

Feature: Waskahiganikh Child Care Centre

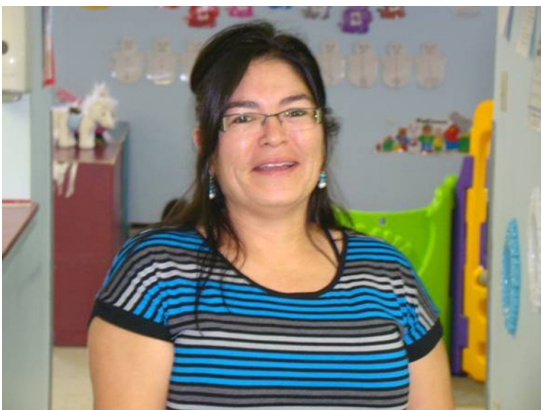
Located in the remote northern village of Cumberland House, Waskahiganikh Child Care Centre (meaning *house* in Cree), is doing great things with nutrition and physical activity. Being in a remote community poses some challenges when it comes to planning nutritious meals for children. Produce is really expensive, lacks variety and is not necessarily fresh. There is a food store in the village but the delivery truck only comes once or twice per week. The nearest full shopping centre is nearly 200km away in Nipawin via highway 123, voted the worst



road in Saskatchewan (according to CAA's 2013 Worst Road Campaign)! As a result of accessibility issues, "a lot of kids have too much sugar in their diets" says Hazel Sewap, the Director at Waskahiganikh. "Processed food can be the easiest, less costly thing for families to access." These barriers to healthy eating make the work done at Waskahiganikh Centre that much more impressive.

To overcome these challenges Hazel decided to start bulk buying on her trips to Nipawin, purchasing foods such as frozen vegetables in larger quantities to last a month. She has found that planning well-balanced meals in accordance with Canada's Food Guide has been really helpful in ensuring variety for breakfasts, lunch and snacks.

Hazel also shared that "kids at the daycare serve themselves for meal times." Knowing



that it can take up to 20 tries for picky eaters to warm up to new foods, they have decided that staff continually provide the opportunity for children to explore new foods without pressure. Using *LEAP Food Flair* and Healthy Start recipes, the centre has been successful in incorporating meat, vegetables, whole grains, fruits and yoghurts on a daily-basis.

According to Hazel, when it comes to outdoor physical activity Waskahiganikh faces challenges that we wouldn't even think about in the more Southern parts of Saskatchewan or Canada. Surrounded by water, trees and bush, the mosquitoes and 'bull dog' sand flies make it nearly impossible to be outside in the summer months. To remedy this educators take the opportunity to bring children outside as much as they can in the spring and fall seasons.

The Staff at Waskahiganikh are very proud of their beautiful outdoor play space. Children at the centre have a curved concrete pathway for running and using their tricycles and push cars. A new sandbox was built and trees planted for the kids to enjoy. With each upcoming year staff plan to plant more trees and improve the yard. When the winter months come with -40 degree celcius weather, they will use the Healthy Start bag (APE Kit) and LEAP resources even more to stay active indoors.

Incorporating Healthy Start initiatives into Waskahiganikh was an easy choice for Hazel because "kids have more fun when they're physically active and they don't even realize it". Staff at the centre know the importance of physical activity as it helps with behaviour. Children do not act up as much and truly enjoy coming to the centre. Kids love dancing around with ribbons and tossing and catching beanbags and scarves. Activities give children and educators the chance to move together. Everyone loves playing with balloons (covered in nylon, of course) "it's so much fun!" (*LEAP HOP* pages 118-119 & 145).



Not only do children who attend Waskahiganikh daycare have delicious, nutritious meals and are physically active on a daily basis but they also have the opportunity to learn the Cree language. Educators, some who are older and fluent in Cree, speak to the children in their traditional language. Children can learn to understand Cree in the early years and then continue to do so when they attend school in Cumberland House.

Congratulations to all the great work being done at Waskahiganikh Childcare Centre!

Let's make: Terrific Turkey Tacos*



*Reference: LEAP Food Flair, Legacies Now, p. 162.

What you need:

- 1 corn tortilla
- 2 tbsp. cooked ground turkey, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp. shredded cheese
- 2 tbsp. shredded lettuce
- 2 tbsp. chopped tomatoes
- 2 tsp. salsa

How to:

1. Wash tomatoes and lettuce. Spin lettuce or dry with towels.
2. Shred cheese and lettuce.
3. Chop tomatoes.
4. Place turkey, cheese, lettuce, tomatoes and salsa on tortilla.
5. Fold soft tortilla in a U shape to eat.



Serves one child.

Healthy Start@Home

Surviving and Thriving the Holiday Season

During the holidays, routine can become a less important part of our lives! With visiting family and friends, we tend to eat more. We don't always know how to keep the children busy. Here are a few ideas to stay active and maintain healthy eating habits over the holidays:

Be active outdoors:

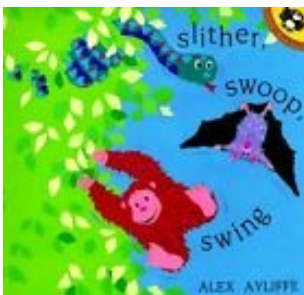
- Have a neighbourhood treasure hunt – ask the children to find specific things (a Santa Claus, a star, something green, a Christmas tree, etc.);
- Go skating as a family;
- Make snow people or animals;
- Go tobogganing;
- Go for a walk in the park or in the neighbourhood to look at the coloured lights on the houses;
- Make snow angels;
- Ask the children to help you shovel the snow in the yard (using children's shovels);
- Don't forget to dress up warmly in layers before you go outside!

Be active indoors:

- Take the family swimming;
- Make an obstacle course in your living room with furniture and materials you have at hand: go around the sofa, crawl under the chair, jump over a cushion, etc.
- Play *Simon Says*;
- Make an indoor hopscotch game;
- Dance to your favourite song;

Active Books in your Library

Slither, Swoop, Swing by Alex Ayliffe is a great book, filled with



full-colour illustrations, that describes what animals do best. Readers are introduced to slithering snakes, swooping bats, and penguins waddling across the Arctic ice. Children and educators can use their imagination when imitating zebras galloping through far-off grasslands. After reading, try the "Freeze dance" activity in *LEAP HOP*, pp. 34-35 by inviting children to move around like the animals

pictured in the book. When the music stops they need to stay perfectly still until the music begins again.



- Ask the children to help with the housework (see our October newsletter for more information: <http://healthystartkids.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/2014-10.pdf>)

Maintain healthy eating:

- Use your leftover turkey to make Terrific Turkey Tacos (see our Recipe of the Month above);
- Choose healthy snacks such as raw vegetables, fruit, nuts (unsalted), hard-boiled eggs, etc.
- Cook together as a family (see *Food Flair* parent activity cards for some simple recipe ideas like apple-cheddar quesadillas, sunomono salad, or hummus: <http://decoda.ca/resources/online-resources/resources-child-family-literacy/leap-resources/page/3/?t=1876&st=40!>)

And don't forget the most important thing: have fun!

References:

- "12 days of active holiday fun", *Active for life*, December 18, 2013, <http://activeforlife.com/12-days-active-holiday-fun/>
- Catherine Cameron, "Five fun winter activities for families", *ParticipAction*, January 6, 2014, <http://www.participaction.com/make-friends-with-winter/>

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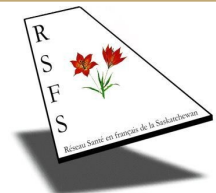


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The information contained in this newsletter is intended to inform early childhood practitioners and parents. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Public Health Agency of Canada.