development as well as skill development in movement.

<http://www.shapeamerica.org/standards/guidelines/actstart.cfm>



Dr. Diane Craft PhD, a professor at State University of New York, is a leading proponent of physical activity for Preschoolers with and without disabilities. Her Active Play books, DVDs and workshops provide professionals in the field of early care and education simple and easy ways to incorporate physical activity into daily routines in all kinds of space and settings.

Centers that provide ample opportunities daily for their Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers to be physically active both indoors and outdoors are more likely to score in the range of 5 to 7 on Item 16 (Active Physical Play) in the ITERS –R scale and Item 6 (Space for Gross Motor) on the ECERS-3 scale.

Happy Wallets and Happy Children

Handy items around your neighborhood

Bubble wrap – Jump during transitions, music and movement

Socks – matching game

Cardboard boxes – for crawling through, to play pretend drums

Pool noodles cut into smaller sizes – bats for striking

Hula hoops – in place of musical chairs, hop in and hop out

Aluminum pie plates – tie a string and hang for children to use as a target

Panty hose – to be used as a stretchy string

Laundry baskets – push and pull activities

1 liter bottles – in place of bowling pins



Indoor gross motor supply cart

Providing our young learners with varied opportunities to be active during the day doesn't have to break the bank. A dash of creativity and an aptitude to recycle is all it takes to make each learning day fun!

Keeping Children Moving Indoors...

Being physically active does not have to be synonymous with the outdoors, large open spaces, and costly equipment. Creating an appropriate indoor gross motor space is one way to keep children active for the recommended amount of time, especially if centers do not have the necessary space outside or if the weather makes it difficult to go outside.

Featured here are photos of the indoor gross motor room and indoor gym from the *John Kenney Child Care center* in Middlesex County, along with Director Roxanne Martin.



...all day long!

In the absence of adequate space for setting up a gross motor room indoors, centers can keep children physically active inside their classrooms by incorporating movement into their daily routines.

Ideas for getting children moving as they go through their schedules:

- ◆ **Moving to Transition** – Have children hop, skip, crawl, and jump or perform any fundamental movement skill as they move from one part of the routine to another.
- ◆ **Story Time Theatre** – Make book reading time more active by having children act out the story or imitate the characters and their actions.
- ◆ **Active Large Group Time** – Instead of having children sit during morning circle, incorporate music and movement into the discussions related to weather, daily schedule, attendance etc.
- ◆ **Meals and Snacks** – Having children become active partners in setting up and clearing the table during meal and snack time not only helps with physical activity but also goes a long way in teaching mathematical and language concepts.

Need to Know!



Save the date for these upcoming opportunities...

Webinars *Open to all GNJK programs*

Date	Time	Topic	Presenter(s)	Description
6/22/16	1:00-2:30	Babies, Brains and Relationships: Why our Interactions with Infants and Children Really Matter!	Dr. Gerard Costa from the Center of Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health	By the 5th month of pregnancy, the fetus' brain has 100 billion nerve cells - about the number of stars in our galaxy! Through years of research and progress in studying how brain development occurs, we now know that the ways we interact with infants and children - our facial expressions, hand movements, tones of voice, gestures, words, etc., help form children's brains, developing them as social beings and learners, and helping them when they have difficulties. This webinar will explore this important process.



Registration Link:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2690018244329441282>

GNJK Peer Learning Communities (PLC) *County- specific*

Date	Time	Location	County
6/29/16	1:00 - 3:00	1001 Spruce Street, Suite 201, Trenton	Mercer



Prevent Child Abuse New Jersey™

PCA-NJ operates a broad range of preventative services designed to support the improvement and quality of professional workforces and programming, resulting in significant positive impacts on family functioning and health in all 21 counties. **PCA-NJ programs include:**

- ◆ Grow NJ Kids TAC
- ◆ Middlesex County Council for Young Children
- ◆ Healthy Families
- ◆ Human Trafficking
- ◆ Parents as Teachers
- ◆ Essex Pregnancy & Parenting Connection
- ◆ Parent Linking Program
- ◆ Parent Education & Technical Assistance
- ◆ Enough Abuse
- ◆ The Period of Purple Crying

Needs Assessment Survey

Please help us cater to YOUR needs by completing our Needs Assessment survey. Follow this link and share your thoughts about PLCs.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/gnjkneedsassessment>



Training

Click on the link provided below to view all currently offered professional development opportunities specifically designed for GNJK centers.

[Trainings](#)

Central Region TA Center 103 Church Street, Suite 210 New Brunswick, NJ 08901 732.246.8060

Northeast Region TA Center 550 Broad Street, Suite 1105 Newark, NJ 07102 973.371.5301

www.preventchildabusenj.org/programs/growtac