

## Feature: Leading the way towards healthy, active kids

Healthy Start wouldn't be possible without the tireless effort, dedication, enthusiasm, and leadership offered by early years directors, educators, and cooks. As such, in this feature we would like to recognize some of the great work going on at one of our proud Healthy Start centres – Tisdale Tiny Tornadoes Daycare.

Since completing the Healthy Start training last January, staff at Tiny Tornadoes have been energized and motivated to keep their kids moving and eating healthier. Tiny Tornadoes has made leaps and bounds, demonstrating their strong commitment to healthy children. When it comes to food, not only has Tiny Tornadoes revamped their menu to more closely reflect guidelines from *Eat Well with the Canadian Food Guide*, but they have started a weekly event dubbed "Cooking with the Kids" where they find inspiration from various **Food Flair** recipes. For example, they recently created their very own fruit pizzas

(featured in the March *Healthy Start Sampler*) with great success; the kids loved both helping out with food preparation as well as trying out their very own creations.

While Tiny Tornadoes draws inspiration from Healthy Start resources, they have gone beyond the book pages and found creative ways to spice



up food time. Every week, Tiny Tornadoes selects a different cultural theme, encouraging the children to explore new foods. During a recent 'aboriginal week', for example, children got to try their hand at preparing baked bannock and salmon burgers (**LEAP Food Flair**, pp. 148 & 176).

To support physical activity, Tiny Tornadoes has taken initiative, appointing one staff every day to be in charge of coming up with a new activity or fun way to keep the children moving. But what happens when it's raining outside, or what about long Canadian winters? No problem! Tiny Tornadoes has created an indoor space in their daycare dedicated to keeping kids active at any time of the year. With a quick glance at their 'active space', one can easily spot hula hoops, floor...

To read more, please visit:  
<http://www.healthystartkids.ca/category/healthy-stars/>

## Mealtime: How to make the most of it!

Mealtimes can often make for stressful times for parents and educators alike. From picky eaters to frequent messes, sometimes it can be difficult to really get the most out of mealtime.

**Food Flair (LEAP BC)** suggests both adults and children sit down together, eat as a group, and open up conversation, encouraging food talk in a fun, relaxed environment. Even if group meals may take longer, they can be highly beneficial, allowing children the opportunity to become interested in what they eat and allowing them to learn healthy habits and manners by modelling adults' behaviours. **Here are some tips to facilitate a positive meal-**



### time learning experience:

- Try letting the children serve themselves;
- Follow a routine;
- Lead by example;
- Have children join in and participate in meal preparation;
- Ask the children to help set, and clean up the table.

### But how will this all play out in real-life child-care settings?

Often it seems translating theory to practice is easier said than done. With this in mind, we would like to **share some suggestions** that have emerged from our centres' real-life experiences and **promising practices** when it comes to promoting a positive mealtime environment:

- Serving themselves allows children to pass on food altogether if they don't like it, or take a small sampling of a less preferred food.

- Educators can facilitate self-serving; helping children who need help;
- Set children up for success: proper child sized utensils are needed, i.e. small tongs, small jugs ¼ full of milk, etc.

### Tips and tidbits

To help children learn to better pour from a pitcher, learning doesn't have to start at the dinner table. Check out the "Ready, Set, Eat! Pouring and Serving" activity card for parents from **Food Flair (LEAP BC)** at [www.decoda.ca](http://www.decoda.ca) for more great ideas.

### References:

*LEAP – Food Flair*, «Social Aspects of Food», Legacies Now, pp. 57-61.

*Manger sainement, c'est important*. Ministère des services à l'enfance et à la jeunesse de l'Ontario, p. 17.

*Mealtime Mentoring. Creating Supportive Food Environments*, Ministère de l'Éducation de la Saskatchewan, novem-

## Share your HEALTHY START experience with us!

Has Healthy Start made a positive difference in your day? Send us a brief story describing how Healthy Start has worked for you and you could be featured on our website! Please send your submissions to: [info@healthystartkids.ca](mailto:info@healthystartkids.ca)

# Let's make: Rabbit Pancakes\*

\*Source: LEAP – Food Flair, Legacies Now, p. 155-156.

## What you need:

- 1 ¼ cup milk
- 5 tsp. Lemon juice or cider vinegar
- ½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup oats
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- ½ cup grated carrots
- Non-stick vegetable cooking spray



## How to :

1. Make sour milk. Warm the milk slightly in the microwave or in a pot on the stove. Add lemon juice or cider vinegar and stir well. Allow this mixture to rest while you assemble the rest of the ingredients.
2. In a medium bowl, mix together the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Stir well.
3. Add the vegetable oil, sour milk, egg and carrots.
4. Beat the mixture with a hand beater until smooth.
5. Spray griddle with non-stick cooking spray. Heat griddle to a medium heat. (To see if the griddle is hot enough, sprinkle with a few drops of water. If bubbles skitter around, the temperature is just right).
6. Using a measuring cup, pour about ¼ cup of batter onto the hot griddle for each pancake. Cook until pancakes are puffed and dry around edges. Turn and cook the other side until golden brown.
7. Top with applesauce, fresh fruits or yogurt.

Makes 16, four inches (10 cm) pancakes.

# Healthy Start@Home

## Tips for healthy eating that won't break the bank! (Part 2)

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:

(...continued from the March edition of the *Healthy Start Sampler*)

- Cut your fruits and vegetables, and grate your cheese yourself – pre-cut and pre-grated foods are more expensive.
- Cook at home – ready-made meals are generally more expensive, contain large amounts of salt and sugar, and less fibre.
- Buy foods that are relatively stable in price. Dried beans, lentils, apples, bananas, potatoes, and carrots are great examples of healthy foods that come at an affordable and predictable price year-round.
- Stock up on staple food items when they are on sale (rice, pasta, quinoa, oats, flour, etc.). These items can be kept for long periods of time and can serve as an easy, affordable go-to within reach.
- Freeze fruits and vegetables for use at a later date (berries, bananas, grapes, pumpkin, rhubarb, peaches, peppers, etc.) – follow these links to learn more about how to properly freeze and store fruits and vegetables (<https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Articles/Budget/Food-choices-when-money-is-tight---Budget-friendly.aspx>).



To learn more tips for healthy eating on a budget or for additional tips on storing food, check out these great resources:

## References:

EatRight Ontario: <https://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/Budget.aspx>  
 March – Nutrition Month: <http://www.nutritionmonth.ca/eating-tips/>  
*Food Flair*, p. 44-45 (chart of seasonally available fruits and vegetables)

## Connect with us!

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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.

## Active Books in your Library

With spring in the air and all around, why not take advantage of the fresh air and take your kids outside to catch some clouds? Read along with Rob D. Walker's *Once Upon a Cloud* and ask your kids to describe all the different shapes and forms clouds can take, or ask them where clouds come from.

Next, try out a new activity by playing 'Cloud Catching' (*LEAP HOP*, p. 28-29).

Use tissues, handkerchiefs, or paper towels to create your very own 'clouds'. Invite the children to throw their 'clouds' in the air and try to catch them with different body parts – feet, knees, elbows, back, and more! For more ideas check out the activity card for parents at <http://decoda.ca/resources/rsc-leap/cloud-catching/> or consult p. 28-29 of your *LEAP HOP* guide.

