

# Healthy Start Sampler

Growing happier, healthier children in early learning environments

NUMBER OF HEALTHY START CENTRES (SK & NB): 149

## The Importance of Active, Outdoor Play!

"There are no hills indoors", says Myriam Strachan, facilitator at Regina Early Years Family Centre (Dr. Hanna location) and a Healthy Start Trainer. "Children need to be given the opportunity for freedom and to explore. Outdoors, there are less limitations on movement."



are impossible to duplicate indoors.

And fancy equipment is not needed for outdoor play. Myriam spoke of the children's love of running to the top of a hill and then rolling down. She also mentioned that natural elements like large stones and logs provide the children with material to climb on, lift, and build with. Children may use everyday elements like grass, sticks and leaves in ways that adults might not think of. Myriam mentions, "It is important for caregivers to be there, in that moment, with the child. Children notice things that we don't, and see things in a different way. **Participate with them!**".

Having worked in the child care field for over 25 years, Myriam has witnessed the



importance of active outdoor play, time and time again. "Children are less fidgety, have an increased appetite, sleep better, and are more focused." Both children and caregivers tend to be more relaxed, as playing outside also helps to build a connection with natural world. Giving children a chance to dig in the dirt or grow a garden, offers them limitless discoveries. "Many children are so disconnected with nature they don't know where food comes from; just being outside can help them to build that connection."

Active, outdoor play can include a variety of activities that allow children to explore and feel the space they are in. They can ride bikes, jump puddles, dig in the snow and climb trees. There is the opportunity to "feel the wind and sunshine, take your shoes off in the grass, and feel different temperatures", says Myriam. These natural elements

### Position Statement

It's proven! Encouraging young children to play outdoors increases their level of daily physical activity. Learn more by reading the full article - ***Position Statement on the outdoor play*** developed by the research group on healthy living and obesity of Eastern Ontario's Children's Hospital (HALO-CHEO) [by clicking here](#).

## Share your stories with us!

Has Healthy Start made a positive difference in your day? Send us your story and pictures and you could be featured on our website or in our newsletter! Please send your submissions to [info@healthystartkids.ca](mailto:info@healthystartkids.ca) or visit [www.healthystartkids.ca/your-stories/](http://www.healthystartkids.ca/your-stories/).

# Let's Make: Fruit Kebab and Dip for fruit\*

\*Reference: LEAP Food Flair, Legacies Now, p. 126 & 127.

## Fruit Kebab

### What you need:

Choose a variety of ripe, fresh fruit to make into different bite-size shapes, such as:

- Apple half-circles
- Banana rounds
- Cantaloupe or honeydew melon cubes
- Grape halves
- Kiwi circles
- Orange moon shapes
- Watermelon triangles

### How to:

1. Remove rinds and make fruit easy for children to cut.

2. Arrange fruit on a small plate and sparkle with cinnamon.
3. Children can spear fruit with a fork. (This is less dangerous than a wooden skewer or toothpick.)



## Dip for fruit

### What you need:

- ¾ cup Vanilla yogurt
- ¼ cup Low-fat granola
- 2 tbsp. Unsweetened, shredded coconut

### How to:

1. Mix yogurt, granola and coconut together in a bowl.

Serves six children



# Healthy Start@Home

## Playing in the rain

With Canada's warmest season right on our doorsteps comes more rainy days to take advantage of. Young children can easily grow tired of being required to stay inside all day when it is raining outside. Why not try some activities **outside in the rain?**

Here are some ideas to try at your centre or home:

- Jump in, over and around any puddle you can find
- Sing and dance in the rain: take inspiration from the famous musical *Singin' in the Rain*. You can twirl, turn, skip and jump in the rain!
- Follow the small streams that form in the streets and find out where they lead to...
- Catch rain drops with different parts of your body (hand, finger, foot,



tongue, etc.) or your umbrella.

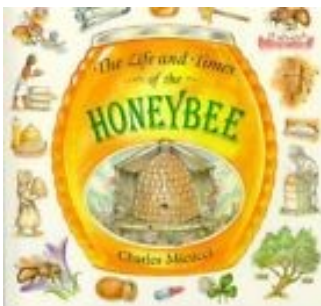
- Take a walk in the rain while taking note of what surrounds you and how the rain affects the plants, flowers and buildings.
- Ask the children to point out similarities and differences between what they see when it's raining and what it looks like when it is sunny out (for example: birds, worms, the look of the grass, flowers, trees, etc.).
- Let your imagination soar, there is no limit to what you can do in the rain, if you are well-dressed to do so and you are not scared to get a little wet!

### References:

Slate, Stephanie. "Rainy days: 20 ways you can get your kids active outside anyway," *Active for Life*, April 23, 2014, <http://activeforlife.com/fr/les-jours-de-pluie-20-idees-pour-faire-sortir-vos-enfants-malgre-tout/>

"La pluie, activités pour enfants avec fiches imprimables", *Educatout.com*, <http://www.educatout.com/activites/themes/la-pluie.htm>

# Active Books in your Library



The summer is a wonderful time to observe flying critters all around us in nature. *The Life and Times of the Honeybee* by Charles Micucci explores the many tasks involved with keeping bees and why they are one of the most useful insects. It explains why beekeepers use smoke machines when collecting honey. The life cycle, social organization and history of bees is covered in an informative and humorous way. The book describes how bees make honey and all its many uses such as lipstick and wax for snowboards and surfboards. Science comes alive in Micucci's tribute to bees.



Why not take a walk outside with the children to see if you can spot some bees or try the Dancing Bees, activities in *LEAP HOP*, pp. 114-115?

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# Connect with us!

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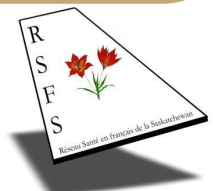


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*The information contained in this newsletter is intended to inform early childhood practitioners and parents. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect those of the Public Health Agency of Canada.*