

# Caregiver Chronicle

## Make Mealtimes in Child Care Pleasant, Easy and Appealing

Creating enjoyable mealtimes and snacks in a child care program will help young children learn healthy eating habits and develop positive attitudes toward food. Consider the following tips to make the meal experience positive for children in your child care program.



- **Make mealtimes pleasant.** Show your enthusiasm for healthy foods. Children will feel more comfortable if you sit with them and share the same meal. Spend time in positive conversation, and make mealtimes relaxed.
- **Help children learn self-help skills.** Starting in the toddler years, children can help set the table, serve themselves, spread jam or butter on bread, stir batter, or even pour milk or water from a small pitcher.
- **Remember that eating is a social time.** Children should be seated around a table so they can talk with and observe one another. Important social learning happens during mealtime as children learn new vocabulary and practice skills such as taking turns and sharing. Child care providers should sit with children during meals and encourage conversation.
- **Plan fun food activities to encourage children to try new foods.** Read a book about a new

food, and then serve the new food as a snack when children are hungry. Let children help prepare foods. Getting children involved in food preparation will boost self-confidence, and may encourage them to try the food they helped create

### Tips to Make Mealtimes Easier

Serving meals to a group of children can be challenging, and encouraging them to take an active role in serving themselves requires good planning. Here are some tips that may make mealtimes in child care simpler.

- **Provide child-sized furniture.** Most child care centers use a child-sized table and chairs for meals. Family child care providers may use child-sized furniture or arrange chairs, high chairs, and booster seats around the family table.
- **Use serving utensils that make it easier to serve the right size portions of food.** Utensils should be easy to handle. Tongs, smaller serving spoons and scoops work well.
- **Use plastic squeeze bottles.** Children can squeeze jellies, peanut butter, mustard, mayonnaise, ketchup, and other spreadable ingredients onto their foods.

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- **Try using serving utensils of a different color.** Having all serving utensils the same color, and a different color from eating utensils, will help children distinguish cooking and serving utensils from eating utensils. It's easier for children to remember not to lick the red spoon. If you can't find colored plastic utensils, mark serving utensil handles with vinyl tape. This tape lasts a long time and stays on well in the dishwasher.
- **Provide child-sized utensils for eating.** Small spoons are essential. A plate with edges or a small, shallow bowl helps young children to scoop up their food more easily.
- **Serve finger foods frequently.** Foods such as small meat or cheese cubes, vegetable sticks and fruit chunks teach coordination to children. Finger foods are a good way to introduce new foods.
- **Learning eating skills can be messy.** Encourage children to help you clean up spills. Place a drop cloth or old shower curtain on the floor to make cleanup easier. Have paper towels and a sponge handy. A spill is not a catastrophe, but rather an opportunity to help children learn.
- **Consider food temperature.** Most children do not like very hot or very cold foods.
- **Consider food texture.** Vary textures — crunchy, crisp, smooth, creamy. Children often dislike lumpy or stringy foods. Avoid overcooking vegetables.
- **Consider food color.** Serving foods of different colors makes a meal more interesting and appealing.
- **Serve foods of different shapes.** Choose round crackers or cherry tomatoes. Cut sandwiches into triangles. Serve square chunks of cheese and apple wedges.
- **Balance food flavors.** Consider foods with sweet, salty, sour, tart, spicy and mild flavors.
- **Include some well-liked foods in every meal.** Choose healthy foods that are familiar to children.
- **Introduce new foods with familiar foods.** Introduce only one new food at a time.
- **Serve a new food several times.** The more chances children have to try a new food, the more likely they are to accept it. Compare the new food to foods that are already familiar to a child. Offer the new food to a child who enjoys trying new things; other children will follow this child's lead and try the food.
- **Go easy on fruit juice.** Fruit juice is a healthy choice but should be offered only in small quantities. When children drink too much juice, they may get full and miss the nutrients they need from other foods.

Reprinted from:

<http://articles.extension.org/pages/25781/make->

### Make Foods Appealing

Children have definite food preferences. The following guidelines may make the foods you serve more appealing to the children in your child care program.

### Alexandra's Refreshing Watermelon Salad

Makes 4 servings • 215 calories • 11g fat • 27g carbohydrates • 6g protein

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup fresh spring greens
- 1 cup fresh cilantro
- 1 cup fresh watermelon, cubed
- ½ cup red grapes, halved
- ¼ cup walnuts, chopped
- ¼ cup Feta cheese
- 4 whole-grain dinner rolls
- 2 teaspoons butter

#### Preparation:

**1. In a large salad bowl,** mix all ingredients together. Arrange the salad mixture on a platter and serve with whole-grain dinner rolls spread with grass-fed butter, if possible. Enjoy!!!

From: Kids State Dinner Cookbook 2016  
Minnesota winner - Alexandra Steele

To see full cookbook go to:

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/recipes-cookbooks-and-menus>



# Save the Dates for Early Childhood Professional Learning Communities



Child Care Aware of Minnesota Metro is sponsoring an Early Childhood Professional Learning Community - an extended learning opportunity to foster collaborative learning among colleagues in the field.

This is a place for you to meet with other providers, learn new things, help each other be successful, share what you know and what works for you! Your experience providing child care and/or teaching preschool is important for children. Your thoughts, ideas, and wisdom will lead the discussions along with Special Guests!!!

### Washington County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at

#### Peace of Mind Early Education Center

August 17th, 2017  
September 21st, 2017  
October 19th, 2017  
November 16th, 2017

### Anoka County Dates:

All meetings take place on the 2nd Tuesday of the month from 6:30pm to 8:30pm at

#### Blaine Human Service Center

August 15th, 2017 (3rd Tuesday)  
September 12th, 2017  
October 10th, 2017  
November 14th, 2017

# Parent Aware

## We Hope You Will Join Us For Our 2017 Annual Parent Aware Celebrations

6:30 to 8:30 pm

**Tuesday August 1st, 2017**

**Blaine Human Service Center**  
1201 89th Ave NE  
Blaine MN 55434

**Tuesday August 8th, 2017**

**Peace of Mind Early Education Center**  
9025 Tamarack Rd  
Woodbury, MN 55125

PLEASE RSVP to: Annette Borman Include number and ages of children who will be attending



## Libraries in Anoka and Washington County celebrate summer reading

Public libraries in Anoka and Washington County invite everyone to experience the great free programs for families at public libraries this summer. All libraries offer reading rewards, workshops, performers, regular story-times, STEM events, and other programs. Visit the website of each library to gather more information about these fun and educational summer programs.

### Anoka County Library

Sing along or be amazed by magic with programs at 10:30 am at Coon Rapids High School, 2340 Northdale Blvd NW Coon Rapids MN

Wendy's Wiggle Jiggle and Jam, July 12

Jack and Kitty Music Show, July 13

Michael Madden Magic of Reading, July 19

Teddy Bear Band Music Show, July 20

Jerry Frasier Magic Show, July 26

Bazzillions Music Show, July 27

### Columbia Heights Public Library

**YoYo Yoga**, Tuesday, July 18, 1 to 2 p.m. Participants will use their creative and artistic imagination, experience cooperation, explore relaxation after movement and have a fun time in the process! Ages 3-8. Registration required.

**Parachute Party**, Monday, July 31 at 10:30 a.m. Parachute play encourages gross motor development, listening skills, and cooperative play. Geared toward ages 2 to 5. Registration required.

### Stillwater Public Library

Preschool STEM Lab: Wednesdays July at 10:30 am.  
Teens Teach STEM to Kids: Tuesdays July at 10:30 am.

### Washington County Library

#### **Play & Learn Series**

Play while you learn at these fun and interactive programs for toddlers and preschoolers.

#### Play & Learn: Dino Dig

Saturday July 1, 10:30 am, Oakdale Library  
Tuesday July 11, 10:30 am, Park Grove Library

#### Play & Learn: The World of Eric Carle

Monday July 17, 10:30 am, Oakdale Library

#### Play & Learn: Tape Town

Tuesday July 25, 10:30 am, Park Grove Library

For a full list of programs, visit each library system's calendar of events.

#### **Anoka County Library:**

<http://anokacountylibrary.org/>

#### **Columbia Heights Public Library:**

<http://www.columbiaheightsmn.gov/index.aspx?nid=127>

#### **Stillwater Public Library:**

<http://stillwaterlibrary.org/>

#### **Washington County Library:**

<https://www.washcolib.org/>

KATIE WILLIAMS

# CARE Fellowship

CHILD CARE ADVOCATES READY TO EMERGE

PUBLIC POLICY | LEADERSHIP | NETWORKING

The CARE Collaborative is accepting applications for another round of the CARE Fellowship. Now in it's 12th year, the CARE (Child Care Advocates Ready to Emerge) Fellowship works with early childhood and school-age care professionals to show them how to be effective advocates for themselves and the profession when engaging education policymakers at all levels of government.

More information is available on the **MnAEYC-MnSACA website**. ([http://mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/?page=care\\_fellowship](http://mnaeyc-mnsaca.org/?page=care_fellowship)). Applications are due August 11, 2017.

The CARE Collaborative includes:

MnAEYC-MnSACA

Minnesota Child Care Association (MCCA)

Think Small

YWCA Minneapolis

Child Care Aware of Minnesota



## At 18 months, toddlers begin to show the first signs of independence

There are big changes for children as they reach 18 months and gain ground on walking, talking and play. Those tentative first steps, clutched to furniture or a helping hand, are giving way to independent, quick and energetic dashes around the house. Their vocabulary is growing, as is their willingness to explore when familiar adults are nearby.

While every child grows at his or her own rate, Help Me Grow offers the following developmental milestones as typical for an 18-month-old. These markers help monitor a toddler's progress:

- Walks alone; begins to run
- Says three or more single words\*
- Tries new things with familiar adults nearby
- Points to one body part
- Scribbles with a crayon or pencil
- Shows interest in other children
- Starts to imitate two-word phrases, such as "all done"
- Points to show what he wants
- Plays simple pretend, such as feeding a baby
- Imitates your behavior
- Enjoys books, stories and songs
- Shows interest in a stuffed animal or doll



For an 18-month-old, parents, child care providers and caregivers can take the following actions to encourage a child's development:

- Provide toys without small pieces
- Hold toddler and read simple stories
- Set limits that are firm, fair and consistent
- Encourage curiosity
- Play games and sing songs with movements that the toddler can imitate

Help Me Grow suggests that parents, child care providers and caregivers track a child's progress as he or she grows. To request developmental resources or a developmental wheel, which includes milestones and actions to encourage a child's progress, contact Kathy McKay at (651) 728-0400 or [kathy.mckay@metroecu.org](mailto:kathy.mckay@metroecu.org). For more information, visit [helpmegrowmn.org](http://helpmegrowmn.org).

*\*Help Me Grow recommends that parents talk to their health care provider or refer their child through Help Me Grow if their child isn't saying single words like "mama" at 16 months old. To refer a child, visit [www.helpmegrowmn.org](http://www.helpmegrowmn.org).*

*Portions of this content, developed by Help Me Grow Minnesota, may have previously appeared elsewhere.*

### WATER LIMBO

1. Set up a water hose in a grassy area.
2. Line kids up as in traditional limbo.
3. An adult is in charge of the water hose, shooting a powerful stream of water for kids to limbo under.



4. Adult starts with the hose high, and then lowers the stream of water after each round. Can't go low enough? You, get soaked!
5. Start with the water low and raise stream of water as the kids try to jump over it.
6. Don't forget the Limbo music!!!

## Summer Fun

**Bubble Snakes:** <https://www.stevespanglerscience.com/lab/experiments/bubble-snakes/>



1. Find a clean, empty plastic bottle. While a 16 or 20 oz. bottle will work the best, feel free to try any size bottle you want. Maybe the results will be something crazy!
2. Using a pair of box-cutters (and adult supervision), carefully cut the bottom off of the plastic bottle.
3. Cover the freshly-cut hole with a piece of fabric that is similar to a washcloth or cotton sock. Use a rubber band to keep the fabric in place.
4. Dip the fabric-covered end of the bottle into the bowl of bubble solution.
5. Blow into the mouth of the plastic bottle and, before you know it, you'll be creating Bubble Snakes like a pro!
6. Let's take it up a notch by adding some color! Find some liquid food coloring in your favorite colors. Add a few drops of the food coloring to the fabric on the end of your bottle. Get creative!
7. Dip the fabric in the bubble solution and give the bottle a blow... HOLY MOLY! You're creating

## Strawberry Yogurt Popsicles

Contributed by Beatrice <http://www.dltk-kids.com/recipes/strawyyogurtpop.html>

Makes 12 popsicles

### Ingredients:

2 cups fresh (chopped) or frozen strawberries  
2 cups low fat vanilla yogurt  
12 small paper cups  
12 wooden sticks

### Instructions:

1. Combine strawberries and yogurt. Mix well.
2. Fill cups with mixture. Cover cups with plastic wrap or aluminum foil.
3. Insert a stick through the plastic wrap or aluminum foil.
4. Freeze popsicles until firm.
5. Gently tear away paper cup from frozen yogurt popsicle before eating.

Remember to supervise children while eating popsicles and throw away sticks after eating.

## Meet Our New Quality Coach

Hello! My name is Tara Johnson. I am so excited to be a Parent Aware Quality Coach for ACCAP! This is a new chapter for me after being an Early Childhood Educator for almost ten years. I graduated from Southwest Minnesota State University with a Bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education and have been working with infants and young children ever since. My most recent experience was as a teacher for ACCAP Head Start. I loved being a preschool teacher, but am eager to provide support for other teachers and providers now.

My husband and I were married on Leap Day in 2016 and live in Ham Lake. We spend much of our time with landscaping, fixing, or doing small building projects around our house and yard.

I also like to cook, learn about gardening, walk, and craft. I love trying new things and stretching out my comfort zone every now and then. I look forward to doing that here with the Child Care Aware team!