

Why Healthy Food is Important for Children Ages 2-5

- ✓ Foods with lots of rich nutrients help with brain and motor development
- ✓ Healthy habits at a young age lead to healthy habits later
- ✓ Healthy food helps prevent long-term diseases such as, diabetes, heart disease, liver disease, etc.
- ✓ Healthy food helps prevent oral health problems like cavities and gum disease



Why Physical Activity is Important for Children Ages 2-5

- ✓ Activity promotes healthy metabolism
- ✓ Children become more attentive
- ✓ Studies show that active children are more likely to develop good behaviors as adolescents (attend school, get better grades, take part in after-school activities, etc.)

Current Daily Recommendations

These daily recommendations are for children between the ages of 2 and 4. For children over age 4, serving sizes are the same as adult serving sizes.

5 servings of fruits and veggies
(1 serving is about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

4 servings of fluoridated water
(1 serving is about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)

3 servings of low-fat dairy
(1 serving is about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)

2 hours **maximum** of screen time for ages 3 and up only. Up to age 2, **no** screen time is recommended (screen time includes TV, videos/DVDs, computer, and hand-held video games)

1 hour or more of physical activity (30 minutes each of structured and free play during the day)

Tips

1. Reward children with things that are not food or drinks. For example, use praise, pencils, stickers, coloring books, etc.
2. Encourage children to take age-appropriate (small) portions.
3. Eat family style (everyone at the table). Children are more likely to try new foods if they see other people eating those foods.
4. Play and interact with children during recess or free time.
5. Use structured curricula that encourage healthy behaviors like Animal Trackers, Color Me Healthy, Choosy Kids, etc.



The Facts

- ✓ Almost **80%** of children 5 and under with working moms are in child care an average of 40 hours per week
- ✓ **24%** of Chicago preschoolers are obese, **10%** are obese nationally
- ✓ **78%** of children aged 2-5 are not eating enough vegetables each day
- ✓ Small children need less water than adults
- ✓ **66%** of infants and toddlers watch 2 hours of television each day
- ✓ Overweight children under age 6 are **5 times** more likely to be overweight as adults

References

For a complete list of references, visit the Early Childhood Working Group page on CLOCC website:

www.clocc.net/partners/group/earlychild/index.lasso

Online Resources

- Healthy Early Childhood Toolkit
<http://www.clocc.net/partners/group/earlychild/hectoolkit.html>
- Illinois Nutrition and Education Program (IL NET)
www.kidseatwell.org
- Healthy Kids, Healthy Care
www.healthykids.us
- Fruits and Veggies More Matters
www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov
- Action for Healthy Kids
www.actionforhealthykids.org



Healthy Living For Ages 2 - 4 Years

A Resource for
Child Care Providers



For more information, visit www.clocc.net, email info@clocc.net or call 312-573-7764.

