

Minnesota

Minnesota's Department of Education Team Nutrition Let's Move! Child Care Initiative



Nearly 1,700 of the over 8,500 family child care providers in Minnesota took part in a Team Nutrition Let's Move! Child Care Initiative designed to help them set and meet healthy meal pattern goals for the USDA Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Between January and June 2013, each provider completed a Team Nutrition Let's Move! Child Care Quiz on their health and nutrition practices. The questions were duplicated from the national Let's Move! Child Care Quiz with one additional CACFP goal-setting question added. The number of respondents represents the total family child care providers in the state who partake in CACFP.

The Minnesota Department of Education partnered with eight family child care sponsor organizations to promote the initiative. Sponsor monitors gave information and training to providers during home visits.

Realizing that serving proper, nutritious meals and snacks to children is important to overall health and learning, staff at the Minnesota Department of Education based the initiative on best practices. "We worked to identify meal pattern goals centered on the Institute of Medicine's recommendations and the meal pattern changes that we've already seen in the School Nutrition Programs," said Kara Mitterholzer, from the Department of Education's Office of Safety, Health and Nutrition.

As part of their participation in the initiative, an incentive drawing was held by each sponsor organization in August 2013 for eligible providers who selected one or more of the following goals (from CACFP) and agreed to maintain the goal for at least one month:

- Serve fresh fruit three times per week for breakfast.
- Serve fresh fruit twice per week for snack.
- Serve at least one fruit and two vegetables at each lunch.
- Serve one fruit and one vegetable or two vegetables at each supper.
- Serve a dark green vegetable at least twice per week for lunch or supper.

- Serve an orange vegetable at least twice per week for lunch or supper.
- Serve legumes (dried peas or beans) at least once per week for lunch or supper.
- Serve corn, potatoes, green peas or lima beans (starchy vegetables) no more than twice per week for lunch or supper.
- Limit fruit juice to no more than one serving per week at breakfast.
- Make half of the grains served per week whole grain rich.

Approximately 200 nutrition and physical activity-related incentives were given to providers for incorporating nutrition training and activities as part of their child care programming. The largest sponsor organization gave out certificates of achievement to all providers who participated.

Lisa Markson, a provider of 18 years, used her creativity to introduce variation in a Nutrition Island game. “Rather than just having the children draw a color-coded card

and advancing through the board, I wanted the kids to really get ‘into’ the food concept, so I decided to make up food questions before the child could advance,” she said.

Provider Laura Davis welcomed a visit from B. Smart Bear as children engaged in activities using a large floor mat and big game tokens. “The children were very surprised at the size of the game,” she said. “The kids laughed when I announced their silly names as, “Peanut Pete, Betty Banana, Mr. Cheese, Broccoli Bob and Tommy Toast. They had great fun crawling around the big board and matching up the colorful game pieces.”

[Team Nutrition](#) is an initiative of the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to support child nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity.

We want to feature your story of progress and success working on the five *Let's Move!* Child Care goals. Please email a brief description of your story with your contact information, including program name, city and state, to eceobesity@cdc.gov with the subject heading “Program Success Story.”