



Possibilities

Early Childhood Inclusion

Training Opportunities

Project PREPARE staff members hope that you will register to attend one of the free Regional Mini-Conferences scheduled in your area during 2009.

The Regional Mini-Conferences offer a choice of two out of four topics and participants earn four approved hours of child care facility staff development. The topics include: *Facilitating Hands-On Learning for ALL Preschoolers, Facilitating Hands-On learning for ALL Infants and Toddlers, Reaching and Teaching ALL Children: Inclusion, and Reaching and Teaching ALL Children: Building Relationships.*

At each of the Saturday events, four lucky individuals will win door prizes! Details and registration for all of the Regional Mini-Conferences can be found by viewing www.usm.edu/ids/prepare. Please call Becky toll free at 1.888.671.0051 if you have any questions.

Child care centers near the location of the Regional Mini-Conference will be mailed a flyer with all of the registration details and descriptions of the agenda about a month before the actual date of the conference.

Institute for Disability Studies - Project PREPARE
Mississippi's University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities
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PREPARE Essentials

We hear it on the television and we read it in the newspaper. Mississippi has one of the highest, if not the highest, rate of obesity in the country. Recently, Mississippi became the first state to have more than 30% of its residents classified as obese. Fifteen years ago, no state was above 15%. For children, statistics are even worse. Mississippi, however, is not alone. The obesity rate is increasing in all states and many say it is a national epidemic. Why is this a problem? Obesity is known to contribute to heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, asthma, and sleep apnea. Obese children and teens are more likely to be obese as adults. Health problems once experienced mostly by adults may actually start in childhood leading to more severe problems in their adulthood. In fact, some have said that the current generation of children could be “the first generation to live

sicker and die younger than their parents.”

So, what has caused this problem? Simply stated, childhood obesity is usually caused by eating too much and exercising too little. Children need to start early eating a healthy diet that that includes multiple servings of various grains, fruits, and vegetables per day, and limiting the intake of saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar. This edition of *Possibilities* is dedicated to educating early childhood educators about the problem of childhood obesity and prevention. Adults play an important role in helping children begin embracing a healthy lifestyle early in life.

Contributed by Beth Bruton, RN, CPNP, The University of Southern Mississippi Institute for Disability Studies

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A Perspective of Inclusion

Movement contributes to children's motor development which is so important and interrelated to every other aspect of development. We know that it is vitally important for ALL children to get exercise. This includes young children with disabilities. For some children with motor delays or impairments, mobility may be limited. For these children, it is important to incorporate movement activities that involve the upper body. As children are moving they are learning! One example would be creative movements with scarves while music is playing. Children can all move in their own way to the music while twirling scarves in the air. All children can participate in the same activities, although modifications may have to be made to ensure that children with disabilities are fully engaged. Children with disabilities often need additional supports. If your program serves a child with a disability, ask the child's parents or therapists if they have ideas of ways to encourage a more active lifestyle for their child.

With children having limited mobility, it is important that their weight be monitored by their pediatrician. Sometimes these children may be placed on a lower calorie diet than their peers because they are not burning the same amount of calories as their more active peers. A pediatric nutritionist often writes nutritional recommendations for children who have unique needs. It is important to keep ALL children as healthy as possible. The more weight a child carries, the harder it is for them to move. If a child is already experiencing difficulty with movement, additional weight only adds to the problem. If you have concerns about a child in your program, please speak with the child's parents and let them know that you are a partner with them in improving the health of their child.

For more information about including children with disabilities in your program, please contact Ann Henson at 601.331.7369 or visit www.usm.edu/ids/prepare. You can also call us toll free at 1.888.671.0051.

Book Spotlight

It is important to select books that relate to better health for children. Here are a few suggestions for reading during circle time or for placement in the reading/library center. Be sure to look for these at your local library.

We Like to Move: Exercise is Fun by Elyse April and Regina Ryan.

This book was written by an Early Childhood Educator

and a Fitness Consultant. The theme of the book is that exercise is fun, just like the title indicates. The book encourages exercise as a prescription to prevent obesity. As an added bonus, the book has an upbeat rhythm and features multicultural illustrations.



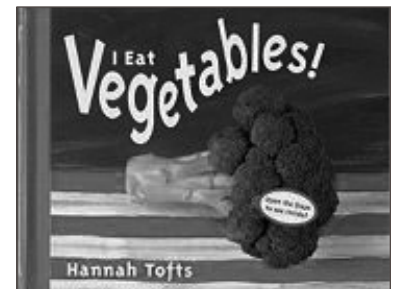
Oh the Things You Can Do That are Good for You: All About Staying Healthy (A Cat in the Hat book) by Tish Rabe.

According to the inside flap, "This book with the help of the staff and equipment at a Seussian spa, the Cat in the Hat explains the basics of healthy living, from eating right and getting enough exercise and sleep, to having a positive body image, to the distance and speed of a typical sneeze!"

I Eat Vegetables by Hannah Tofts

This book includes pictures of realistic vegetables and their names. This book features full-page foldouts to look inside

the fruit or vegetable, kids can see which need to be peeled before eating and which have seeds, stones, pits, or other interesting things inside.



Getting Started: Healthy Food Choices

Child care centers can make smart decisions about the foods they provide to young children that are healthy yet fun for kids to eat. Smart choices for meals and snacks are the first steps in addressing the problem of obesity. Listed below are some recipes that will help children appreciate and love foods that are tasty and fun. These foods should provide good nutrients for the children without the fat and calories that are found in pre-packaged foods such as cookies and chips.

- Peel a banana and dip it in yogurt. Roll it in crushed whole grain cereal and freeze.

- Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit and top with low-fat vanilla yogurt.
- Make a sandwich on whole grain bread then cut out your favorite shape using a big cookie cutter. Eat the fun shape and the edges too!
- Toast a whole-grain English muffin, drizzle with pizza sauce and sprinkle with low-fat mozzarella cheese.
- Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced peaches.
- Make snack kabobs. Put cubes of low-fat cheese and your choice of fruit pieces on pretzel sticks. Children can help you make this fun treat while working on their fine motor skills!
- Spread celery sticks with low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins and call it “ants on a log.” Peanut butter can be used as a substitute for the low-fat cream cheese but caution should be used if children have peanut allergies.



For more ideas like these, visit www.eatright.org and type “25 Healthy Snacks for Kids” in the search box.

Resource Room

Healthy eating habits develop when children are young and continue throughout their lives. As early childhood professionals, it is important to help children establish healthy attitudes about nutritious foods and exercise. Be creative in introducing children to healthy foods, activities, books and discussions that promote good health.

Circle Time Ideas:

- Read a fun and informative book that promotes eating fruits and vegetables or emphasizes why we need to exercise.
- Talk about what is on the menu for the day. Discuss each food and which food group it belongs. Encourage children to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables each day.
- Always include an activity that encourages movement (stretches and simple exercises) such as *Simon says*. You can say, “Simon says touch your (body part)” or Simon says (insert an active word such as jump or twist). Use your creativity!

Indoor Activity Ideas:

- Make sure all children have the opportunity to move independently. Provide materials that allow for safe climbing, crawling and moving.
- Occasionally allow children to stand rather than sit while doing art activities at the table.
- While transitioning from one activity to the next or to another room have the children hop or skip rather than walk.
- Provide soft balls and other soft materials appropriate for throwing at targets such as a bucket, laundry basket or box.

Outdoor Activity Ideas:

- Place a large blanket on the ground so that infants and toddlers can practice motor skills outdoors. Be sure to bring clean objects that they can explore and try to reach by rolling, crawling, or scooting. Tummy time is fun outdoors!
- Introduce more cooperative games such as Red Light, Green Light or Duck, Duck, Goose.
- If the outdoor area does not include climbing equipment or swings, be sure to include other opportunities for active play such as a variety of outdoor blocks, balls, parachutes, and tunnels.

Regional Mini-Conference Door prize winners

- Christine Jackson from Ruleville Head Start Learning Center in Ruleville
- Chegretta Williams from Sanders Head Start in Hollandale
- Gwendolyn Scott from Eighth Street Head Start Center in Greenville
- Gwen Williams from Sunflower Humphrey County Progress, Inc. Head Start in Indianola



Greenville door prize winners, left to right: Chegretta Williams and Gwen Williams

Congratulations!

Project PREPARE Regional Mini-Conferences Schedule

Topics include: *Facilitating Hands-On Learning for ALL Preschoolers, Facilitating Hands-On Learning for ALL Infants and Toddlers, Reaching and Teaching ALL Children: Inclusion, and Reaching and Teaching ALL Children: Building Relationships.*

March 28, 2009	Summit Southwest Community College 8 a.m. - 1 p.m.
April 4, 2009	Hattiesburg The University of Southern Mississippi 8:30 a.m. - 1:30pm
April 4, 2009	Tunica Rosa Fort High School 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.
May 2, 2009	Cleveland Delta State University 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

To register, visit us on the Web www.usm.edu/ids/prepare or call Becky toll free at 1.888.671.0051.

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To subscribe or to submit materials (pictures, articles, etc.) for consideration, contact Kristie Bowlin at 662.397.1902 or Kristie.Bowlin@usm.edu.

Alternate formats available upon request.



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