



Nutrition Edition

Your Guide to Child Health and Nutrition



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Holiday Considerations

Those who care for and educate young children are well acquainted with making daily choices based on the needs of children and families. For instance, serving nutritious meals because children's growing bodies need a well-balanced diet or making daily plans that include active as well as quiet play because their bodies and minds need both exercise and rest. Childcare professionals must also make conscious decisions on how to celebrate holidays, just as they do for what holiday art projects and holiday treats to offer.

December celebrations can pose significant challenges to childcare professionals and the families they serve. Ensuring that all children and families feel respected is critical, as children are learning about diversity of families. Whether or not to include any holidays in your curriculum, and what activities to use if you do, requires thoughtful decision making.

While not intending to offend or have children feeling left out, perhaps many programs rationalize celebrating the dominate culture's religious holiday, with the justification that the activities connected to the holiday (e.g., Christmas trees, Santa Claus) are "not specifically religious but just fun" and therefore okay for everyone. However, this does not respect cultural and religious diversity. Instead, it lifts up one group's holidays above that of others. Honoring the cultural diversity among the families you serve means recognizing that all have the right to their traditions and that an ECE program should not favor one category of families over another. Understanding the different ways people do and don't celebrate broadens children's

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Farmer Fran's Fun Facts



Cranberries

- The cranberry is one of only a handful of fruits native to North America—the Concord grape and blueberry being the others.
- Cranberries have had a variety of names throughout history. Various German and Dutch settlers named them "crane berry" because the vine blossoms resembled a crane.
- During the days of wooden ships, the cranberry's generous supply of vitamin C prevented scurvy for the sailors on board.
- Cranberries float and bounce and are about 90% water. There are about 440 berries in a pound and it takes about 4,400 cranberries to make one gallon of juice.
- Cranberries are grown on sandy bogs or marshes which are flooded when the fruit is ready for harvesting.
- Try fresh or frozen cranberries in breads, muffins, sauces, jams or dried and tossed in salads. Though naturally sour, limit the amount of sugar used in preparation to help maintain their positive health attributes.
- Cranberries are high in Vitamin C, fiber-rich, low calorie and score among the highest of all fruits in antioxidants. They help maintain a healthy urinary tract, heart and immune system.



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Holiday Considerations

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worldview of what a holiday is—these are all wonderful, powerful learning outcomes for children. Taking the time to thoughtfully decide how to make respectful learning about holidays a part of your curriculum results in an inclusive, anti-bias setting where all children and families know that they are cared about and belong. Activities that foster these objectives prepare children to embrace a diverse society while cherishing their own beliefs.

A natural extension of the holidays is an opportunity to foster empathy, giving and gratitude with children. Some ideas include:

- Reading books to build a “feeling vocabulary” so children can recognize another’s feelings which fosters early empathy skills.
- Actively teaching children that advertising attempts to shape our thinking to want more and more. One way to help children understand the importance of giving and gratitude is to teach them about moderation whenever possible.
- Encourage children to give to other children in need through Toys for Tots or similar programs, providing the opportunity to explore the ideas of compassion.
- Model restraint and share with the less fortunate through local programs to aid the impoverished.

Yes, the holidays are laden with many dilemmas, not the least of which is helping children eat well during a time when parties and treats abound.

Remember:

Manage Your Expectations. Regular healthy meals and sit-down snacks ensure kids don’t get too hungry.

Avoid Controlling Tactics. The Division of Responsibility shouldn’t take a back seat at holiday time. Justifying a dessert if all the broccoli is eaten doesn’t foster a love of veggies, it just makes it something to get past.

Involve Kids in the Kitchen. They will enjoy trying the creations they help to prepare.

Make Healthy Holiday Snacks Available. Veggies with dip make a great appetizer and fruit is a yummy dessert.

Be a Healthy Role Model. The holiday season goes hand in hand with an increase in treats and festive occasions. To achieve a moderate approach when it comes to treats, encourage children to eat nutritious, wholesome foods that promote growth, development and overall wellbeing at mealtimes. Think along the lines of veggies, fruit, whole



grains, legumes, healthy oils, nuts, dairy, lean meats, eggs and fish. Also allow children to eat some of those fun foods and treats they enjoy when the occasion arises. Be mindful to not label these as ‘bad’ foods, doing so doesn’t promote healthy habits. Instead, adopt a flexible, positive approach that allows children to indulge occasionally.

Let go, relax and enjoy. In the end, holidays shouldn’t be a battleground, fraught with food fights, hurt feelings and tension. Focus on what really matters during holiday gatherings. Energy is better used on helping kids enjoy time spent with family and friends, while focusing on the true spirit of the holidays: togetherness, belonging, connection and gratitude.

Sources:

NAEYC Anti-Bias Education and Holidays: Making Thoughtful Decisions, Louise Derman-Sparks and Julie Olsen Edwards, Bright Horizons, Vicki Burns, Early Childhood Education Blog, Peggy Riehl, M.Ed., University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service, U.S. News and World Report, Jill Castle, The Biting Truth, Only About Children

KIDS' HEALTH & SAFETY

Let's Stop Bullying Now!

MENTAL HEALTH IS A TOP PRIORITY at any age, especially during the current stress charged pandemic. As we approach the end of another year and prepare to set intentions for 2022, it is vital to bring focus to and help eradicate a problem affecting young children: Bullying.



The percentage of children affected by bullying is too high. Young children may not realize they are a victim of bullying and may be unable to verbalize what is happening to them. In fact, many children do not talk about or report incidents — especially as they grow older, making the statistics less accurate.

TYPES OF BULLYING

Verbal: teasing, name-calling, threatening to hurt someone

Social: leaving someone out on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone, spreading rumors

Physical: hitting, kicking, pinching, taking or breaking someone's things

Cyber: sending or posting negative, harmful, false or mean content about someone on apps, texts or social media

Research shows that aggressive behavior in children is common so parents and caregivers play an important role in preventing and addressing bullying to stop it at its early stages. Adults are powerful role models and can help facilitate dialogue and conflict resolution skills.

The following research-based best practices adapted from *stopbullying.gov* will help everyone play a part in preventing bullying and stopping unwanted behaviors:

Begin early. Aggressive behavior in young children is very common, but if these behaviors are not addressed, they can lead to bullying and other problems with peers. Adults can work to stop these behaviors before they become habitual by encouraging cooperative behaviors such as helping, sharing and problem-solving.

Show warmth and be engaged. When adults are disengaged (e.g., spend little time with children or do not regularly supervise their activities) there is an increased likelihood that a child will bully others; while having warm, involved caregivers reduces this likelihood.

Learn about bullying. Dispel myths about its nature, prevalence, effects and best practices in prevention.

Talk about bullying. Talk with children about bullying to help them understand what it is, why it is harmful and how to respond. Discuss and practice what children can do when they encounter bullying. Give tips to try, such as saying “stop” directly and confidently, walking away and getting help from adults.

Model how to treat others with kindness and respect. Children learn by example and will reflect the attitudes and behaviors of their parents/caregivers.

Develop clear rules and expectations about how to treat others. Enforce these rules with natural and appropriate consequences that emphasize teaching acceptable behavior, not inflicting punishment.

Encourage children to speak up if they are bullied or witness others being bullied. Help children identify one or two trusted adults whom they can report bullying they experience, see or suspect. Take these reports seriously.

Encourage children to do what they love. Special activities, interests and hobbies can boost confidence, help children make friends and protect them from bullying behavior.

Help to make a difference in children's lives; learn more and talk about bullying so you can be a source of information and inspiration!

Source:

“Understanding the Roles of Parents and Caregivers in Community-Wide Bullying Prevention Efforts” at stopbullying.gov

Leftover Turkey Soup

Olive oil	2 Tbsp	Salt	2 tsp
Carrots, thinly sliced	2	Dried thyme	1/2 tsp
Celery, thinly sliced	2	Dried oregano	1/2 tsp
Onion, chopped	1 small	Pepper	1/2 tsp
Green beans	1 cup	Orzo pasta, uncooked	3/4 cup
Garlic, minced	3 cloves	Cooked turkey, chopped	3 cups
All-purpose flour	3 Tbsp	Fresh spinach, packed	2 cups
Chicken stock	8 cups	Fresh lemon juice	1/4 cup
Fresh rosemary, chopped	1 Tbsp		

1. Heat oil in a large heavy pot over medium-high heat. Add carrots, celery, onion and green beans. Cook until vegetables begin to soften. Add the garlic, cook 1 minute. Stir in the flour. Cook, stirring constantly, for 2 minutes.
2. Slowly stir in the stock, rosemary, salt, thyme, oregano, pepper and bring to a boil. Stir in the orzo. Reduce heat to a gentle boil and cook for 8-10 minutes (until orzo is tender). Add the turkey, spinach and lemon juice. Cook to wilt spinach. Season with salt and black pepper and serve immediately.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate and vegetable

—Thepioneerwoman.com

Cranberry Nut Bread

Buttermilk	2/3 cup	Salt	3/4 tsp
Orange, zest and juice	1	Cinnamon	1 tsp
Vegetable oil	1/2 cup	Baking powder	1 tsp
Egg	1	Baking soda	1/4 tsp
Whole wheat flour	1 cup	Fresh cranberries, chopped	1 cup
Enriched, all-purpose flour	1 cup	Walnuts or pecans, chopped	1/2 cup
Sugar	1 cup		

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray a 9 x 5-inch loaf pan with non-stick spray.
2. In a small bowl stir together buttermilk, orange zest and juice, oil and egg.
3. In a large bowl whisk together flours, sugar, salt, cinnamon, baking powder and baking soda. Stir in the liquid ingredients until just moistened. Gently stir in cranberries and nuts. Do not over mix.
4. Spread the batter into the prepared loaf pan. Bake 20 minutes then reduce the heat to 350°F and bake an additional 45 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes in the pan and 30 minutes out of the pan before serving.

Yield: 15 servings (one ounce equivalent)

Meets requirement for whole grain-rich

— Adapted from *onceuponachef.com*

ACTIVITY CORNER

Physical Activity Around the World



HOPSCOTCH

Hopscotch probably originated in Rome but is played all over the world and is known by many different names: ‘Stapu’ in India, ‘Hajla’ in Syria, ‘Rayuela’ in Spain, ‘Marelle’ in French. The object of this game is simple. There are numbered squares drawn on the ground with chalk. You throw an object (a stone, bottle cap, coin, etc.) onto any one of the squares, then hop with one leg to the square, pick up the object and bring it back, without stepping on the lines or changing your foot. The best part about this children’s game is that you can either play it alone or with a number of other people.

This Nutrition Edition is brought to you by your local Food Program:



Child Development Associates
180 Otay Lakes Road, Suite 300
Bonita, CA 91902

and is produced by:



Child Health & Nutrition Program

www.CoCoKids.org
nutrition@cocokids.org
(925) 676-6117 • (Fax) 676-5829

Program Director Paula James
Graphic Designer Abe Cruz
Co-Editor Donna Green
Manager, Co-Editor Catherine Stafford

Food **Q.** What is a pretzel’s favorite dance?
Funny **A.** The twist!