

National ECELC Newsletter

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Savor the Flavor

During National Nutrition Month!

Written by: Katey Halasz, MPH, RD, LD
Reviewed by: Alexandra Hyman, MPH

National CACFP Week! March 13-19, 2016

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) serves 3.3 million children and 120,000 adults each day.¹ CACFP provides nutritious meals and snacks to those participating in child care centers, family child care homes, adult day programs, afterschool and summer feeding programs in an effort to reduce hunger and provide healthy foods to participants. National CACFP Week is a national information campaign to raise awareness to this important program. The CACFP Sponsors Association is challenging both CACFP Sponsors and participating programs to promote CACFP for a chance to win \$250! For more details, please visit:

http://www.cacfp.org/files/2714/4952/2285/2016_National_CACFP_Week_Operation_Proclamation.pdf

National Nutrition Month is an annual campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. The campaign is designed to share nutrition education and information related to the importance of making informed food choices. The theme for this year is "Savor the Flavor of Eating Right." This theme encourages everyone to develop a mindful eating pattern while celebrating the need of everyone to enjoy in food traditions. While the flavor of food helps to satisfy our hunger, we are also fulfilled by the social interactions, sights, and smells that mealtimes offer. So while you enjoy your meals, also savor the time spent with friends and family during this part of your day!

As part of the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives (ECELC) Project, you all have been promoting this important theme of "savoring the flavor." Through this project, participants are reminded that they are terrific role models for the children they serve, particularly at mealtime. Practicing family-style dining, and sitting and eating with children at meals has added to having a positive eating experience in the classroom.

Use this month to celebrate with your ECE providers on the many enhancements they've made to their program related to healthy eating. They are truly our agents of change that help the children and families they serve to savor the flavor at mealtime!

Success Story from Orange County, Florida!

Last month Brenda Miller, one of our ECELC Trainers working with Orange County Head Start programs in Florida, presented to the Orange County Cooperative Extension Service board. After explaining the work being done through the ECELC project, the board voted to have their Extension Agents support all of the Orange County Head Start programs by purchasing seeds for two planting seasons, providing onsite gardening education, and possibly including a gardening book for use in the classroom. By leveraging community resources and building this partnership, these Head Start programs are able to meet their required volunteer hours and the Extension Agent has a new group to spread the gardening word. Great work!

Do you have a success story you would like to share? Please email us with your story! Our contact information is below.

Questions?
**Please contact your
State/Local Project Coordinator or
one of our Content Specialists:**

For health & nutrition information:
Katey Halasz, MPH, RD, LD
katey.halasz@nemours.org
202.649.4422

For early care and education
information:
Brianna Holmes, MA
brianna.holmes@nemours.org
202.649.4425



Promote Healthy Eating for National Nutrition Month!

The recent release of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans reminds us all that we have a role to play in creating healthier environments both inside and outside the classroom. For National Nutrition Month, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics has included ideas for getting everyone involved in this effort.² Here are some ideas that your ECE providers can adopt:

- Create a “nutrition question of the day” contest sent by email to families or post it on display in the program. Draw the name of the “winner” who answered the question correctly and offer a prize!
- Have children and parents vote for their favorite fruit or vegetable and post a tally board to record the votes. Bonus: provide a selection of fruits and vegetables at a parent meeting to have a taste test. Then have children and families vote on their favorite!
- Connect with a local farmer or a Farm to Preschool initiative (now Farm to Early Care and Education) to set up a field trip to a farm.
- Develop a lesson plan that explains the science behind growing a fruit and/or vegetable.
- Highlight ethnic and cultural food traditions in the classroom and offer international cuisines on the program menu.
- Encourage program staff to make a healthy dish, bring it in for a staff lunch, and have them vote on their favorite dish.
- Organize a health fair and invite local health professionals to promote healthy eating resources and preventive screenings.

For tipsheets and handouts to help promote healthy eating, please visit:
<http://www.eatright.org/resource/food/resources/national-nutrition-month/nnm-handouts-and-tipsheets-for-families-and-communities>

¹United States Department of Agriculture. Child and Adult Care Food Program. Accessed March 10, 2016. Available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

²Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. National Nutrition Month 2016. Accessed March 11, 2016. Available at: <http://www.eatright.org/resources/national-nutrition-month>



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