



Family Well-Being: Nutrition Tip Sheet

For Early Head Start/Head Start (EHS/HS); Refugee Resettlement; Migrant and Seasonal Head Start (MSHS); Early Care and Education Providers

All providers can support families by promoting a nutritious diet and healthy eating habits in babies and children, which will lead to children's healthy growth and development. This Nutrition Tip Sheet corresponds to page 5 and 6 of the [Raising Young Children in a New Country: Supporting Early Learning and Healthy Development Handbook](#).

Conversation Starters: (or staff, families, and partners can design program-specific questions)

- At what age do you typically wean a child from the breast?
- Describe how babies are typically weaned from breastfeeding or a bottle.
- How are the food and eating habits in the U.S. similar to or different from those in your home country?
- What are the ways you introduce new foods to your children?

Cultural Considerations:

- Mothers may breastfeed longer (until age 2-4) than U.S. mothers and may expect less privacy, or more privacy, in order to breastfeed.
- Breast pumps may be unfamiliar or undesirable for some mothers.
- The circumstances of refugee camp life may have affected breastfeeding (e.g., breastfeeding may have been difficult to maintain if mothers were undernourished; easily available baby formula in refugee camps may have reduced breastfeeding; formula may not have been used if clean water was limited).
- Families may have different expectations for when to introduce solid foods to infants and the types of food to introduce to them.
- Families who lived for years under harsh conditions (such as drought, famine, or limited rations) or who may have only eaten 1-2 meals per day, may take a while to stop feeling that they need to store up food for periods of scarcity.
- Families who did not use or have access to refrigerators may shop frequently, even daily, or they may be in the habit of sharing food with family and friends, rather than refrigerating leftover food.
- The amount and variety of choices in American grocery stores may be overwhelming to those who previously had few choices.

- Fruits and vegetables in the U.S. may be very different from what families are familiar with in their home countries.
- Refugees may not be used to so much processed items or "junk food," or they may not be aware of the potential negative impact of eating a lot of junk food.



Remember to Mention:

- Local WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) programs provide support for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, as well as infants and children up to age 5 who are at nutrition risk. WIC provides nutritious food, nutrition education, and referrals for health and social services (see USDA/WIC website under "NCCLR References and Resources.")
- Breast milk is the ideal food for infants, as it boosts brain development and the immune system. Breast milk provides all the required nutrients for a baby's growth and development. During the breastfeeding period, it is

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Remember to Mention: (cont'd)

important that mothers pay attention to their own diet and ensure that they are eating nutritious, balanced meals and drinking a lot of water.

- Infants should not be introduced to juice until they are 12 months old.
- Mothers should avoid alcohol consumption while they are pregnant and while they are breastfeeding.
- Children who have had a healthy breakfast can focus better on learning and interacting.

- Children learn about proper nutrition by observing the habits of the adults and children in their family.
- Children's sugar consumption should be monitored and limited. Juice should be limited to one small glass a day.
- Juice for children should be labeled "100% juice," rather than "drink." "Drinks" are mostly sugar and water.
- Providing children with proper nutrition during their early years will help them establish and maintain healthy eating habits later in life.



Applicable Head Start Program Performance Standards:

<http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/standards/Head%20Start%20Requirements/1304>

45 CFR 1304.40 Family partnerships (a)(1), (2), (3), (4) and (c)(3) and (f)(1)(3)

45 CFR 1304.23 Child nutrition (b)(1), (2), (4); (c)(d) and (e)(2)

Resources on ECKLC:

Early Head Start National Resource Center

- **Breastfeeding.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/health-safety-nutrition/breastfeeding>
- **Beyond Bottles and Baby Food: Setting the Nutritional Foundation for Lifelong Wellness.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/multimedia/webinars/BeyondBottlesan.htm>
- **Caring Connections Podcast Series. Podcast 2: Let's Talk About Nourishment.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/Early%20Head%20Start/multimedia/podcasts/caringconnection.html>

National Center of Health

- **Nutrition.** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/nutrition/nutrition.html>
- **Nutrition Tips for a Healthy Pregnancy.** <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center/health-literacy-family-engagement/prenatal-postpartum/duplicateNutriti.htm>

References:

American Academy of Pediatrics – Childhood Nutrition. <http://www.healthychildren.org/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/default.aspx> *In Spanish:* <http://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/healthy-living/nutrition/paginas/Childhood-Nutrition.aspx>

National Institutes of Health – Child Nutrition. <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/childnutrition.html>

In Spanish: <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spanish/childnutrition.html>

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Child Nutrition and Health. <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/lifecycle-nutrition/child-nutrition-and-health>

U.S. Department of Agriculture – Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>

