



California Department of Education, Nutrition Services Division

Preschools SHINE Fact Sheet

Criteria for Element 9: Partnerships

Establish partnerships with families and/or the community to support a healthy eating and physical activity environment at the site.

A child's family members are his or her first nutrition teachers. Family members have a significant influence on helping children to develop healthy eating and physical activity habits. It is critical for child care programs to share their nutrition and physical activity program policies and communicate in ways that respect the cultures and customs of families. In this way, families can become allies in promoting and supporting the policies and practices of the center or family child care home. Follow the practices below to meet the criteria for Element 9.

Involve Families

- Inform families about the program's nutrition and physical activity policies.
- Recruit families to participate in special work groups or committees to promote children's health.
- Invite parents to share their expertise and skills in building healthy nutrition and physical activity environments. For example, a parent who enjoys gardening can teach children how to regrow vegetable scraps.
- Provide information on nutrition, physical activity, screen time, and gardening through newsletters, postings on the program's Web site, handouts, or menus (e.g., on the back). If possible, provide information in each family's home language.
- Send menus home or post them where families can easily see them.
- Invite families to sit down and eat meals and snacks with children.
- Invite families to share healthful recipes and participate in cooking activities with children.
- Include nutrition education and physical activity topics at family nights.
- Provide families with guidance for contributing healthy foods to celebrations and fund-raising activities. Share a list of healthy food options with parents.



- Encourage and support family efforts to promote active physical play for their children at home.
- Refer to the USDA's 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>) and download the Healthy & Active Preschoolers Tip Sheets (<http://www.healthypreschoolers.com/tip-sheets>) to share nutrition and physical activity information with families.

Partner with National, State, and Local Organizations

- Identify national, state, and local organizations that can help you reach or maintain your program goals.
- Request national, state, or local community partners to help provide wellness information for child care staff.
- Request nutrition and physical activity educational materials from national, state, or local organizations.
- Inform families about local resources such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), the Cal-Fresh Program (also known as the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), First 5, and food banks.
- Work with local college staff members to determine how nutrition students could help support the program in improving its nutrition and physical activity environment.
- Ask local farmers or farmers market vendors how they can help support classroom nutrition education activities. To locate farmers markets in your area, visit the Healthy & Active Preschoolers Web site (<http://www.healthypreschoolers.com>).