

Team Nutrition and Child Care: Working Together for a Healthier Tomorrow



What is Team Nutrition?

Team Nutrition provides the nutrition education component of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program. The Child and Adult Care Food Program is part of the National School Lunch Act. Through public and private partnerships, Team Nutrition promotes healthy food and lifestyle choices through six channels: foodservice, classrooms, school-wide events, home activities, community programs and the media.

The goal of Team Nutrition is to improve children's lifelong eating and physical activity habits through nutrition education based on the principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and *MyPyramid*. Through fun, interactive nutrition education, children are encouraged to:

- eat a variety of foods;
- eat more fruits, vegetables, and grains;
- eat lower fat foods more often;
- get your calcium-rich foods; and
- be physically active.



How Can Team Nutrition and Child Care Work Together?

Child care programs are natural partners for Team Nutrition. The goals of Team Nutrition are consistent with those of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). They share the commitment to nutrition education that promotes our children's nutritional health and well-being as well as that of their families. Both programs are committed to meeting children's nutritional needs, promoting parental and community involvement in proper nutrition and health-related care of children, and providing follow-up to reinforce healthy eating and lifestyle habits. Activities for children and their parents reinforce messages that children learn at school and in the community. Activities also provide opportunities for students to influence parental shopping and food preparation decisions.

Team Nutrition's Goals for Nutrition Education Activities in Child Care

1. Encourage children to eat a greater variety of foods for better nutrition.
2. Encourage children to use all of their senses to explore different foods.
3. Help introduce children to the basic sources of foods such as animals and plants.
4. Encourage children to learn and enjoy fun and new ways to be physically active every day.

Team Nutrition has developed many resources and materials appropriate for the child care setting with these goals in mind. A listing of resources is available on the Team Nutrition Website: <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/childcare.html>.

Information adapted from *Tickle Your Appetite for Child Care*, USDA Team Nutrition Program, developed September 1998, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Default.htm>