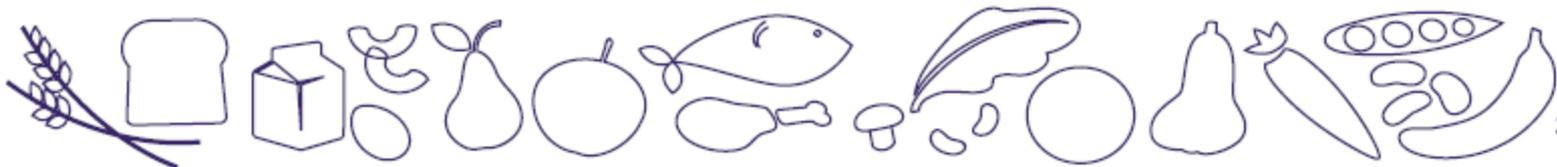# Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Electronic Media Use in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Andrea Farmer, MS, RD, LD, Nutritionist

Child Nutrition Programs

June 24, 2015

# Technical Assistance

- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) requires USDA to:
  - Update the CACFP meal patterns
  - Promote health and wellness in child care
  - Provide technical assistance to child care centers and day care homes
    - Minimum assistance - develop Handbook
    - Any additional assistance necessary



USDA

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children
Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program
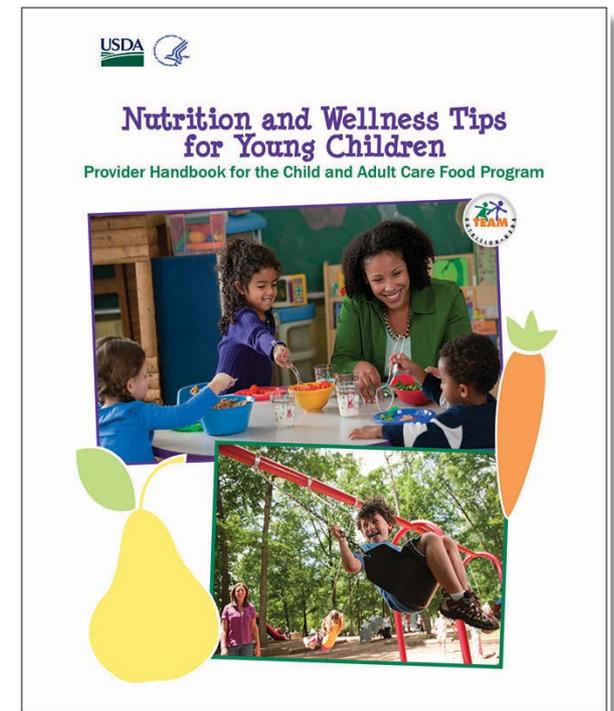
# Formative Research

- Determine Challenges
  - Nutrition
  - Physical Activity
  - Electronic Media Use

- Determine Resource Needs
  - Skills
  - Knowledge
  - Information
  - Topics of Interest

- Determine Delivery Methods
  - Print
  - Online
  - In-Person
  - Webinar
  - Video
  - Apps

# Research Methods

| Representatives from... | Phase 1: Survey (# of respondents) | Phase 2: Focus Groups (# of groups) |
|---|---|---|
| State Agencies | 52 | 1 |
| Sponsoring Organizations | 158 | 1 |
| Child Care Centers | 802 | 3 |
| Family Day Care Homes | 390 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 1,402* | 7 |

*Out of 13,105 survey invitations released

# Research Limitations

- Formative research
- Self-selection from random sample
  – More interest
  – More compliant
- Self-reporting
  – More positive portrayal
- Fear of recrimination, despite anonymity

# Snapshot: Audience Comparison

| State Agency Staff | • Believe providers need more knowledge about nutritional *Guidelines*<br>• Concern that providers are not implementing and modeling *Guidelines* consistently<br>• Concern that staff are reluctant to engage in physical activity<br>• Concern about electronic media as "secondary caregiver" |
|---|---|
| Sponsoring Organizations | • Report the most comprehensive view of "healthy habits" for young children<br>• Cost and time cited as top challenges to meeting nutrition guidelines<br>• Concern that staff are reluctant to participate in physical activity |
| Providers | • Very interested and eager to learn about ways to make meeting nutritional *Guidelines* easier<br>• Nutritional value is very top of mind<br>• Physical activity and electronic media use important, but fall into lower tier |

# Nutrition

## All groups are at least somewhat familiar with the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (DGAs)

- Interest in meeting the DGA recommendations is high!
- All audiences appreciate nutrition guidelines specific to age groups.

## Many providers are serving healthful and nutritious food and beverages, including:

- Whole grains
- Fruits
- Vegetables
- Milk
- Water

## Providers would like help with their biggest challenges:

- Meal planning
- Recipe ideas
- Managing food costs

## Providers want to learn from peers about best practices in promoting healthy habits

- Not only among children,
- But also among the parents of children in their care.

## Providers are engaged – especially on the topic of nutrition.

# Food Service

**Percent Saying Each Factor is "Very Important" in Deciding What Types of Food and Beverages are Served**

| | State Agency Staff | Sponsoring Organizations | Child Care Centers | Family Day Care Homes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Nutritional/health value | 69% | 89% | 95% | 97% |
| Access to nutritious foods and beverages | 65% | 89% | 91% | 93% |
| Provider/staff knowledge about types of foods to prepare/serve | 73% | 78% | 79% | 89% |
| Cost | 83% | 73% | 60% | 66% |
| Child preferences | 48% | 42% | 43% | 53% |
| Parental preference | 13% | 28% | 33% | 47% |

# Food Service

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## Percent Reporting How Meals and Snacks are Served

Child Care Centers



63%  37%

Family Day Care Homes



60%  40%
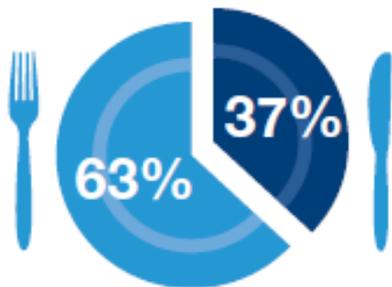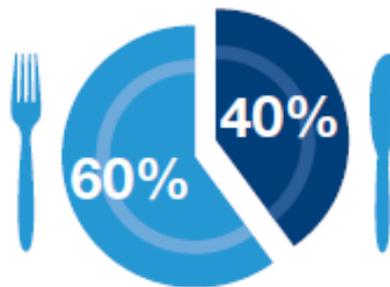
Key:
- Family Style Meals
- Preplated Meals

Providers who preplate meals express in focus groups that they want to know more about how to successfully implement family style service. Recommended training and tools include:

- Measuring tools that can be used for the first serving while allowing children to take the second on their own;

- Encouraging providers to model eating so that children try new foods; and

- Helping providers accept that messes may occur as children become familiar with serving themselves.

# A Closer Look at Key Findings

**Percent Reporting the Frequency of Food Groups
Served to Children Ages 0 to 5 the Previous Day**

**Child Care Centers**

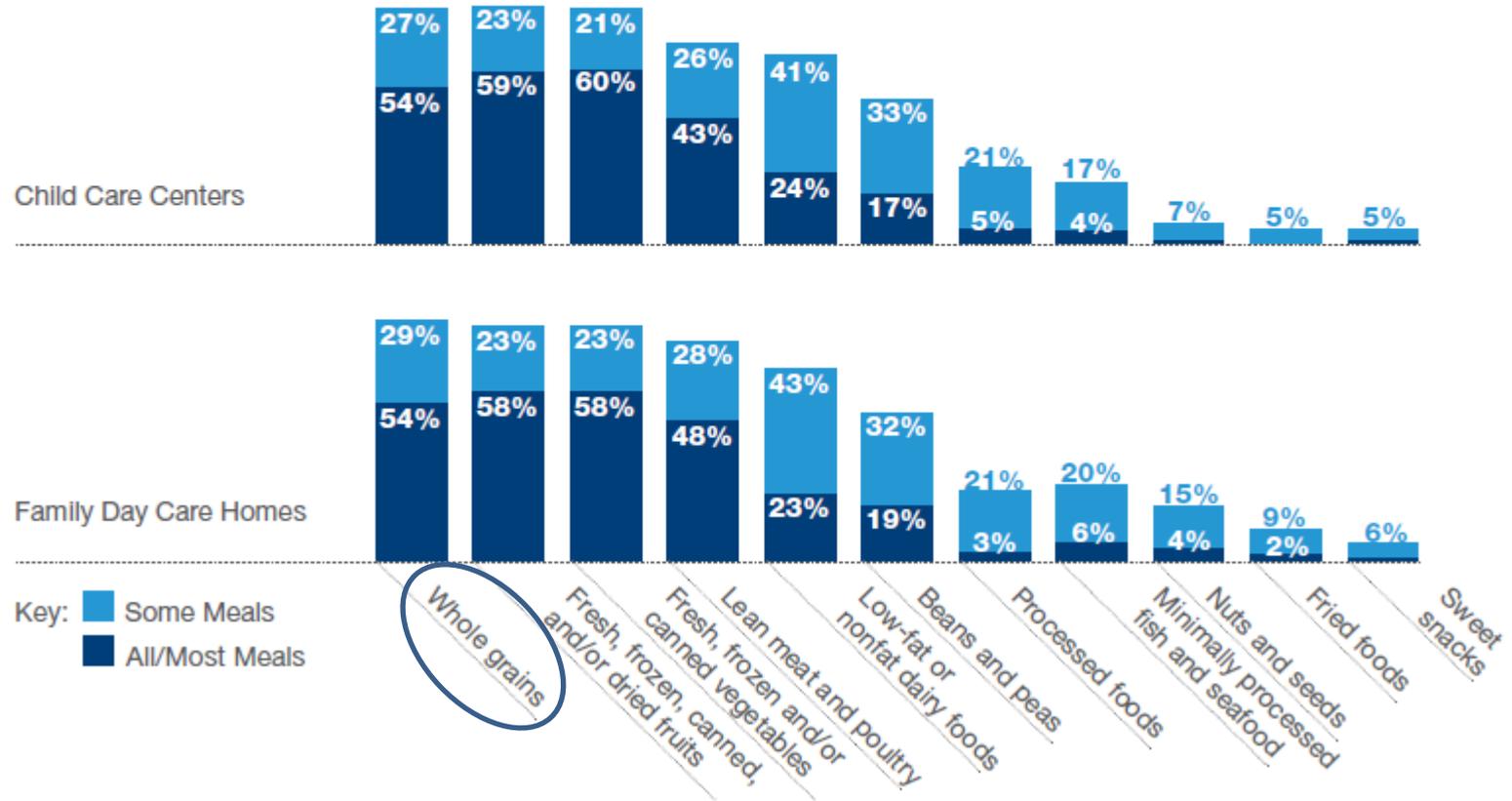| Food Group | Some Meals | All/Most Meals |
|---|---|---|
| Whole grains | 27% | 54% |
| Fresh, frozen, canned, and/or dried fruits | 23% | 59% |
| Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables | 21% | 60% |
| Lean meat and/or poultry | 26% | 43% |
| Low-fat or nonfat dairy foods | 41% | 24% |
| Beans and peas | 33% | 17% |
| Processed foods | 21% | 5% |
| Minimally processed fish and seafood | 17% | 4% |
| Nuts and seeds | 7% | |
| Fried foods | 5% | |
| Sweet snacks | 5% | |

**Family Day Care Homes**

| Food Group | Some Meals | All/Most Meals |
|---|---|---|
| Whole grains | 29% | 54% |
| Fresh, frozen, canned, and/or dried fruits | 23% | 58% |
| Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables | 23% | 58% |
| Lean meat and/or poultry | 28% | 48% |
| Low-fat or nonfat dairy foods | 43% | 23% |
| Beans and peas | 32% | 19% |
| Processed foods | 21% | 3% |
| Minimally processed fish and seafood | 20% | 6% |
| Nuts and seeds | 15% | 4% |
| Fried foods | 9% | 2% |
| Sweet snacks | 6% | |

Key:
- Some Meals
- All/Most Meals

# A Closer Look at Key Findings

**Percent Reporting the Frequency of Food Groups
Served to Children Ages 0 to 5 the Previous Day**



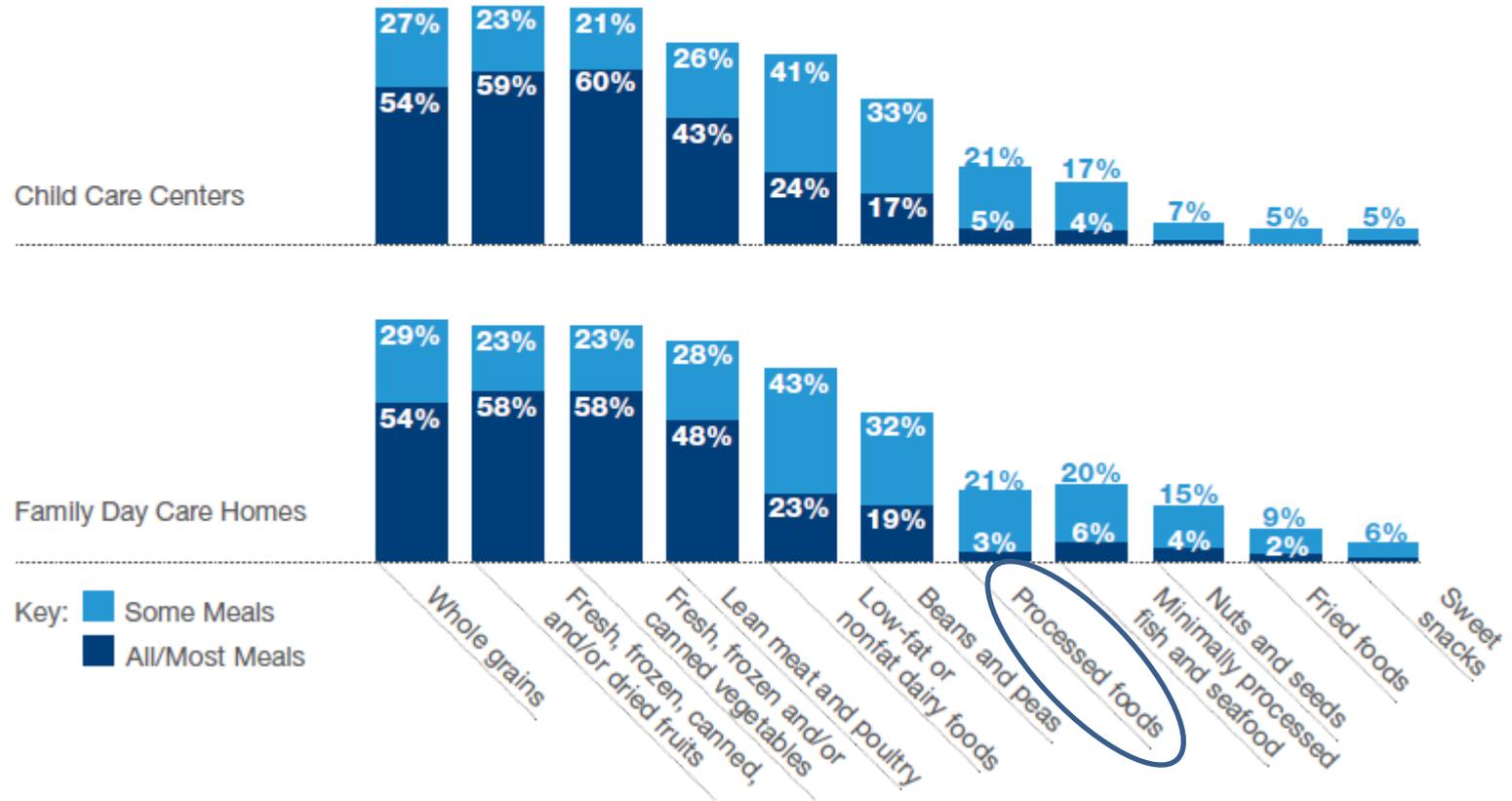**Child Care Centers**

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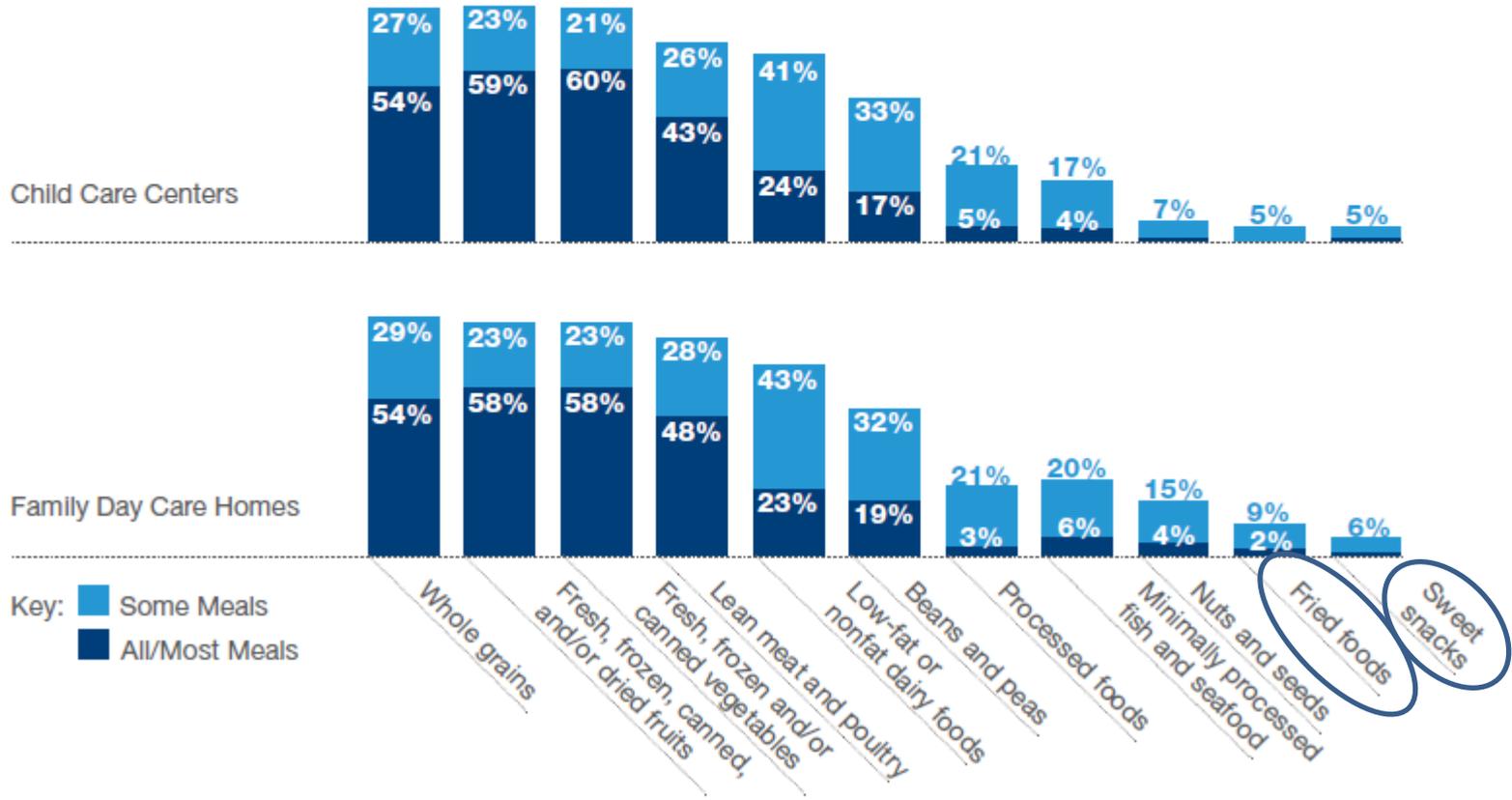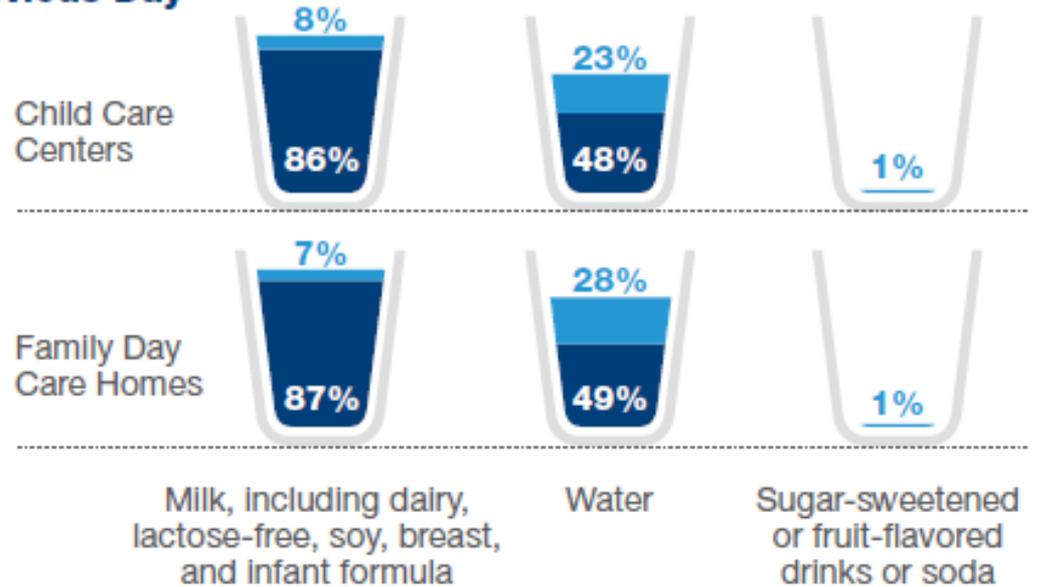Child Care Centers

| | Whole grains | Fresh, frozen, canned, and/or dried fruits | Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables | Lean meat and/or poultry | Low-fat or nonfat dairy foods | Beans and peas | Processed foods | Minimally processed fish and seafood | Nuts and seeds | Fried foods | Sweet snacks |
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Family Day Care Homes

| | Whole grains | Fresh, frozen, canned, and/or dried fruits | Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables | Lean meat and/or poultry | Low-fat or nonfat dairy foods | Beans and peas | Processed foods | Minimally processed fish and seafood | Nuts and seeds | Fried foods | Sweet snacks |
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Key:
- Some Meals
- All/Most Meals

# A Closer Look at Key Findings

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Key:
- Some Meals
- All/Most Meals

# Nutrition: Food Group Categories

| | |
|---|---|
| **Fruit** | •Including fresh, frozen, canned and/or dried |
| **Vegetables** | •Including fresh, frozen and/or canned |
| **Beans and peas** | •Such as black beans, kidney beans and lentils |
| **Minimally processed fish and seafood** | •Such as canned tuna and non-breaded fish filets |
| **Lean meat and poultry** | •Including beef, pork, lamb, chicken, and turkey |
| **Nuts and seeds** | •Such as almonds, peanuts and sunflower seeds, and their butters |
| **Whole grains** | •Such as oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, and whole grain crackers |
| **Low-fat or nonfat dairy foods** | •Such as yogurt and cheese |
| **Sweet snacks** | •Such as ice cream, granola bars, doughnuts, pies, pudding, cookies, cake, and candy |
| **Fried foods** | •Such as fried chicken, French fries or potato chips |
| **Processed foods** | •Such as chicken nuggets and hot dogs |

## Percent Reporting the Frequency of Beverages Served to Children Ages 0 to 5 the Previous Day

Just under half specifically serve water all or most of the time, but focus group participants confirm that water is available throughout the day.

Key:
- 💧 Some Meals
- 🔵 All/Most Meals

**Child Care Centers**

| | Milk | Water | Sugar-sweetened or fruit-flavored |
|---|---|---|---|
| Some Meals | 8% | 23% | 1% |
| All/Most Meals | 86% | 48% | |

**Family Day Care Homes**

| | Milk | Water | Sugar-sweetened or fruit-flavored |
|---|---|---|---|
| Some Meals | 7% | 28% | 1% |
| All/Most Meals | 87% | 49% | |

Milk, including dairy, lactose-free, soy, breast, and infant formula

Water

Sugar-sweetened or fruit-flavored drinks or soda

## Percent Reporting Top Challenges to Meeting Nutrition Guidelines

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **State Agency Staff** | 75% **Cost of Food** | 52% **Staff Knowledge** |
| **Sponsoring Organizations** | 68% **Cost of Food** | 45% **Preparation Time** |
| **Child Care Centers** | 54% **Cost of Food** | 43% **Child Preferences** |
| **Family Day Care Homes** | 56% **Cost of Food** | 48% **Child Preferences** |

**Other challenges discussed in focus groups include:**

- The availability of fresh food;

- Gaining support from parents; and

- Managing food vendors.

> " I think different ideas for when we do cooking projects, quick and simple that would help educate the children as well, that would be great."

**Child Care Center, mixed familiarity with Dietary Guidelines**

## Suggestions to overcome nutrition challenges:

- Give providers the opportunity to share strategies among themselves that have been successful with picky eaters.

- Improve staff knowledge with increased and more targeted trainings.

- Provide cost-effective and seasonal produce options as well as resources and strategies for child care gardens.

- Make menu planning both easier and less time-consuming by:

  - Supplying new, easy recipes for meals and snacks with explanations of how ingredients meet CACFP requirements,

  - Developing a mobile- or tablet-based application that builds recipes based on available foods inputted by the provider, and

  - Providing recipes that reflect cultural influences.

# Physical Activity

## All groups recognize the value of age-specific physical activity guidelines

- Guidelines can help create structure.
- Some providers are less familiar with what children can do at different ages.

**Time for physical activity reported by providers is what they perceive to be best practices, but not always consistent with actual recommendations.**

## Key factors providers consider when deciding on physical activity:

- Safety
- Caregiver-to-child ratio
- Children's clothing and footwear
- Space or equipment limitations

## Key barriers to promoting physical activity:

- Weather
- Finding activities conducive to smaller, indoor spaces

## Percent Reporting Actual Active Time per Day by Age

### Ages 0-12 months
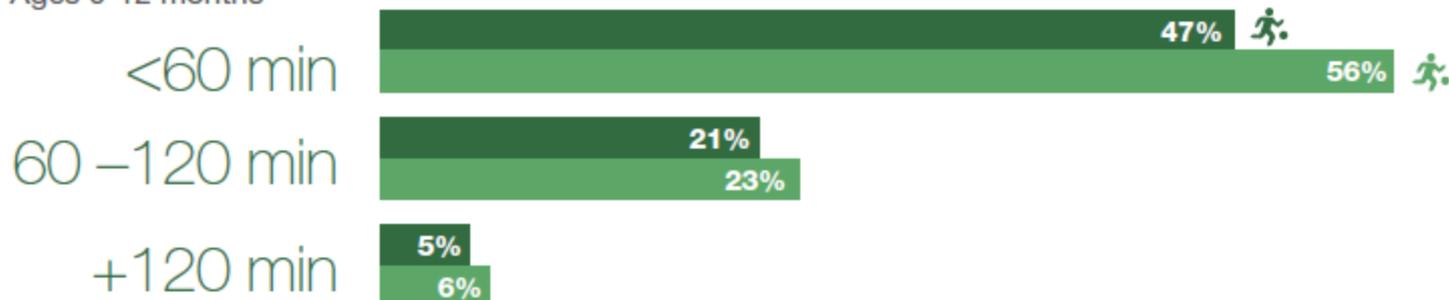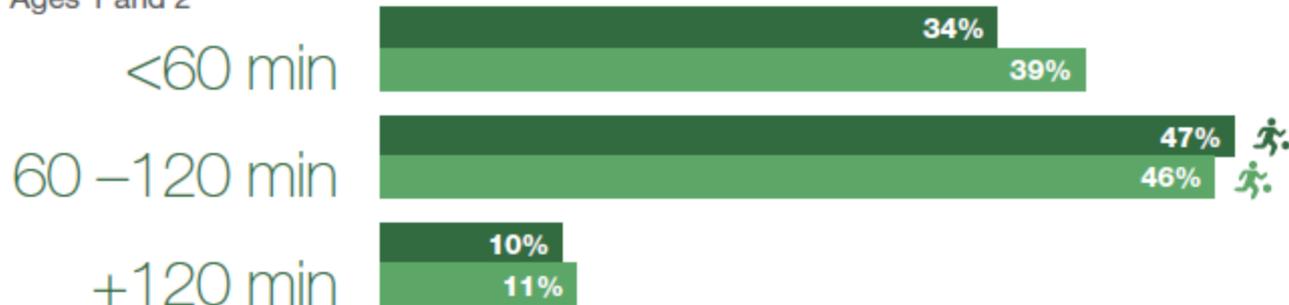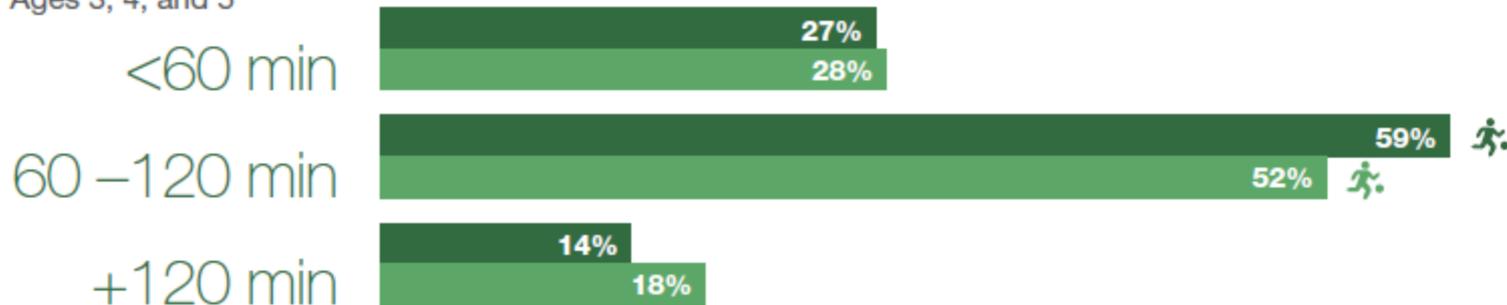
**<60 min**
- Child Care Centers: 47%
- Family Day Care Homes: 56%

**60 –120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 21%
- Family Day Care Homes: 23%

**+120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 5%
- Family Day Care Homes: 6%

### Ages 1 and 2

**<60 min**
- Child Care Centers: 34%
- Family Day Care Homes: 39%

**60 –120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 47%
- Family Day Care Homes: 46%

**+120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 10%
- Family Day Care Homes: 11%

### Ages 3, 4, and 5

**<60 min**
- Child Care Centers: 27%
- Family Day Care Homes: 28%

**60 –120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 59%
- Family Day Care Homes: 52%

**+120 min**
- Child Care Centers: 14%
- Family Day Care Homes: 18%

Key: Child Care Centers | Family Day Care Homes | Indicates the most frequently selected response by audience

## Percent Reporting Top Challenges to Ensuring There are Enough Opportunities for Physical Activity

**State Agency Staff**

65% Staff Knowledge

63% Space Limitations

**Sponsoring Organizations**

41% Space Limitations

34% Cost of Equipment

**Child Care Centers**

36% Cost of Equipment

33% Space Limitations

**Family Day Care Homes**

44% Mixed Age Groups

41% Cost of Equipment
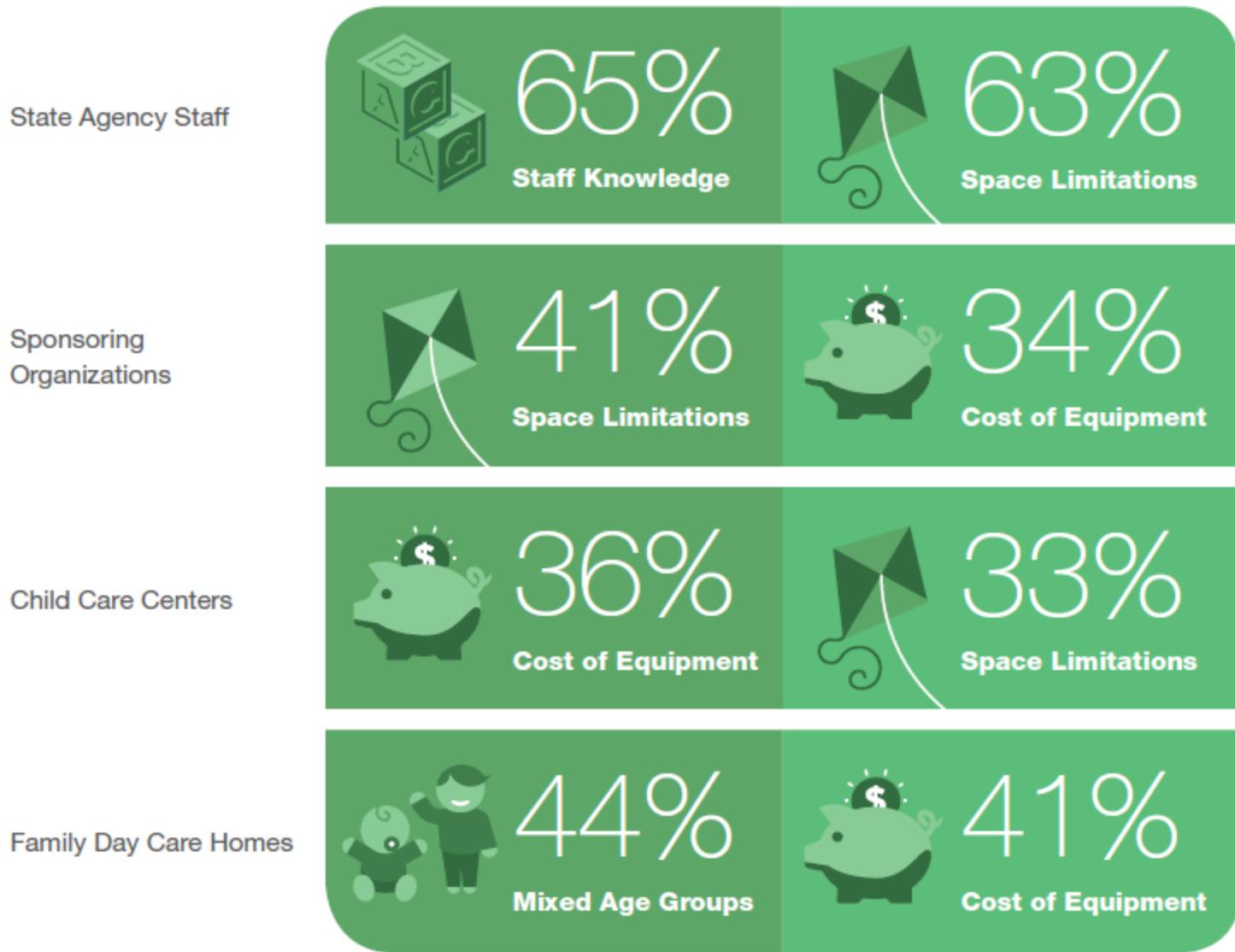
" I think what would help more is giving actual examples of structured activity that the kids can do and of course…we don't want the kids to get hurt or they might be afraid to do it. But if it's something age appropriate to where we can find a way to get the kids all involved, then that way, we're incorporating the physical activity as part of their routine, as something that they just do normally."

**Sponsoring Organization**

# Electronic Media Use

## Audiences differ in perceived appropriateness of use in child care settings:

- State agency staff are more likely to say young children should not be exposed to electronic media.
- Most providers and sponsoring organizations see electronic media as an asset if both limited and appropriately used.

## Use is associated with age

- Younger children are allowed less screen time per day than older children.

## A top challenge to limiting use in child care settings:

- Finding activities for mixed-age groups

## Providers discuss primarily using electronic media for educational purposes

- Some report having well-defined strategies for limiting electronic media use.

**There is less interest in training on electronic media use than on nutrition and physical education.**

## Percent Perceived Prevalence of Electronic Media Use in Child Care Settings

## Percent Reporting Electronic Media Use

**94%** — State Agency Staff

**87%** — Sponsoring Organization

**82%** — Child Care Centers

**91%** — Family Day Care Homes

(Y-axis: 100%, 75%, 50%, 25%, 0%)
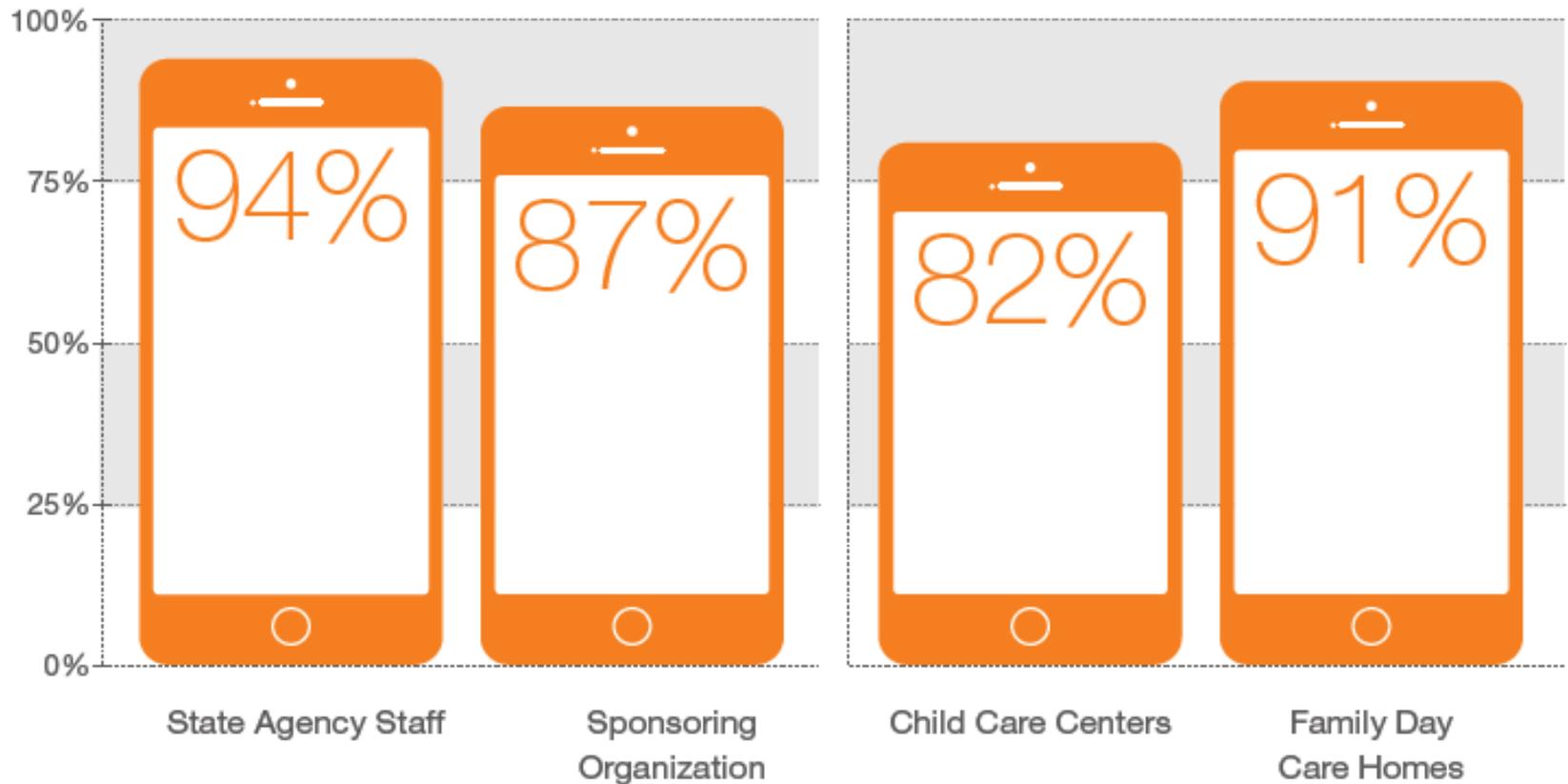
For the purposes of this research, "electronic media use" included any TV, video, and DVD watching, electronic games, computer use, and use of other electronic devices (like cell phones).

# Electronic Media

- Electronic media use is widespread in childcare settings.

- In focus groups, providers discuss primarily using electronic media for educational purposes and say that it is limited.

- Providers do, however, see a benefit to some screen time.

## Percent Reporting Actual Electronic Media Use per Day by Age

### Under 2 years
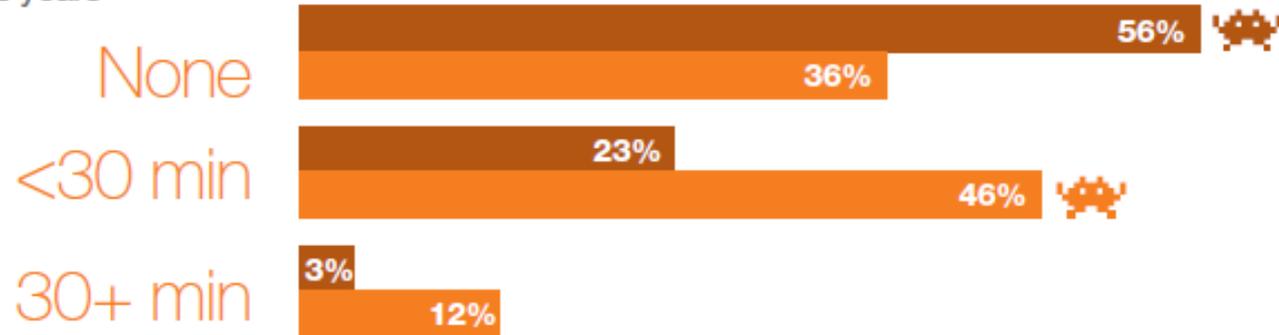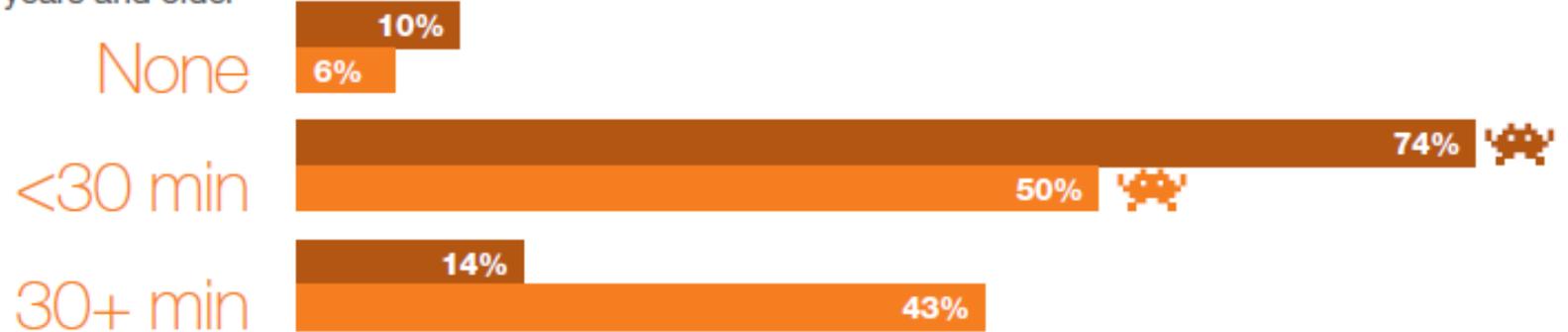
**None**
- Child Care Centers: 56%
- Family Day Care Homes: 36%

**<30 min**
- Child Care Centers: 23%
- Family Day Care Homes: 46%

**30+ min**
- Child Care Centers: 3%
- Family Day Care Homes: 12%

### Ages 2 years and older

**None**
- Child Care Centers: 10%
- Family Day Care Homes: 6%

**<30 min**
- Child Care Centers: 74%
- Family Day Care Homes: 50%

**30+ min**
- Child Care Centers: 14%
- Family Day Care Homes: 43%

Key:
- Child Care Centers
- Family Day Care Homes
- Indicates the most frequently selected response by audience

## Percent Reporting Top Challenges to Limiting Electronic Media Use

**State Agency Staff**

52%
Lack of Staff Training

52%
Perception that Use is Educational

**Sponsoring Organizations**

27%
Lack of Staff Training

38%
Perception that Use is Educational

**Child Care Centers**

35%
None

18%
Mixed Age Groups

**Family Day Care Homes**

34%
None

31%
Mixed Age Groups

# ☑ Needs Assessment

### All audiences want information and training on a range of topics

- The greatest number of topics concern nutrition.
- Technical assistance and training needs and interests are aligned most clearly around nutrition over physical activity and electronic media use.

### Multiple formats for delivering the same content are needed—one size will not fit all!

### Preferences vary around the delivery of information and training

- Interactive training methods and peer learning, when possible, are preferred.
- Videos, webinars, and in-person training are all considered useful.
- Print materials can be shared with parents and provide expert reference for decisions and behaviors.
- Social media can play a role in helping providers communicate to parents.

# Research Report

- Posted on Team Nutrition Web site
- teamnutrition.usda.gov
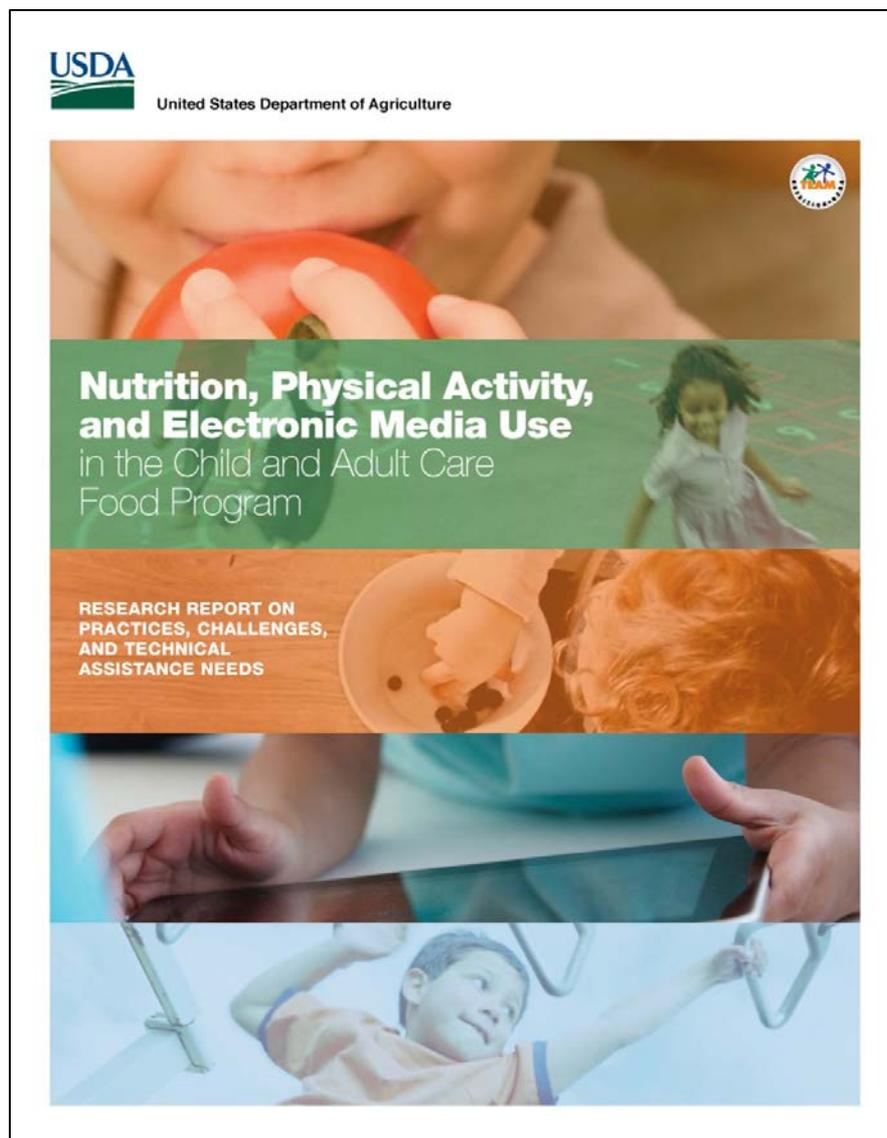
# Team Nutrition

## How To Apply
- Join the Team

## Popular Topics
- HealthierUS Schools
- Local Wellness Policy
- Training Grants
- Resource Library
- Graphics Library
- MyPlate
- Resource Order Form

## Other Useful Links
- Healthy Meals Resource System
- Healthy Access Locator
- Best Practices Sharing Center
- School Day Just Got Healthier



Team Nutrition is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support the Child Nutrition Programs through training and technical assistance for foodservice, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

## Spotlights

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for CACFP is now available in Spanish

Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers are back in stock!

Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Electronic Media Use in CACFP

High Five Stickers now available! Encourage kids to make a MyPlate meal #GimmeFive

# Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Electronic Media Use in CACFP (CACFP Research Report Booklet)

Print

Wednesday, April 1, 2015

**Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Electronic Media Use in the Child and Adult Care Food Program: Research Report on Practices, Challenges, and Technical Assistance Needs**

This easy-to-read summary highlights findings that answer these questions:

- What are the biggest nutrition and wellness challenges for child care?
- What do providers need to overcome these challenges?
- What are the best ways for providers to receive training and resources?

The research was conducted in 2014 to help USDA assist child care providers in following the nutrition, physical activity, and electronic media use recommendations outlined in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) audiences nationwide (child care centers, family day care homes, sponsoring organizations and State agencies) participated in the study.

For more details on the research, including the complete report, click here

*Available*: in PDF, below. A free print copy of the CACFP Research Report Booklet (USDA 278) is also available, **upon request**, to State agencies, child care centers and homes, sponsoring organizations, and schools that participate in USDA's Child Nutrition Programs.  Look for it in the Child Care/Preschool section of the order form.

**File Upload:**

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**File Upload:**

United States Department of Agriculture
**Food and Nutrition Service**

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Home

# Formative Research on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Electronic Media Use in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Print

Monday, March 9, 2015

This report includes findings from formative research undertaken to help USDA assist child care providers in following the nutrition, physical activity, and electronic media use recommendations outlined in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. Results and analyses in this report are based on two studies: 1,402 structured qualitative interviews (SQIs) of a diverse population of child care centers, family day care homes, CACFP sponsoring organizations, and State agencies; and 7 focus groups among the same audiences.

- Report Summary
- Full Report
- Appendix 1
- Appendix 2
- Appendix 3

Last Published: 03/09/2015

# Moving Forward

- Revise current resources/develop new ones
  - Findings from research
  - Input from interagency workgroup
  - Policy changes
  - Meal pattern changes

# CACFP Wellness Resources for Child Care Providers (Web site)

- One-stop shop for nutrition, physical activity and screen time resources

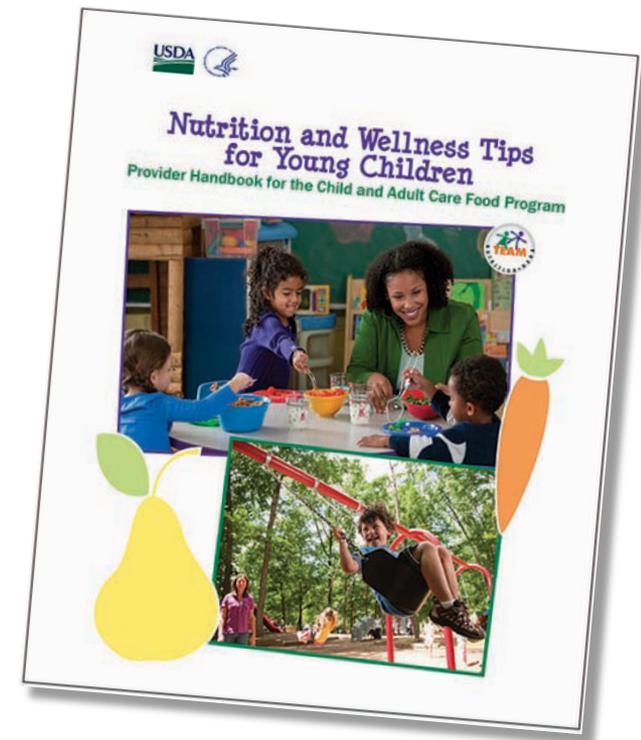- Revamping to make more user-friendly

Currently available at:
**http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov**

# New Supplements to the Handbook!

- *Encourage Healthful Foods*
  - Offering new foods
  - "Nudging" healthy foods
  - "Smarter Lunchrooms" for child care
- *Create a Positive Meal Environment*
  - Making the transition to mealtime
  - Involving children in mealtime
  - Being a good role model



USDA

Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children

Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

# New Supplements to the Handbook!

- *Support Family-Style Dining*
  - Reimbursable meals
  - Tips for success
  - Mythbusters

# CACFP Multi-Cultural Recipes

- Resource In Development
    - Recipes from around the world
    - Tips for using traditional foods
    - Nutrition education lessons
    - Parent handouts
- Workgroup subcommittee collecting recipes

# *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

- *Fun With Fruits and Vegetables at Family Child Care*
  - Redesign of tool kit for family child care
  - Incorporates feedback from Advisory Group and providers!
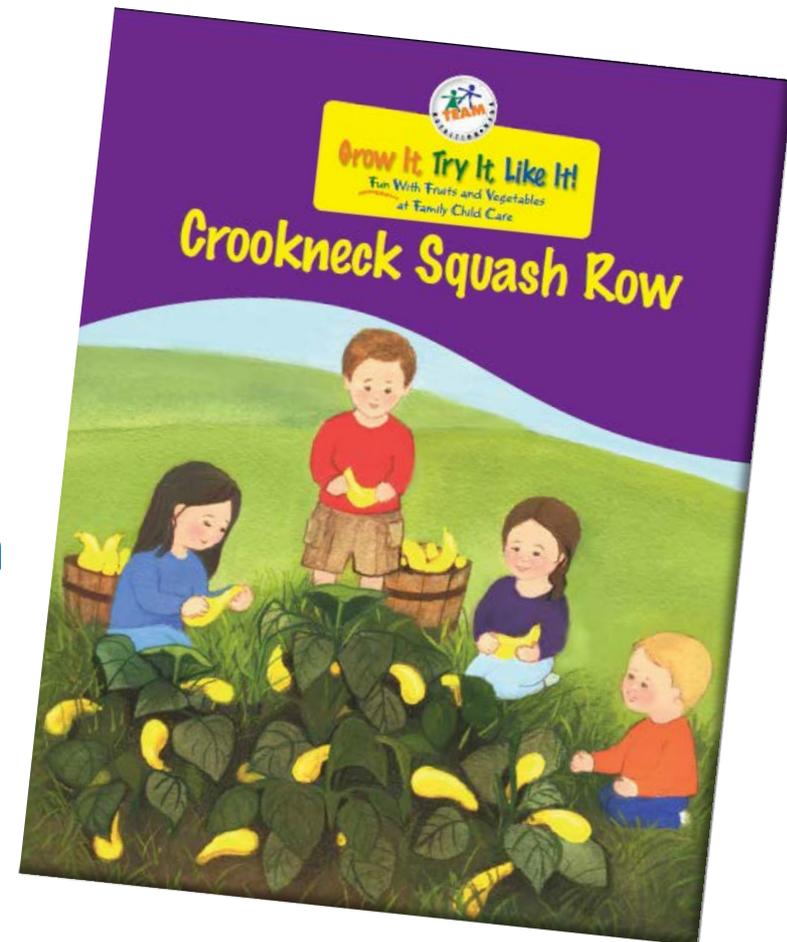
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- Crediting Tips
  - Integrate activities with meals or snacks

**Crediting Tip**

If you plan to serve the squash from this activity at snack time, be sure to offer each child the correct amount of squash to count towards the Fruit/ Vegetable component:

Ages 1 – 2: ½ cup

Ages 3 – 5: ½ cup

Ages 6 – 12: ¾ cup

# *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

- Messages for Parents
  - Ideas to text or tell
  - "Growing at Home"
    - Parent letter
    - Recipe
    - Coloring activity

**Messages for Parents**

Text or tell parents:
- "Your child learned what crookneck squash looks and feels like."
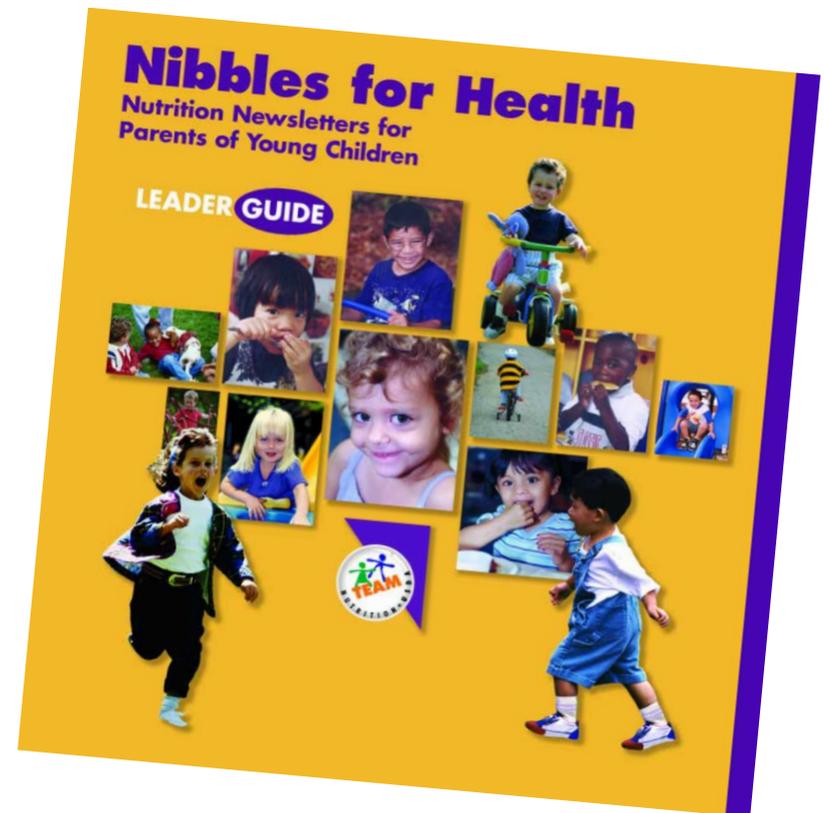- "Your child tasted crookneck squash today."

# *Grow It, Try It, Like It!*

- Movement Activities
  - Part of every day's activities
- "Crookneck Says" (like Simon Says)
- Fruit and Vegetable Yoga

# Messages for Parents

- Nibbles for Health
  - Parent newsletters
  - Available online
  - Undergoing revision

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