Healthy Hydration for Active Young Learners!

Water: a real lifesaver!

Did you know that water makes up about 60% of your body weight? Or that you can survive six weeks without food but you can't live much more than a week without water? Water helps the body function properly from maintaining blood volume to lubricating your eyes.

How much water do toddlers and preschoolers need per day?
1–3 year olds: 5 1/2 cups / 4–8 year olds: 7 cups

Fruit, vegetables, drinking water and milk are all good sources of water. Warmer temperatures, high humidity and physical activity increase water needs. When children are active, offer at least 1/2 to 2 cups of water every 15 to 20 minutes.

The word on sugar-sweetened beverages:

While juice drinks and soda pop are heavily advertised to children, these types of beverages contain a concentrated source of sugar that isn't good for a child's health. Too much sugar in children's diets is associated with obesity, tooth decay, and an increased risk for other health conditions.

Consider only drinking water or putting beverages such as coffee, soda pop or juice in an unmarked opaque container before drinking it in a classroom.

If you offer juice occasionally, make it 100% juice and consider these tips:

- Check the ingredients to make sure you're getting the juice advertised. Often inexpensive apple and grape juices are thrown in the mix, increasing sugar and adding limited nutrition. Even juice that is advertised as '100% juice' will often contain preservatives and other additives.
- Dilute 100% juice with water.
- Be mindful of age-appropriate portion sizes:
  - Less than 1 year - do not give fruit juice.
  - Children 1–6 years - limit to 4–6 ounces fruit juice per day. Less than 2 servings per week, if served at all, is recommended.
- Serve juice in a cup, not a bottle, and avoid allowing children to carry around juice boxes or cups throughout the day.
- Or skip the juice and offer whole fruits and vegetables or a fruit smoothie instead (see recipe on second page). Fruit provides more nutrition than fruit juice.
Hydrating Recipes with a BURST of Flavor:

**Sparkling Water(melon):** Whip up this naturally sweet and refreshingly minty beverage in no time and sure to please both kids and their providers/teachers!

**Silly Water:** Let kids take the lead in suggesting fruit, vegetable or herb-infused water flavors! Try one new flavor a week.

**Fuel You Up Smoothie:** This colorful blend of fruits and vegetables screams summer: Spinach never tasted so sweet!

Family meal-style serving tip: if your program emphasizes children serving themselves, consider filling "help yourself" pitchers that allow children ages 3-6 years old to serve their own water throughout the day when they feel thirsty!

3 TIPS from local providers who have made drinking water fun at their program!

1. Stock special cups with cartoon characters or favorite colors for drinking water.
2. Allow children to use silly straws only when drinking water.
3. Purchase or request that parents buy a special water bottle for each child. Keep bottles cold in the refrigerator each day.

Are sugary drinks sent from home a problem? Consider sending home a letter about beverages. Here’s some sample language to get you started!

Sources:
- [http://iom.nationalacademies.org/~/media/Files/Activity%20Files/Nutrition/DRIs/DRI_Electrolytes_Water.pdf](http://iom.nationalacademies.org/~/media/Files/Activity%20Files/Nutrition/DRIs/DRI_Electrolytes_Water.pdf)
- Healthy Children, Fit Children: Answers to Common Questions From Parents About Nutrition and Fitness (Copyright 2011 American Academy of Pediatrics)

Breastfeeding Connection:

Did you know that breastmilk contains 87% water? Women should drink fluids after delivery to prevent dehydration while breastfeeding. Milk supply usually isn’t affected by dehydration, but dehydration can contribute to constipation, fatigue, and impaired concentration for the breastfeeding mom.

Tips for supporting moms’ breastfeeding on-site at your day care or preschool:
- Leave a fresh pitcher of water and cups in your lactation room.
- Provide recipes for infused water in your lactation room for moms to take home—find over 100 recipes here!
- For breastfeeding employees, consider gifting them a water bottle to congratulate them on their new baby.

Share the Love, Share the Water

A short video produced by the University of California shows how families can learn to avoid the sugar in popular beverages by choosing to drink the most refreshing, inexpensive and life-sustaining drink in the world: water! The video is a great resource for staff and parents. English: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJjDoKIN7Lw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJjDoKIN7Lw) Spanish: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpOQ2sH5u8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KpOQ2sH5u8).

We want to hear from you!

What topics would you like to see featured in future issues of Watermelon and Wiggles?

Let us know about the successes at your program!
- Did you grow a garden for the kids this spring?
- Create a new lactation room?
- Start using a new physical activity curriculum?

We want to hear about it!

Dakota County Public Health Department
Jill Verchota, MPH, RD, LD
Jill.verchota@co.dakota.mn.us / 651-554–6154
[www.dakotacounty.us](http://www.dakotacounty.us)