

A Breath of Fresh Air

It seems like spring has finally arrived in Saskatchewan, bringing the sun and longer days. After a long cold winter the snow is melting and the air is fresh with the smells of spring. In New Brunswick winter is still going out like a lion, but warmer days are around the corner!

This is an exciting time for children, when they naturally want to be outside exploring. As adults, we can make opportunities for kids to shake off their cabin fever and spend time outdoors. A simple walk around the neighbourhood is a chance to be active together. Engage children's sense of wonder by talking about the signs of spring you see around you. Take time to squat down to see if the grass is showing through the snow, and if trees are starting to bud. Watch and listen for birds. If children are dressed in rubber boots and splash pants, it will be a joy for them to jump in puddles.

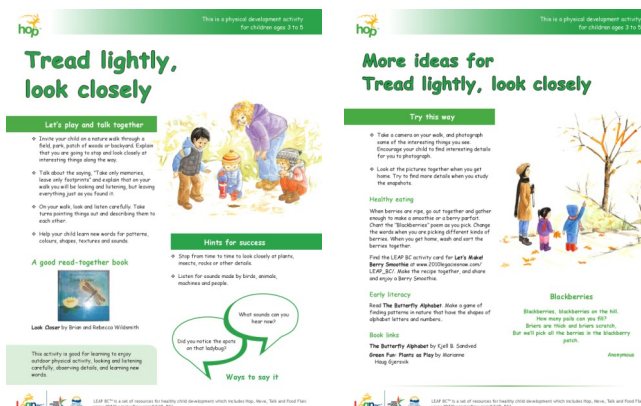
LEAP resources suggest this kind of interactive

walk in an activity called 'Tread lightly, look closely' available as an [activity card for parents](#) or in the educator's HOP manual on page 128-129. The activity suggests we 'take only memories, leave only footprints'. It may seem simple,

but walking with a child and taking the time to see things from their point of view is a wonderful experience for them and for us.

For educators in Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Education's [Play and Exploration Early Learning Program Guide](#) contains detailed information on creating opportunities for children to connect with the natural world.

For educators in New Brunswick, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's [Play & Playfulness](#) also contains information on creating opportunities for children to connect with the natural world.



Taking a hard look at sugar

This March, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has launched new draft guidelines on sugar intake for adults and children. New guidelines recommend that sugar be **limited to 5% of daily calories**, which equals around **25 grams or 6 teaspoons of sugar daily for an average adult** and around **17 grams or 4 teaspoons of sugar daily for an average child**. This means added sugar in any form (white sugar, brown sugar, corn syrup, honey, etc.), but does not include naturally occurring sugars in whole fruits and vegetables. Limiting ourselves to no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar a day can reduce health risks like obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

This comes as a shock to many. A can of pop contains around **10 teaspoons of sugar**, so drinking one Coca-Cola would put you over your daily recommended limit! In fact much of the sugars consumed today are hidden in processed foods, even ketchup is high in

sugar! It seems that we are swimming in a sea of sugar; not only is sugary food everywhere, the food industry spends millions of dollars a year to advertising their products to us.

For children, sugar is a problem not only because of long term health risks, but because eating a lot of sugary food can crowd out more nutritious food from their diet. Often, sugary convenience foods like

granola bars take the place of healthier homemade meals and snacks containing vegetables and fruit. Too much sugar also contributes to cavities and dental problems.

A key way to reduce sugar is to cut down on the worst offenders such as pop, sports drinks and sweetened juices. Be sure to read food labels to see where high levels of sugar may be hiding, such as breakfast cereals. By offering children homemade meals and snacks you can control how much sugar goes in. And remember, for your children and yourselves, fruit is a healthy way to satisfy a sweet tooth!

References:

WHO; *Draft Guideline: Sugar intake for adults and children*. Financial Times; 'Cut the sugar' WHO warns in new guidelines, Wednesday March 5, 2014. The Globe and Mail; *Sugar Verdict*, Thursday March 6, 2014.



Let's make: Fruit Pizza*

*Source: LEAP – Food Flair, Legacies Now, p. 129.



What you need:

- 30 cm (12 in) prepared thin-crust pizza crust
- 1 cup (8 oz) light cream cheese
- 1 banana, peeled and sliced
- 4 cups assorted fresh fruit (pineapple chunks or slices, blueberries, strawberries, honeydew, cantaloupe, pitted cherries, apricot, and apple, peach or pear slices)
- Non-stick cooking spray

How to :

1. Coat pizza pan with cooking spray.
2. Place crust on pizza pan and bake at 350° F (175° C) for 8-10 minutes. Cool.
3. Spread light cream cheese over cooled crust.
4. Arrange banana slices and assorted fruit on pizza.
5. Cut into 30 pieces.

Serves 30 children.

Healthy Start@Home

Tips for healthy eating that won't break the bank!

Healthy eating can sometimes come at a cost...but it doesn't have to! We've compiled a list of tips and reminders to help you shop on a budget and help you find ways to store fresh foods for longer periods of time:

- First things first, take a quick inventory of the fridge and pantry, and plan your meals in advance.
- Make a list and stick to it.
- Use coupons and take advantage of sales. Some grocery stores offer an additional free discount card which adds further savings at checkout.
- Compare nutritional information and unit prices of similar products. For example, when comparing unit price a bag of carrots actually turns out to be cheaper than buying the same number of carrots from the 'bag-it-yourself' produce shelf.
- Shop in season. Fruits and vegetables are cheaper when they are in season (e.g. strawberries in early summer, pumpkin during the fall, etc.).
- Buy canned or frozen fruits and vegetables. Look for products that are low in salt and added sugar.

Make sure to drain and rinse before use to help eliminate extra salt and sugar.

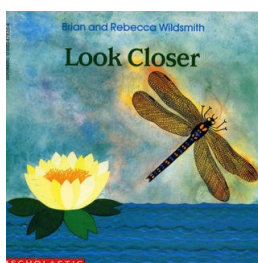
- Try the no-name brand. These items are often tucked away up high or down low on grocery store shelves, but are surprisingly similar in quality and taste to their name brand counterparts and are often less expensive.
- Buy in bulk!

...To be continued in April's edition of the **Healthy Start Sampler**



Active Books in your Library

Look Closer by Brian and Rebecca Wildsmith describes how, by looking closely at walls, fences, and flowers, a young child discovers ladybugs, caterpillars, and other tiny insects that inhabit our world.



With spring just around the corner, why not go outside for a walk? Use this book and encourage kids to look more closely at the various plants, insects, birds, colors and shapes. Check out "A Breath of Fresh Air" or "Tread lightly, look closely" on pp. 128-129 in LEAP HOP for more activity ideas.



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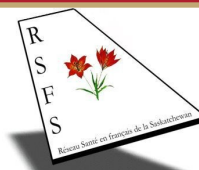


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