



# Preschools SHINE Fact Sheet

## Criteria for Element 2: Meal Quality

Follow the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Pattern and implement the practices below:

### Healthy Beverages

- Offer low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk.
- Offer no more than one serving of 100% juice each day.
- Ensure water is accessible to children every day.

### Fruits and Vegetables

- Serve fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables daily.
- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables, such as dark green vegetables, red/purple/orange fruits and vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), and starchy and “other” vegetables.

### Whole Grains

- Make sure that at least half of the grains served are whole grains. (Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/grains.html>)
- Serve whole-grain, enriched, or fortified breakfast cereals with no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.

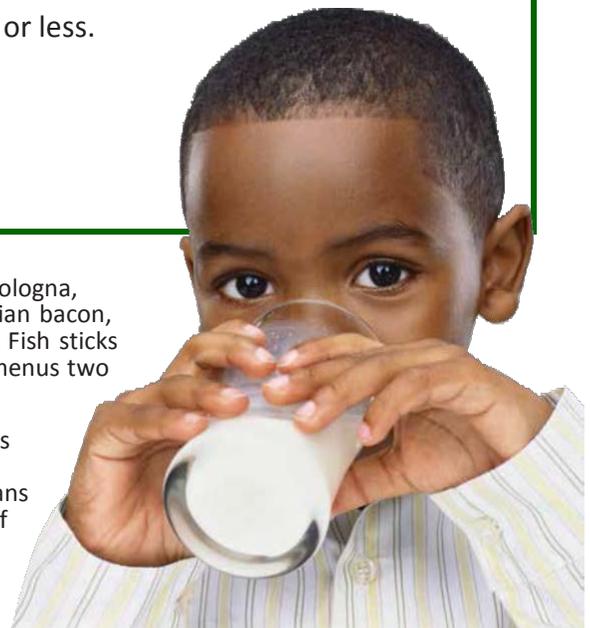
### Protein Foods

- Serve lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and peas, nuts, eggs, low-fat yogurt, and cheese.
- Serve cooked dry beans and peas weekly.
- Limit serving processed meats<sup>1</sup> to four times a month or less.

### Oils/Others

- Do not deep-fry foods on site to serve to children.
- Limit serving prefried<sup>2</sup> food items to two times a

1. Processed meats may include but are not limited to ham, Spam™, bologna, sausage, turkey lunch meat, lunch meats, pepperoni, salami, Canadian bacon, hot dogs (beef and poultry), fish sticks, and chicken nuggets. (Note: Fish sticks and chicken nuggets may also be prefried and will be allowable on menus two times per month.)
2. *Prefried* means food items that have been previously fried; such items may have been deep fried, flash fried, or par fried. *Deep fried* means a food item is cooked by total immersion in oil or fat. *Flash fried* means a food item is quickly fried on both sides in oil with a temperature of 400 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. *Par fried* means a food item is fried to reach an internal temperature of 160 degrees Fahrenheit and then is cooled to room temperature so that it may be refrigerated or frozen for future frying or baking.



Young children need a well-balanced diet that supplies the nutrients necessary to support their growth and development. Well-nourished, healthy preschoolers are more likely to have the energy, stamina, and self-esteem needed to enhance their ability to learn. According to the USDA's MyPlate, a healthy, well-balanced diet includes a proportional and varied selection of grains, vegetables, fruits, dairy, protein, and oils. Use the following information to learn how to serve high-quality meals to preschoolers and promote good health.

## Healthy Beverages

### Milk

- Serve whole milk to children between one and two years old (up to a child's second birthday).
- Offer low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk to children at two years of age. Low-fat milk and fat-free milk deliver the same vitamins and minerals (such as vitamin D and calcium) without the saturated fat and extra calories of whole milk.

### Juice

- Check labels to make sure that any juice served is 100% juice. If the product label has the word *cocktail*, *—ade*, *beverage*, or *drink*, the item is not 100% juice.
- Serve no more than 4 ounces of juice per day to preschoolers. Although juice is nutritious, it is a source of concentrated sugar and is less nutritious than fresh fruit. Drinking too much juice may contribute to obesity; therefore, no more than one serving should be offered each day.
- Serve juice from a cup or glass, not from a sippy cup or bottle.

### Water

- Have water available during indoor and outdoor activity. Water is an essential nutrient for the body. It is calorie-free and helps maintain a healthy weight.
- Do not substitute water for milk when milk is required as a food component in the CACFP.



## Fruits and Vegetables

- Serve a colorful variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. They ensure that children receive a wide range of nutrients. Fruits and vegetables are low in fat and calories and contain fiber and other key nutrients. Serve them as a part of healthy meals and as nutritious snacks.
- Model healthy eating. Children in care learn from watching adults—so eat fruits and vegetables with the children during meals and snacks.

- Make fruits and vegetables appealing to young children.
  - Offer prepared, easy-to-eat fresh fruits and vegetables.
  - Be creative with fruits and vegetables—for example, make fun faces and shapes with fruits and vegetables. Enhance fruits and vegetables by offering them with fun, healthy dips such as yogurt or hummus.
  - Introduce preschoolers to these Kid-Friendly Veggies and Fruits (<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/tentips/dgtipsheet11kidfriendlyveggiesandfruits.pdf>). Caution: Whole grapes, hard vegetables, nuts, and dried fruits are potential choking hazards for children under four years old. Also, never allow children with known allergies to peanuts to participate in preparing or eating peanuts.
- For more information, visit the Cal-Pro-NET Web site at <http://www.fresnocitycollege.edu/index.aspx?page=2202> (accessible January 2014).

## Whole Grains

Whole grains include the entire edible part of any grain; therefore, they contain the most nutrients and fiber and are good for the heart and for digestion.

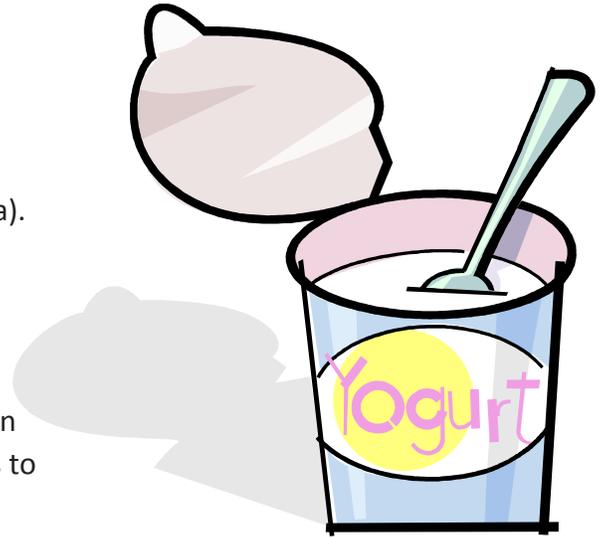
How to tell whether a food is whole grain:

- Examples of foods that are naturally whole grain include oatmeal, brown rice, wild rice, and quinoa.
- Check the information on the package. Look for the word “whole” as the first ingredient. Look for breads, pastas, tortillas, and cereals with “100% whole grain” or “100% whole wheat” listed on the package.
- Beware of products with the following terms because they are usually not 100% whole-grain products:  
“100% wheat,” “Multi-grain,” “Contains whole grain,” “7 grains,” “Wheat germ,” “Made with whole grains,” “Made with whole wheat,” or “Bran.”
- Use whole-grain products instead! Examples of whole grains include de-hulled barley, brown rice, buckwheat, bulgur (cracked wheat), whole corn, whole millet, whole oats and old-fashioned quick-cooking oatmeal, whole quinoa, whole rye, whole sorghum, wild rice, whole triticale, and whole wheat.
- Choose whole-grain, enriched, or fortified breakfast cereals with no more than 6 grams of sugar per serving.
- For more information on whole grains, visit the Cal Pro-NET Web site at <http://www.fresnocitycollege.edu/index.aspx?page=2214> and register for the whole-grains course (accessible January 2014).



## Protein Foods

- Provide your preschoolers with healthy proteins by limiting processed meats, such as sandwich meats, which are often too high in saturated fat and salt.
- Excellent sources of protein include lean meats, poultry (such as lean chicken), and fish (such as tuna).
- Offer high-protein foods such as eggs, beans, peas, nuts<sup>3</sup>, low-fat yogurt, and cheese.
- Beans are not only high in fiber, but they also are a great source of protein. Offer beans or peas weekly on menus. Serve hummus or bean dip with fresh veggies to add tasty fiber and protein.
- Nut butters<sup>3</sup> add healthy fats and protein to meals and snacks.



## Oils/Other

- Children need dietary fat for proper growth and development, but not all fats are equally healthy.
- Fried foods are very high in fat per serving. Fats in fried foods are often saturated fats and trans fats, which tend to raise “bad” (LDL) cholesterol levels in the blood, increasing the risk of heart disease.
- Alternatively, offer children foods with higher levels of unsaturated fats and cook with unsaturated oils, which are healthy when eaten in moderation.
- Some foods are good sources of unsaturated fats. Examples include avocados and peanuts<sup>4</sup> and oils such as canola oil, olive oil, and safflower oil.

For more information on serving quality meals, visit Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/building-blocks-fun-and-healthy-meals>) and Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nutrition-and-wellness-tips-young-children-provider-handbook-child-and-adult-care-food-program>).

3. Avoid serving whole nuts to children younger than four years old, as nuts may pose a choking risk. Also, be aware of peanut allergies among the children served.

4. See footnote 3.