

Yoga for Kids

Yoga, when introduced in the early years, helps children develop awareness of their bodies. It also encourages relaxation and physical activity without competition.

The biggest challenge when introducing yoga to preschoolers can be maintaining their attention. To help with this, when you first start doing yoga poses, do many poses in a short time period. Children will identify their favourite poses and will learn the patience for them as they go.

Studies have shown that yoga can help calm children and create a healthy state of mind ready to learn.



Photo: <http://www.namastekid.com/assets/photos/lion-pose-470x353.jpg>

INTRODUCING YOGA WITH A STORY

Start by getting into a calm mood; dim the lights and play some soft music. Invite the children who would like to hear the story to take a few big breaths while sitting around the storyteller. It's im-

portant to not force the children to participate. As they see other children enjoying the activity, they may choose to join in to the fun.

Read a favourite story (or see the back of the newsletter for a book suggestion!) and introduce some yoga poses. For example, the pose pictured here is the "Lion": Start on your knees, then sit back on your heels. Spread your fingers out and press your palms into your knees. Take a deep breath in through your nose. Open

your mouth, stretch out your tongue and breathe out with a loud ROAR like a lion.

As you read the story, do as many poses as the children are interested in. Ask them to make up their own movements to go along with the story.

When you see the children start to get too distracted, finish with a calming, relaxing pose and a few deep breaths.

HOW CAN WE START DOING YOGA?

Ask your Healthy Start coordinator for a few book suggestions and some yoga sequences.

Borrow a book of yoga poses for children from the library.

Take pictures of the children doing the poses and post them around your centre so they can practise them when they have free time.

This article was inspired by "Introducing Children to Yoga Through Storytelling" by Playful Learning (playfullearning.net/)

"Hiding" Healthy Foods—Good or Bad?

Many people have been asking us about 'hiding' healthy foods in kid-friendly dishes (blending squash into the macaroni and cheese, for example). This idea has become popular lately, and with good reason: most young children today are not eating the 4-5 daily servings of vegetables and fruit recommended by Canada's Food Guide. But is hiding them the answer? Many experts would say no.

Sneaking vegetables into other dishes will boost nutrition, but it may leave children feeling tricked or betrayed¹. In the long run it sends the wrong message to kids: vegetables taste bad and need to be hidden in order to be enjoyed². Also,

hiding vegetables may interfere with a child learning to like a variety of flavours. Children's taste buds develop with age and they will learn to accept new foods over time. If kids reject a certain food (cooked broccoli with cheese sauce, for example) try serving it in a different way next time, such as raw broccoli with homemade ranch dip³ (see this month's recipe!). The key is to plan and provide a variety of healthy foods, offered without pressure.

That said, hidden vegetables may be a normal part of the way a food is made, such as pureed squash in squash soup. It is also common to add bananas, zucchini or even lentils to baked goods such as

muffins or cookies. This is still a great way to boost the nutritional value of certain foods. However, if your children ask you what is in something, do not lie to them. Be up front and explain how these extra ingredients help the food make their bodies feel good.

For more information on this, contact your local Public Health Nutritionist or consult these resources:

¹Ellyn Satter, "Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense", 2000.

²Sally Squires, "Hiding Veggies In Food: Benefit Or Betrayal?", The Washington Post, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/10/12/AR2007101201942.html>

³LEAP, Food Flair, Legacies Now, 2008

Let's make: Ranch Dip for Kids

*Recipe adapted from *Better Food for Kids, Your Essential Guide to Nutrition for All Children from Age 2 to 10* by Joanne Saab and Daina Kalnins.

Want to make a big plate of veggies disappear? Just serve this dip—kids find it irresistible!

What you need:

- 2/3 cup sour cream
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. dried dill weed
- 1 tsp. Dijon-type mustard
- Pinch salt
- Pinch pepper

How to:

1. In a small bowl, whisk together sour cream, mayonnaise and vinegar until smooth. Add dill, mustard, salt and pepper. Whisk to blend.

Makes one cup.

Cover and refrigerate for up to one week.



Healthy Start@Home

Helping Your Picky Eater

There are many reasons why children might not eat some foods. Sometimes they're learning that they can say no or other times the food tastes too strong for their young taste buds. Often, however, it can be that they just aren't used to the food, and they need more chances to experience the food before they will eat it.

Here are some ways you can encourage your child to try new foods:

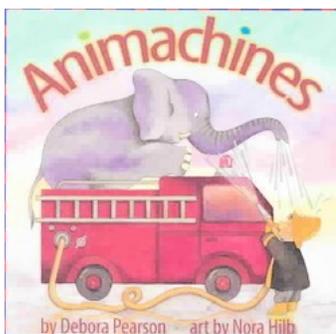
- **Get them helping!** Children who help make food feel proud of what they've created and will be more likely to try it out.
- **Ask for their ideas!** Children like feeling like they made their own choices. Asking them for dinner ideas may help them try new foods. Make some compromises, serve one thing you know they like along with one new thing.
- **Start a garden!** Children love taking care of something then using it later in a meal.
- **Keep trying!** Children may need to see a new food on 15-20 different occasions before they are ready to eat it. Keep offering the food without pressure.

Check out *Food Flair*, p. 42-43 for more information.



Active Books in your Library

Animachines by Debora Pearson. *Animachines* creatively combines two of children's favorite topics—animals and machines—and compares them to demonstrate concepts like dig, crawl, squirt, and carry. In all, ten active animals and their actions are matched with ten mighty machines.



Read this book then try some yoga poses like in the physical activity article in this month's newsletter. **Contact the Healthy Start team** for more yoga stories and poses!

Some things to avoid:

- **Bargaining**. Don't try to get children to eat a certain number of bites—this just starts a power struggle where no one wins.
- **Rewarding eating with special treats**. We don't reward for other everyday tasks (putting on shoes or brushing teeth), so we don't have to reward children for eating. Eating food should just be considered an everyday task.
- **Preparing special food for your picky eater**. As long as there is one thing they like in a meal, you can feel sure that your child will eat something and that they will not go hungry.

Do you have other "picky eater" tips? Send them to us and we'll share them on our Facebook page!

Connect with us!

In Saskatchewan:

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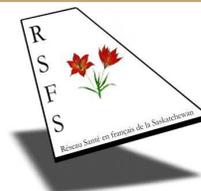
In New Brunswick:

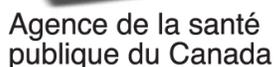
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 Public Health Agency of Canada 

The information contained in this newsletter is intended to inform early childhood practitioners and parents. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Public Health Agency of Canada.