

Age-Appropriate Portion Sizes Matter in Kids' Packed Lunches

Researchers at Penn State University were interested in finding out how portion sizes in packed lunches affect food choices and intake among preschoolers. In the study, all preschool children received the same foods in their packed lunch including macaroni and cheese, milk, green beans, unsweetened apple sauce and a whole-wheat roll. The only difference between the lunches was the amount of mac & cheese. Larger portions of the macaroni and cheese (more than 1 ½ cups) resulted in greater consumption of this main entree and lower consumption of the fruit, vegetable and whole grain side items. Children who were served the smallest amount of mac & cheese (less than ½ cup) consumed almost twice as much apple sauce, three times the amount of green beans, and double the amount of whole wheat roll. These results demonstrate that serving age-appropriate portion sizes is another strategy parents can use to encourage their children to eat their fruits and vegetables.

Reference: Savage et al. American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, February 2012.

Sign Up for Healthy Kids Challenge Monthly Wellness Tips and More...



Healthy Kids Challenge® is a nonprofit dedicated to helping educators, youth leaders and community leaders to devise solutions to encourage healthy eating and physical activity patterns among youth. Check out the Healthy Kids Challenge website for ideas to create healthy sustainable changes. The following is a snippet from their monthly challenge wellness tips on ways to schedule more movement into your day while taking advantage of the beautiful Spring weather:

- **Schedule It In.** Make active play a priority by scheduling time for it this month into your personal planners, family calendars and work appointments. Set a date for healthy active play today!
- **Out and Back.** Greet the morning sun! Get up a 1/2 hour earlier 3 days a week to walk 15 minutes out from the house and back. If mornings don't work, walk as soon as you get home from work before evening activities begin.
- **Enjoy Nature.** Gather friends or family to bicycle through flowering neighborhoods, walk through public gardens, or play in the local parks. Plan to visit and actively play at a new location each weekend this month.
- **Learn Something New.** Renew your exercise routine with a new outdoor sport or game. Learn to play tennis, Frisbee golf, hacky sack, sand volleyball, outdoor racquetball or handball. Check your local community center for beginner classes.

<http://www.healthykidschallenge.com>

Be Active North Carolina Begins Site Visits to Shape NC Centers

Last month kicked off the first Shape NC site visits from the Be Active Kids® Team with Be Active North Carolina, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering North Carolinians to live healthy, physically active lives. The Be Active Kids Team will provide individualized technical assistance to center directors, providers and other staff regarding the improvement of physical activity policies and practices.

The Be Active Kids team had a wonderful visit at the end of March with Wayne County Community College Child Care in Goldsboro, NC. They observed children and providers in motion, had great conversations with the director, Hub Specialist and others, and led a fun outdoor physical activity to demonstrate utilization of their beautiful shaded space outside their fenced-in play area. The team also provided the director with several suggestions to address their current concerns regarding physical activity including minimal shade during hot weather, climbing activities, and limited indoor space.

The Wayne County Community College Child Care Center is currently meeting best practices for time spent outdoors and in total physical activity time, and is excelling in most other physical activity components identified in the Shape NC assessment. They are doing a terrific job connecting with on campus resources and forming partnerships with various departments including areas such as horticulture to dental hygiene. In addition, the team was extremely impressed with the skilled child care providers who were effectively facilitating unstructured outdoor play through role modeling and encouragement!



Submitted by Richard Rairigh, Director of Programs, Be Active North Carolina

We want to hear from you!

Shape NC Connection will continue to issue newsletters to keep you posted on the happenings with Shape NC and current news and resources regarding physical activity, dietary practices, and outdoor learning environments in childcare.

Please share your successes and/or challenges with improving the health of young children by contacting:

meredith@beactivenc.org or (919)287-7012.