

Healthy Heart Award for Early Childhood Centres

Have you heard of the Healthy Heart Award and the benefits that your children can receive from doing it?

The Healthy Heart Award is an innovative programme developed by the National Heart Foundation for any early childhood centre. It encourages and rewards early childhood centres for promoting healthy food and Active Movement to under fives and their families.

It can be achieved by meeting the seven criteria below:

- 1) **Nutrition Policy** – A copy of the centre's policy will be required. If you don't currently have one, information is available to help.
- 2) **Provision of Food** – This includes either sending in guidelines for parents about lunchbox contents or sending in a copy of the menu if the centre has a food service. Information is available on nutrition.

- 3) **Curriculum linked nutrition activities** – Includes documenting weekly healthy food activities available to the children such as growing vegetables, making fruit smoothies, healthy eating games.

- 4) **Active Movement Policy** – A copy of the centre's policy will be required. If you don't currently have one, information is available to help.

- 5) **Curriculum linked Active Movement** – includes documenting daily physical activities available to the children such as inclusive games, movement to music and movement to stories.

- 6) **Professional Development** – Details of seminars or workshops (including Active Movement) or other training that staff have undergone.

- 7) **Engaging Parents/whānau** – a description of how the information is shared with the parents is required.

How to apply:

Centre staff must complete a registration form and return it to the Heart Foundation. The centre will then be sent a Healthy Heart Award pack containing a manual, wall poster and resources.

When the centre has met the seven criteria, the application form can be returned to the Heart Foundation for processing. The award will then be mailed to the centre. The award will be current for one year.

For more information or to register: Heart Foundation freephone: 0800 863 375 or online www.heartfoundation.org.nz.



PEPE Programme

PEPE (Parenting Education Programme) is a Plunket-developed national programme aimed at supporting first-time parents to build on their confidence and knowledge in their parenting role through the different stages of their child's early development.

PEPE groups can play a significant role in helping parents through the transition to parenthood. They can also provide an opportunity for parents to increase their understanding of their baby's needs, to develop positive parenting patterns, and in establishing a social support network for this new stage of their lives.

The programme is designed primarily, but not exclusively, for first time mothers, fathers and caregivers and is flexible enough to be tailored to meet needs of different groups of parents. It is free to all participants and is usually funded by volunteers in each area. Its primary aim is to increase parents' confidence in their own parenting abilities.

PEPE offers an opportunity for parents and whānau to meet, share ideas, enhance parenting strengths and knowledge and make connections with other families in their communities.

Although there is a framework of topics for each course, parents direct the content to cover what they are most interested in and what is most relevant to their situation.

The small groups are guided by Plunket



facilitators who have been specially trained in facilitation to ensure parents needs are met and that a warm and inviting environment is set so group members feel they can participate.

If you would like to know more about courses running in your local area, please contact Janette McKay on 07 847 7557 or email her on janette.mckay@plunket.org.nz.



Water...

The drinking habits of children are formed early and at home. It is essential to introduce water to children early in their development before they get a taste for sweetened beverages. Water is the recommended choice for children, rather than fruit drink or soft drinks, which can contribute to weight problems and teeth decay.

For more information about healthy meals and snacks for toddlers and whole family (whānau) contact your Plunket Nurse, Public Health Nurse, or Community Dietitian.



sportwaikato
out there and active

Active Movement

sportwaikato
290 tristram street
po box 46, hamilton

p 07 838 2657
f 07 838 2655
m (madeleine) 027 491 6488
m (jenny) 027 230 3669

madk@sportwaikato.org.nz
jennyb@sportwaikato.org.nz

www.sportwaikato.org.nz

Korīnga Hihiko

active movement



Waikato Region
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Early Childhood Educators:

Please feel free to photocopy this newsletter for parents.

Welcome!

A big welcome back to all of our readers.

Now that the summer months are coming to an end, we hope you have made the most of the nice weather and have taken the opportunity to be active outside.

In this issue we are focusing on nutrition, with an article on the Nutrition Fund available to Early Childhood centres, and some great nutrition tips for children.

We also have an article on Plunket's PEPE Programme, and give you some fun tips on cardboard box games.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Yours in Active Movement

Jenny Madeleine

Jenny and Madeleine

Nutrition Fund for Early Childhood Centres

Are you keen to improve the nutrition of the children at your centre?

Do you have some ideas around positive changes to your nutrition environment but never had the financial support to do so?

There is now a Nutrition Fund available through the Waikato District Health Board to support early childhood centres and schools in their efforts to improve the nutrition environment of their centres/schools.

Already in Round 1 of the applications schools presented a range of ideas to suit their varying individual needs. These included developing school vegetable gardens; upgrading school food preparation/teaching areas; and providing nutrition education for parents and/or teachers.

There is a set criteria for applications which includes ensuring changes in each educational setting are for long term benefit, and do involve parents, teachers and students.

The next round of applications closes on 16 May. To access a Nutrition Fund Application pack go to: www.waikatodhb.govt.nz and click on the HEHA logo, or contact Sheryl who will be happy to discuss further details of the Nutrition Fund with you.

Sheryl Hanratty
HEHA District Coordinator
Waikato District Health Board
HanrattS@waikatodhb.govt.nz
(07) 834 3635 extn 7594

We look forward to hearing from you.



10 Fun Active Movement Experiences with a Cardboard Box

1. Make a tunnel and crawl through it.
2. Flatten box and slide down a hill on it.
3. Flatten box and make a dance stage or make it into a 'twister' mat (you can always use pictures of animals or shapes instead of colours).
4. Make a car and have races between children (get children to decorate their own car).
5. Use a shoe box lid as a bat or racket.
6. Children can practice lifting and carrying things in the cardboard box.
7. Use as a goal or target for children to throw objects at.
8. Depending on the size of the box use it as an obstacle in a challenge course (eg. Something to climb over, something to weave around).
9. See how many children can squeeze into it (or onto it if flattened) in a cooperative manner (this is good for their spatial awareness).
10. Get children to play imaginative games using the

box as a prop (eg. Children go on 'Ocean Adventure' and the box is a boat).



Sun, Safety and Nutrition

Why is it important to be careful in the sun?

- New Zealand has one of the highest rates of skin cancer in the world and "exposure to sunlight in childhood is the main risk factor for melanoma and other types of skin cancer in adulthood".
- Keep your child out of the sun between 11am and 4pm as much as possible. If you go outside: stay in the shade, apply 30+ sunscreen on parts of the body that are uncovered, wear a hat, cover the pram or play area with a shade cloth.
- For more information go to www.sunsmart.co.nz or www.cancersociety.org.nz.

Why is a smoke free environment important?

- It is very important to keep your baby or young child in a smoke free environment. It decreases:
 - The risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome
 - The number of colds, chest infections, and ear infections
 - The risk of respiratory problems
 - The likelihood of your child growing up to be a smoker

What else can I do to keep my child safe?

Water and bathing:

- The hot water from your tap should be no more than 50 degrees C
- Always supervise your child when they are in the bath
- Never leave your child alone around water

In the car:

- By law all children under the age of five must be restrained in a car seat when travelling by car or van.
- Teach your child to get your child out of the car on the footpath side.
- Hold your child's hand when crossing the road and talk about watching for traffic.

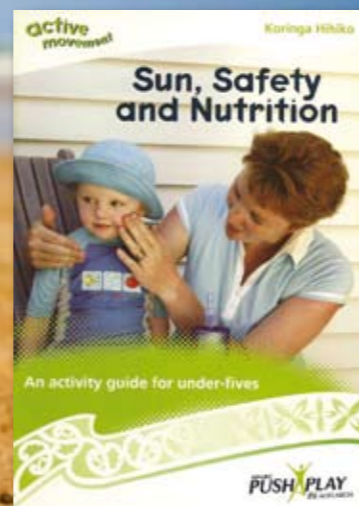
How does nutrition help my child stay healthy?

- Developing good nutrition and eating behaviours early on will help children stay healthy and grow. If you eat healthy foods you are being a good role model for children in your care.

What should I give healthy children to eat?

- Enough food for growth and activity
- Many different foods (variety)
- Mini meals and snacks (small and often)
- Plenty to drink (water and milk are best)
- Treats now and then (special occasions)

An excerpt from the "Sun Safety and Nutrition Active Movement activity guide. This brochure is one of a series of 14. The set is available free by phoning 0800 ACTIVE (0800 22 84 83).



Nutrition Tips for Early Childhood Centres

No matter what age, keeping active and eating well benefits everyone. Eating healthy food is particularly important in early childhood as it affects children's growth, behaviour and health. Here are some nutrition tips to help your centre along...

1. **Remember vegetables!** While everyone is good at promoting eating more fruit, vegetables are often forgotten during the day. At morning or afternoon tea, try presenting the children with a beautiful platter of either julienned or baby carrots, blanched cauliflower and/or broccoli florets, wedges of cucumber and baby tomatoes (which are actually fruit but let's not split hairs!), chunks of red/green/yellow capsicums and mushrooms. Serve with dips such as hummus, guacamole and/or tzatziki. Delicious! Also, remember to get those vegetables into lunches as well. Grated carrot and courgette can be smuggled into most mince based dishes and mixed veges are a welcome addition to many meals (think macaroni cheese, cottage pie and chilli con carne). Aim for at least one serve per day (make up one serve from a variety of part servings e.g. half a potato with four tablespoons of peas and corn) and five different vegetables per week. Try and get a variety of colours also – red, yellow/orange, brown/white, green, purple. Remember 5+ A Day – The Colour Way!
2. **Water and plain milk** are best for children (and adults for that matter!). Diluted juice

and weak Milo are nice treats to have occasionally but should not be served everyday. They provide extra sugar and encourage children to get a taste for sweet drinks. Remember also that 'dark blue' milk should only be given to the 1-2 year olds and 'light blue' milk is best for all those over 2 years. The 'light blue' milk has less saturated fat as well as more calcium and protein than 'dark blue' milk so it's better for growing children! Try heating the milk in the cooler months. Remember that calcium is a crucial nutrient for children – their intake can affect their growth rates. For this reason, please provide at least 1-1½ serves of milk or milk products (or calcium-enriched soy products) per day at your Centre.

3. **Packaged foods** can be a convenient addition to lunchboxes but are not always as healthy as they suggest on the packaging. Muesli bars are marketed as a healthy option yet many are very high in sugar and fat. Look for those that contain less than 10g of fat per 100g, no more than 15g of sugar per 100g and more than 3g of fibre per 100g. Chippies are not healthy, no matter what they say on the packet! Whether they are potato or vege crisps, they are an occasional food and should be discouraged from the lunchbox. Likewise, fruit roll-ups or strings are a treat item only and therefore not suitable for lunchboxes. The reduction in packaged food is not only better

nutritionally but better for the environment too!

4. **Switch from butter to margarine.** Butter contains saturated fat which increases the risk of heart disease while margarine contains unsaturated fat (either monounsaturated or polyunsaturated) which lowers the risk of heart disease. This is a simple change to make and is very beneficial. Just remember that margarine is still high in fat – even if it is the good fat – so use sparingly. You could experiment with other spreads instead, try hummus or mashed avocado.
5. **Iron is essential for growth** and development of the brain as well as for fighting infection and promoting physical development. There are two types of iron; haem (found in animal foods such as meat, seafood and chicken) and non-haem (found in vegetables, grains, eggs and fruits). Haem iron is readily absorbed by the body while non-haem iron is poorly absorbed. Providing lean red meat at least two times a week is a great way of ensuring that children get the iron they require. For vegetarian children, the iron from non-haem sources is more easily absorbed when foods rich in Vitamin C are eaten at the same meal. For instance, eating a meal containing foods such as an orange, kiwifruit or tomato as well as cereals, bread or rice will enhance the uptake of iron from the meal.

