



A nutrition newsletter for carers of children under five

ISSUE 20

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'Preventing Choking on Food' insert included to copy and distribute or multiple copies available from SA Dental Service.

Winter 2006



Promoting healthy food experiences for children

*By Alison Martin & Karissa Woolfe, Dietitian/
Nutritionists, Southern Primary Health.*

Children can learn a lot about healthy eating through food 'experiences' such as cooking, gardening and learning where food comes from. These activities can support children to build up healthy eating habits and positive feelings towards food.

There is more to food than eating!

Food based activities are a great learning tool. They teach children about colours, smells, textures, tastes, shapes, numbers, how food is grown, good hygiene (eg washing hands) and social skills (eg good manners when eating at the table). They can also help children extend their language skills and hand skills (eg spreading, dipping).

There are many ways you can use food to promote healthy food experiences for children. Below are some great ideas.

1. Making healthy food

Children can learn many skills through cooking. Most children enjoy cooking, not to mention eating! Try:

- Making one recipe a week.
- Parents could donate ingredients.
- Allow the children to help with food preparation and mealtimes. They can wipe and set the table, wash and tear lettuce for a salad, help with stirring and other simple tasks.
- Use this time to model and teach safe food handling.

Continued page 2...

Welcome

to issue number 20 of Food Matters. Eating habits set up early in childhood are more likely to continue into adulthood. Therefore providing positive food experiences in early childhood can have a life long effect on children. This is more important than ever with our children becoming more unwell through the ages due to overweight and obesity.

Working with babies and young children gives us many chances to set examples and encourage good eating and lifestyle habits. Read on to learn about how you can help children to grow into healthy adults by doing healthy food activities with them. Find plenty of ideas inside for making, buying, eating, talking about and growing healthy food.

We combine 'Little Miss Muffet' with 'Curds and Whey' to give you a great cooking session for all children. Children can use counting, singing and science whilst making good food.

Don't forget to read about 'Start Right - Eat Right' in the What's Happening section along with Children's Week in October.

Also, see inside for a list of Food Matters pamphlets you can order and don't forget to check out the latest Food Matters Pamphlet - Preventing Choking on Food. Enjoy!

Paula Nash

Editor and Dietitian (APD)

Nutrition Department

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service



2. Buying Healthy Food

Involve children in shopping. It will encourage positive feelings towards food.

- Great places to visit include a farm, market garden, butcher or local fruit and vegetable shop. Have a plan in mind for when you visit and follow-up with a story or related activity.
- Persuade the children to choose something they have never tried before. Here, you can talk about the nutrition content, where the food comes from or what recipe you can use it in.

3. Eating Healthy Food

Eating habits are strongly swayed by the foods children are first introduced to. Ideas to promote healthy eating include:

- Asking children to bring a piece of fruit and place it in a basket when they arrive. The fruit is then cut up and shared at morning tea. Children can't wait to put their fruit in the basket and enjoy sampling the fruit feast!
- Have a theme tasting day (eg different colours, shapes, textures, or food groups). A 'cultural day' (eg Chinese or Italian) can also be lots of fun!
- Try making 'healthy' showbags at Adelaide show time (or anytime!) with the children. Fill them with fruit and vegetables, home made mini-muffins, or non-food items such as a balloon, stickers, mini toothbrush/toothpaste, or a hand-made mask (the children can do this).
- Plan a picnic.

4. Talking about Healthy Food

Talking about food and its nutritional value can help children learn that certain foods

are needed for them to play, learn and grow up to be healthy adults. Some fun ideas to try include:

- Reading stories that mention food as a major part of the plot (eg *The Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle), and perhaps sample the foods discussed.
- Play the game 'I am thinking of a food which begins with the letter ...'. Describe the colour, shape and form until someone can guess the answer.
- Talk about where foods come from (eg bakery, dairy, orchard, farm) and how they are made. This can be done when shopping, cooking or gardening.

Be careful with the language you use when talking about food. Avoid talking about food as being either good or bad. It is better to use 'everyday' and 'sometimes' foods when talking about food. Resist using negative words such as 'Yuk' as this can also have a negative impact on children's food choices.

5. Growing Healthy Food

It is exciting for children to watch a seed grow into food they can eat! Growing healthy food is also a great way for them to learn where food comes from. Have a go at:

- Creating a garden in the child care centre. This can be great fun and can be as small or as large a plot as you like!
- Visit your local nursery and select seeds for potting. Children can help to pot and water them, watch them grow and then pick the yummy, ripe produce. Tomatoes, beans, snow peas and herbs are easy to grow.
- Try growing your own sprouts. Alfalfa and mung beans are easy to grow and

will be ready to eat in a week. You will need a glass jar with one tablespoon of seeds inside, fresh water and a clean piece of stocking stretched over the top held with a rubber band. Let the seeds soak overnight, then the next day, shake as much water out of the jar as you can. Leave the wet seeds in the jar and store it in a warm dark place (under the sink is ideal). Each day, cover the seeds with fresh water and pour the water straight off. They will be sprouting within a week.

6. Making healthy food part of play

It is normal for some children to be wary of new foods. It is common to offer a food many times before they are willing to try it. Allowing children to 'play' with food by way of touch, smell and taste is a great way for them to become familiar with a wide range of foods.

Other ways to make healthy food part of play include:

- Role-playing food activities such as cooking, shopping, gardening and shop keeping. Make a pretend shop or kitchen area with boxes and use clean empty packages for stock. Try to select a range of foods from all the food groups.
- Creating a café with the children taking orders and waiting on tables.
- Choosing a theme vegetable and presenting it to the children in a range of ways (eg for tasting, cooking and planting seedlings to grow).

Good luck in making healthy eating a fun experience!

Information for this article was taken with permission from 'Food Experiences for Pre-School Children', Noarlunga Health Services 1995, and 'Healthy Food Experiences and Activities', Family Day Care Fact Sheet, DECS, 2004.

Good news story

By Mel Tinney, Dietitian/Nutritionist, Southern Adelaide Community Health Service, Inner Southern Community Health Service

Gardening is good news for all.

Recently, the National Community Gardens Conference was held in the beautiful Adelaide Hills. It was a very inspiring three days. It convinced me that creating a garden in a child care setting, kindergarten, school or your own back yard is a great idea and is worth the effort!

A garden is a great place for children to learn all about the food they eat, where it comes from, the cycles of nature, compost and making good soil, how to grow food and trying unusual foods as well. What about spaghetti melon, garlic chives or fresh parsley for example! Many children (and adults) may never have tried these. Children can also learn about looking after water, animals/insects in the garden and how they all work together in nature.

You can develop maths skills in the garden such as counting seeds or plants or measuring the garden beds. Talking about and doing activities around growing food can help develop language skills.

There are so many benefits from encouraging children to grow food and not to mention the joy children get from seeing worms or picking their first crop!

After the conference I visited the Black Forest Primary School garden, the oldest in SA. What a wonderful sight it was! The children were picking potatoes, and loving it. Kate Hubmayer, the coordinator, shared what one

child said about picking potatoes; 'it is like digging for treasure!' Kate also said working in the garden can be calming for unsettled children (and carers!) and great for building self esteem and team work.

Another inspiring person I met was Jacqui Hunter who is the part-time coordinator of 'Community Gardening in SA project', based at the Community And Neighbourhood Houses And Centres Association, located at Glandore Community Centre. Jacqui can be contacted on



jacqui.hunter@internode.on.net or (08) 8371 4622. The Community Gardening in SA kit developed by the project is a very useful resource. See http://www.canh.asn.au/community_gardening/



Above: Students from Black Forest PS harvesting their potatoes

Left: Students created colourful worm farms

Warm Up this Winter with Fruit and Veg.

June - August

Warm up this Winter with some of South Australia's great Winter fruits and vegetables. Hearty vegetable soups, warm vegetable casseroles, pastas, curries, stir fries and delicious baked desserts are at the top of the menu. Or why not try a vegetable frittata? Packed full of vegetables this recipe will definitely boost your intake of veggies and get you on your way to 5 serves of vegetables a day!

VEGIE FRITTATA

🕒 15 minutes preparation + 30 minutes cooking

🍽️ 19 serves of vegetables

1 teaspoon vegetable oil
1 medium onion, sliced
500g sweet potato, peeled and thinly sliced
1/4 cup water
420g can sweet corn kernels (or 1 corn cob, cooked)
2 cups broccoli, cut into florets
60g grated reduced-fat cheddar (or 30g grated Parmesan cheese)
6 eggs
1/2 cup low-fat milk

Preheat oven to 180°C and grease a 20cm square baking tin with oil. Combine onion, sweet potato and water in a large bowl, cover with cling film and microwave on HIGH (100%) for 3 minutes. Add broccoli and microwave on HIGH (100%) for a further 2 minutes. Layer baking tin with half the sweet potato and top with corn, broccoli, onion and remaining sweet potato. Whisk eggs and milk, pour over vegetables, top with cheese and bake for 30 minutes or until firm in the centre. Serves 4.

Variation

Use 5 cups of any cooked vegetables instead of those listed.



Cooks Connection

By Thea Pruul, Lecturer, Community Food Services, TAFE SA

Miss Muffet's Curds and Whey

Real curds and whey is very simple to make, and the end product is like yoghurt. The children will be able to see that milk is made up of two parts – water and solids. The solids contain protein, fat and minerals such as calcium. They will also have fun acting out a classic nursery rhyme- Little Miss Muffet!

The recipe does not use heat or blades, so it is a very safe food activity for children of all ages. They can practice pouring, measuring, and stirring. If they make a little mistake in their measuring, the recipe will still work well. For afternoon tea, they can taste their work.

Make sure each child washes their hands each time they prepare food.

Fruity Curd Cups

Ingredient	Serves 10	Serves 20	Serves 40
Milk	1.0 litre	2.0 litres	4.0 litres
Lemon juice	200ml	400ml	800ml
Pureed fruit eg apple or mango	100g	200g	400g

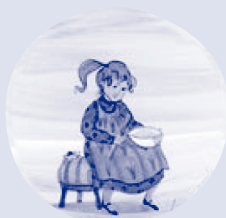
Method for 10 serves

Equipment

- Marker if you would like to put names on the jars
- Small jugs
- Cup measures
- Tablespoon measures
- 10 small jars (to hold about 150ml), empty and clean
- 5 white chux, rinsed and cut in half or cheesecloth
- 10 rubber bands
- Cookie rack
- Deep tray
- 10 Teaspoons

Show the children how to make their curds and whey:

- Pour about 100ml milk into a jar. Pour in 1 tablespoon (20ml) lemon juice.



Assist the children to:

- Place a double layer of chux or cheesecloth over the top of the jar. Secure with a rubber band.
- Place on a tray and put in the fridge for 1½ to 2 hours.
- Remove from the fridge and take the jars off the tray. Look at how the milk has separated into 2 parts.
- Put the cookie rack over the tray. Gently turn the jars over so that the water drains through the chux/cheesecloth.
- Return to the fridge for 1-2 hours or until needed.
- Remove the jars from the fridge and turn them over again. Discard the water that has drained into the tray.
- Remove the cheesecloth from the jar. Stir 2 teaspoons of fruit puree into each jar of curds and enjoy!

What is the latest on water?

As a result of developing the recent Food Matters parent insert 'Drinks for Children', consensus on advice for water has been established between the Department of Health, SA Dental Service and the Children, Youth & Women's Health Service.

The following guidelines will help to ensure consistent advice is given to the general public:

- Water is the best drink. Tap water is best for teeth
- For infant formula, boil* and cool water until 12 months of age
- For drinking, there is no need to boil* water beyond six months of age. If you are unsure of the water quality, boil and cool the water before use.

*Boil: Bring to the boil and switch off.



Go for 2&5
FRUIT VEG

An Australian Government, State and Territory health initiative.

What's in season

FRUIT: Apples (Fuji, Royal Gala, Golden Delicious, Granny Smith, Hi Early, Jonagold, Lady Williams, Pink Lady, Red Delicious), Bananas, Custard Apples, Feijoas, Grapefruit, Honey Dew, Kiwi Fruit, Lemons, Limes, Mandarin, Nashis, Oranges (Navel, Valencia), Pawpaw, Papaya, Passionfruit, Pears (Buerre Bosc, Corella, Josephine, Lemon Bergamot, Packham, Red Anjou, Winter Nellis), Pineapple, Rhubarb, Starfruit, Strawberries, Tamarillos, Tangelos, Watermelons.

VEGETABLES: Artichokes (Globe, Jerusalem), Avocado, Beans (Green, Butter), Beetroot, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts, Cabbage, Capsicums (Gold, Green), Carrots, Cauliflower, Celeriac, Celery, Chokos, Cucumbers, Fennel, Horseradish, Kale, Leek, Lettuce, Marrow, Mushrooms, Okra, Onions, Parsnip, Peas, Potatoes (Bison, Coliban, Desiree, Gourmet, Lasoda, Sebago), Pumpkins (Blue, Butternut, Golden Nugget, Jarradale, Jap), Radish, Salsify, Shallots, Silverbeet, Spinach, Squash, Swedes, Sweet Corn, Sweet Potato, Taro, Tomatoes, Turnip, Witlof, Zucchini.

*Bold represents SA grown



Government of South Australia
Department of Health

Resources

Compiled by Jane Taylor, Health Promotion Officer, Centre for Health Promotion, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service

Food for kids cookbook

MacKinnon Parade Children's Centre in North Adelaide has produced a cookbook that has lots of great recipes that are child (and family) friendly including:

- Broccoli cheese shapes
- Curried tuna slices
- Creamy tuna and corn mornay
- Vegetable sauce and chickpeas and cooked pasta
- Pikelets with fresh fruit jam.

The recipes have very easy to follow instructions and many include low cost ingredients. The cookbook also has recipes suitable for families with school aged children such as savoury platters and tacos.

To find out more or to order a copy contact Barma at McKinnon Parade Children's Centre on (08) 8267 2270. Cost: \$30.00

Preventing Choking on Food

Find this pamphlet in this issue of Food Matters. It has been developed for parents and early childhood services. The pamphlet provides information on how to prevent and treat choking on food for children four years of age and under.

You can get more copies for parents by phoning the SA Dental Service on (08) 8222 9016.



There's more to food than eating: Food foundation for children birth to eight years

'There's more to food than eating' has been written by the Centre for Public Health Research and the School of Early Childhood, Queensland University of Technology. This resource is suitable for use in early childhood services and the early years of school.

This resource is also a suitable textbook for university and TAFE early childhood courses.

The major focus of 'There's more to food than eating' is practical food learning experiences and activities for children. These include:

- science and maths topics
- gardening, processing and recycling within the food cycle
- motor skill practice including rolling, mixing, pouring and tearing.

The resource also includes information about food and nutrition.

To find out more or to order a copy contact Early Childhood Australia on 1800 356 900 or download an order form from www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au Cost: \$68.95



Multiple copies of Food Matters pamphlets for parents available

Multiple copies of the following Food Matters pamphlets are available for distribution to families:

- Snacks for children aged 1 year and over
- Feeding your baby in the first year
- Might your child have a food allergy?
- Fussy eating
- Constipation in children 6 months and over
- Drinks for children
- Preventing choking on food

All pamphlets are available from the SA Dental Service. Call the SA Dental Service on (08) 8222 9016 to order copies.



For more information

For enquiries about any aspect of Food Matters, including mailing list details phone (08) 8161 7777. For general information about children's health and nutrition, contact the Health Information Centre at Children, Youth and Women's Health Service on (08) 8161 6875.

Paula Nash
Editor, Food Matters



What's Happening

*Compiled by Jane Taylor, Health Promotion Officer,
Centre for Health Promotion, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service*

Start Right – Eat Right Nutrition Award Training for child care centres in 2006

Join over 130 South Australian child care centres who have completed the Start Right – Eat Right accredited nutrition course (since 2001).

Start Right – Eat Right Nutrition training gives your centre's Director and Cook the knowledge, skills and tools needed to:

- plan a healthy menu (or lunchbox from home) that meets at least 50% of a child's recommended daily intake for good nutrition
- write a best practice Nutrition Policy for your centre
- ensure a positive and enjoyable eating environment at your centre.

Centres that meet the Start Right – Eat Right Nutrition and Food Hygiene criteria are then eligible for the Start Right – Eat Right Award certificate, sticker and gate sign.

Start Right – Eat Right accredited training courses will be run between July and November in 2006. The course will be run as three hour sessions (2.00pm to 5.00pm) over three afternoons.

For further details, contact Alison Martin, SRER Project Officer
Ph: (08) 8325 8100 or register with Michelle Abbott via email
abbott.michelle@saugov.sa.gov.au

START RIGHT



EAT RIGHT

World Breastfeeding Week August 1 to 7, 2006

To find out more visit the Australian Breastfeeding Association website
www.breastfeeding.asn.au

National Healthy Bones Week August 7 to 13, 2006

To find out more visit the Osteoporosis Australia website
www.osteoporosis.org.au

National Nutrition Week October 15 to 21, 2006

This year's theme is 'Falling in Love with Food' and a Nutrition Week kit will be available in September from the Nutrition Australia website at
www.nutritionaustralia.com.au

Children's Week October 20 to 29, 2006

Children's Week is an annual celebration of children worldwide and aims to raise awareness about the health, care, education, cultural, social and emotional needs of children and the importance of recognising their achievements. A wide range of healthy lifestyle activities will be held throughout South Australia to focus the community on children in health, education and recreation.

To find out more contact the Children's Week Association of South Australia on (08) 8232 6197
email: sa@childrensweek.com.au or visit www.childrensweek.com.au



The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership aims to promote good nutrition for all South Australian children in early childhood services.

Partners include representatives from Child Care Associations, Department of Education and Children's Services, TAFE, Gowrie Training Centre, SA Dental Service, child care centre cooks, Children, Youth and Women's Health Service (Women's & Children's Hospital), The Cancer Council South Australia, Southern Adelaide Health Service (Noarlunga and Inner Southern Community Health Services) and Department of Health.

Editorial Policy

Food Matters aims to promote good nutrition in early childhood by providing nutrition information, advice and support to carers of young children and showcasing child care food and nutrition initiatives. While every effort is made to include articles which meet these objectives, inclusion does not necessarily imply endorsement by the SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership. This newsletter may be copied for educational and non-profit purposes with acknowledgement.

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