



Childhood Obesity Prevention



**e-Bulletin
Spring 2017**

Dear Colleagues:

Obesity prevention begins early in life when children are still forming healthy behaviors. Implementing policies that support a healthy child care environment is a crucial step in ensuring the health of Connecticut's youngest residents. The Department of Public Health, in collaboration with a variety of stakeholders, has developed this e-Bulletin in an effort to provide information to assist early care and education programs in creating healthier environments to support development and learning.

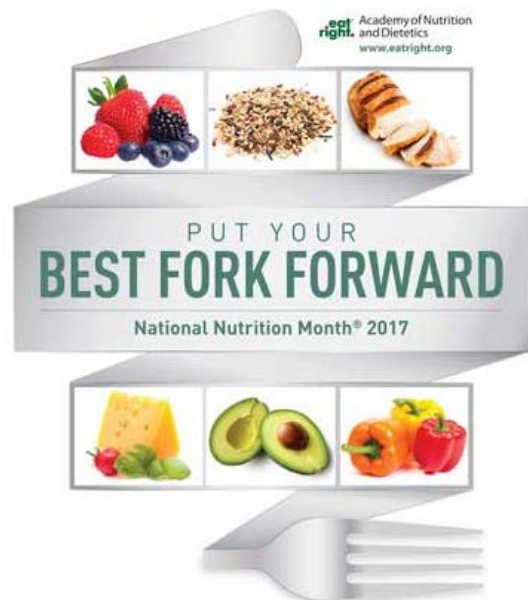
March is National Nutrition Month!

National Nutrition Month® is a nutrition education and information campaign created annually by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics – the nutrition experts. The campaign focuses attention on the importance of making informed food choices and developing sound eating and physical activity habits.



This year's theme, "**Put Your Best Fork Forward**," reminds us to create an eating style that includes a variety of favorite and healthful foods. What, as well as how much we drink is just as important as what we eat. Focus on drinking more water and drinking less sugary beverages.

Nutrition is certainly an important component of early care and education. National Nutrition Month® is a great time to emphasize the importance of nutrition by embracing nutrition initiatives aimed at benefiting the families you serve. Farm to Preschool provides a great opportunity for your program to connect with your community, gain access to fresh local foods, and adopt educational initiatives that promote health. Inside this e-Bulletin, you will find resources that support Farm-to-Preschool initiatives such as garden-themed curriculum, parent resources, how to start a school garden, and more.



What's New?

Promoting Children's Health in Early Care and Education Settings by Supporting Health Consultation

The Child Health and Development Institute recently released a new IMPACT recommending health consultation as a key strategy for integrating health into early learning systems and maximizing the contribution of early learning programs to children's healthy development. Research shows that the presence of a health consultant, a nurse by training, in child care centers leads to positive outcomes including improved nutrition, better sanitation and infection control, and increased access to preventive health care, specialty health care, mental health care, and oral health services.

This IMPACT summarizes research on the role and benefits of health consultation in early learning settings and reviews policies, regulations, training, and payment structures used to support health consultation in Connecticut and other states. The IMPACT also provides a framework for Connecticut to better integrate health into early learning systems through health consultation.

Resources for Teachers and Providers

Farm-to-Preschool

A derivative of the Farm-to-School movement, Farm-to-Preschool focuses on sourcing local foods for child care programs; promoting and increasing access to local foods for providers and families; offering nutrition and/or garden-based curricula; starting school gardens; conducting in-class food preparation demonstrations and tastings. Integrating the Farm to Preschool concept is a great way to encourage healthy habits in young children.

Farm-to-Childcare Curriculum

This curriculum package includes a variety of activity ideas and resources for implementing Farm-to-Childcare at your site. Many of these resources are ready to use, while some are examples of opportunities that can be tailored to a program's needs. Lesson planning charts are provided to help introduce the children to locally grown food items and concepts.

Early Sprouts Curriculum

Early Sprouts is a research-based nutrition curriculum that encourages preschoolers to eat more vegetables by providing the opportunity to grow, harvest, and prepare organic produce.

Color Me Healthy

Color Me Healthy is a program developed to reach children ages four and five with fun, interactive learning opportunities on physical activity and healthy eating. *Color Me Healthy* is designed to stimulate all of the senses of young children: touch, smell, sight, sound, and, of course, taste. This program is a great way to incorporate Farm to Preschool as the children can use all of their senses while trying local fruits and vegetables.

Resources for Families

What's in Season: Connecticut Seasonal Produce Chart

A simple to read produce availability chart that makes shopping in season easy.

Sesame Street's Food for Thought - Eating Well on a Budget

A bilingual multimedia program designed to help support families who have children between the ages of 2 and 8 with limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

We Can! Families Finding the Balance: A Parent Handbook

A national movement designed to give parents & caregivers more Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition

Cooking With Children

A cookbook with a variety of healthy recipes that are easy to prepare with kids. Kids and adults alike will love these recipes!

Policy Guidance & Research

Good Food, Great Kids: Making Practice and Policy Work for Farm to Early Childcare & Education

Partnering with the National Farm to School Network and BUILD Initiative's QRIS National Learning Network, pfc Social Impact Advisors has resulted in the development of a set of case studies. These studies examine the growing movement to bring healthy and wholesome food to children birth to five in settings that prepare them for school, highlighting best practices from service providers on the leading edge of this work. The cases consider how policy development and reform can be a great support to ensuring the health and early development of children in vulnerable and hard to reach communities. Case studies include examples from Minnesota, Washington, D.C., New York, Iowa, Missouri and Philadelphia.

Connecticut Farm-to-School Program

The CT Farm-to-School Program involves a variety of school experiences and programs about gardening educating children about nutrition and purchasing fresh, locally grown farm products. Although Farm-to-School focuses on schools (K-12), there are resources available on their website that pertains to early care and education.

Let's Move: Start a School Garden

Whether you're looking for a new way to capture your students' interest or you simply need to add some life to your classroom or school, planting a school garden will do the trick. School gardens offer opportunities for fun and physical activity while serving as an important educational tool to help students understand how healthy food is produced.

Report: Food Ads Can Trigger Increased Snack Consumption Among Preschoolers

A recent study in *Pediatrics* suggests that food advertisement exposure at a young age may prime eating behaviors that promote weight gain.

Contact Us

Marcia Maillard

Nutrition Consultant

Connecticut Department of Public Health

Marcia.Maillard@ct.gov

Phone: (860) 509-8166

Jennifer Vinci

Nutrition Consultant

Connecticut Department of Public Health

Jennifer.Vinci@ct.gov

Phone: (860) 509-7251

This e-Bulletin was produced, in part, with funds from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) through Cooperative Agreement DP13-1305. The views expressed in this e-Bulletin do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the CDC.

The State of Connecticut is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.