

# National ECCEL Newsletter

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## Quench Your Thirst: Providing Healthy Beverages

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Every beverage we provide as ECE providers either nourishes children's bodies or not. Children naturally get thirsty after playing, sleeping or eating. During the infancy stage, children begin to recognize and send cues when they are thirsty.

What are good beverage choices for young children? Water and milk have been shown to be the best choice of beverages provided to children in order to reduce the risk of overweight and obesity.

Water prevents dehydration as children play and explore. Water needs vary among young children and increase during times when dehydration is a risk (e.g. summer days, exercise, and in dry days during winter). When children are thirsty between meals provide water in place of fruit juices, sodas, and other sugar sweetened beverages. The best thing about providing water is that it is a low-cost, calorie-free drink! You can save and build beneficial habits by providing water on a regular basis.

It is never too early to get children in the habit of drinking milk. By drinking milk, children receive calcium needed to strengthen their bones, vitamin D and other important nutrients that their bodies need to grow up healthy. It is best to provide milk during meals and snacks. Children who are 12-24 months of age should be served 2% milk and children two years or older should be served skim or 1% milk.

References:

[www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)

National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education. 2012. *Preventing Childhood Obesity in Early Care and Education: Selected Standards from Caring for Our Children: National Health and Safety Performance Standards, Guidelines for Early Care and Education Programs*, 3rd Edition.

Penn State University's Better  
Kid Care Online Training

Penn State University and the  
Center for Disease Control  
(CDC) have partnered to offer  
Let's Move! Child Care trainings  
that include opportunities to get  
Continuing Education  
Units(CEUs).

The online module for healthy  
beverages includes information  
on the benefits of providing  
healthy beverages,  
understanding best practices,  
strategies and ideas to support  
healthy beverages in the  
classroom, resources and tips.

For more information regarding  
this training series please visit  
the website at:

[www.extension.psu.edu/youth/  
betterkidcare.com](http://www.extension.psu.edu/youth/betterkidcare.com)

Upcoming Events:  
2016 Screen-Free Week  
May 2-8, 2016

Screen-free week is a week designed to encourage families and children to implement activities that do not include technology. Celebrating this week provides an opportunity to connect as families and reduce the dependency on the various types of technology. Studies have shown a relationship between TV viewing and overweight in young children. Participating in this week can be just a start to reduce the amount of screen time in which children engage.

For more information, tips and resources of how to participate, please visit the website at [www.screenfree.org](http://www.screenfree.org).



### Encouraging Healthy Beverage Habits

Getting children to learn new habits can be difficult in the beginning. It takes time, patience and creative thinking to get children comfortable with trying something new. Below are activities that you can use to support building healthy beverage habits.

1. Introduce each beverage in the various exploratory centers. (Example: Having a water table, including dress-up clothes that represent a milkman, designing a milk truck etc.)
2. Create a job chart and include a “water helper” as a job to bring out water during outside play and serving milk or water during mealtimes.
3. Add fruits to add flavor to the water. This is a great opportunity to learn about fruits and water at the same time!
4. Read stories about the importance of drinking healthy beverages and avoiding sugar.
5. Have water readily available to children at all times. Providing a fountain or pitcher of water for children to access individually encourages children to drink water when they feel thirsty.