



Guidelines for Parents





The 5, 3, 1, 0 Approach

Five or more servings of vegetables and fruit every day

Vegetables and fruits contain nutrients that a child's body needs. They should be a large component of a preschooler's diet.

According to the 2004 Canadian Community Health Survey, children who eat five or more servings of vegetables and fruit each day are significantly less likely to be overweight and/or obese than children who eat less than three servings per day. Additional evidence supports a link between high vegetables and fruit consumption and decreased rates of cancers, diabetes and heart disease.

- Encourage your child to eat fruit and vegetables at every meal and snack.
- Encourage your child to pack fruit and vegetables as a snack for preschool.

Three hours of physical activity or more per day

Young children tend to be active for brief periods at a time. Patterns of physical activity in young children carry on into adulthood, so it is important to teach the importance of activity from an early age.

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology recommends that toddlers and preschoolers get at least three hours of physical activity at any intensity each day. At least 60 minutes of physical activity should be parent-led and at least 60 minutes should be active unstructured free play. The remaining 60 minutes can be accumulated in choice activities (either free play or adult led).

- Build physical activity into your daily routine.
- Take children for a walk each day.
- Provide time for unstructured playtime outside each day.
- LEAP BC has a free manual for parents called *Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers* (HOP). This comprehensive manual has 60 play-focused activities for preschoolers.

One hour of screen time or less per day

Screen time refers to TV, computer and video game watching.

Canadian data indicates that children who watch more than two hours of screen time each day have twice the risk of becoming overweight and/or obese than children who watch less than one hour per day.

- Limit screen time to less than one hour per day.
- Children should not be allowed to watch TV before two years of age.
- There should never be a TV, computer or other screens in a child's bedroom.



Zero sugar sweetened beverages per day

One of the major contributors to childhood obesity is the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages. These beverages contain large amounts of sugar and should rarely be served. For example, a can of pop contains 10-12 sugar cubes (40-48 grams of sugar). A serving of sugar sweetened beverage can have a significant impact on a child's diet, due to the amount of added sugar. These beverages include soft drinks, pop, fruit beverages, punches, or cocktails, sports drinks, candy-flavoured milks, energy drinks and flavoured coffees.

To determine the amount of sugar in a beverage, take a look at the nutrition facts table. The ingredients list provides details about the sources of sugars. There are many different names for sugars.

- Syrups: cane syrup, maple syrup, rice syrup, agave
- "ose" words: high fructose corn syrup, glucose, and sucrose
- Honey and molasses

100 % pure fruit juice does not contain added sugar but does contain fructose. Fructose is a natural sugar found in fruit which may contribute to excess weight gain. Servings of fruit juice should be limited.

- Water should be used to quench thirst.
- Provide your preschooler with plain milk and water to drink.
- Limit 100 % fruit juice to one small glass (125 ml) per day.
- If sugar sweetened beverages are served they should be considered a dessert substitute.

Adapted from the Childhood Obesity Foundation and the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology



Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide

Recommended number of Food Guide servings per day for children

Sex	Girls and boys		
	2-3	4-8	9-13
Age in years			
Vegetables and fruit	4	5	6
Grain products	3	4	6
Milk and alternatives	2	2	3-4
Meat and alternatives	1	1	1-2

Following *Canada's Food Guide* will help your family:

- Consume the vitamins, minerals and other nutrients you need.
- Reduce your risk of obesity, Type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis (a condition that causes the deterioration of bone health).
- Maintain overall health.



Satisfy thirst with water

Drink water regularly. It's the best beverage for your body. Drink more water in hot weather or when you are very active.

- For a change, add a slice of lemon, lime, or a few berries or mint leaves to a glass of water.
- Keep a jug of water chilled in the fridge, especially in the summer.
- Set a good example and choose healthy beverages for yourself.



Healthy Eating

This information supports the following Healthy Beginnings 2-5 guidelines:

- Include all four-food groups (milk and alternatives, meat and alternatives, vegetables and fruit, and grain products) in meals while in childcare.
- Include two food groups for a snack, one serving of a vegetable or fruit.



According to Canada's Food Guide, children ages two to five years should be served a variety of foods throughout the day.



Each day, preschool aged children should eat:

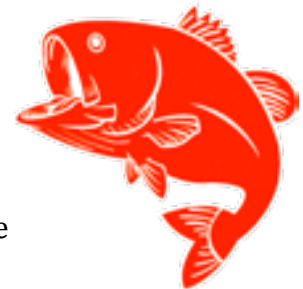
- o Four to five servings of vegetables and fruit
- o Three to four servings of grain products
- o Two servings of milk and alternatives
- o One serving of meat and alternatives



Taken from Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide available at www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Healthy snacks and meals include:

- Foods selected from Canada's Food Guide.
- A variety of food each day of the week.
- Mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks should include at least two different food groups from Canada's Food Guide, including one serving from the vegetables and fruit food group. Lunch should include an option from each of the four food groups.
- Whole grain as the first or second ingredient in all grain products that are served.
- Fresh or homemade foods are best but if serving a processed food make sure it is low in fat, salt (sodium) and sugar.
- Water or milk as a drink choice. Choose water most often.



When serving food:

Consume the same snacks served to children. Discuss portion sizes of snacks with children - adults need more food fuel for their bigger bodies. This will model healthy eating.

Adapted from Healthy After Schools