

Family  
Literacy

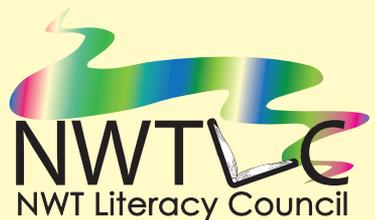
# Eating and Learning



Fun tips, crafts, and recipes  
for good health



Northwest  
Territories Education, Culture and Employment





## Other Resources & Literacy Activities

You will find other resources on our website:

- 1-2-3 Rhyme with Me
- Plan a Family Fun Day
- Puppet Making
- Storysacks
- Science Fun
- Learning Activity Cards
- Storytime Adventures
- Recipes for Fun!
- Family Cooking
- Books in the Home
- Book Making
- And many more!



Go to [www.nwtliteracy.ca](http://www.nwtliteracy.ca) to discover these and other resources. You are welcome to download and use these activities and kits, or adapt them as you wish.

- Try our Little Chef's Program! This resource links cooking with your family to a popular children's story. Under the 'Resources' tab, select 'Family and Community Literacy', then select the 'Little Chef's Program' link.

[www.nwt.literacy.ca/sites/default/files/files/Resources/Family%20and%20Community%20Literacy/little\\_chefs\\_program\\_manual.pdf](http://www.nwt.literacy.ca/sites/default/files/files/Resources/Family%20and%20Community%20Literacy/little_chefs_program_manual.pdf)

## Contact Information

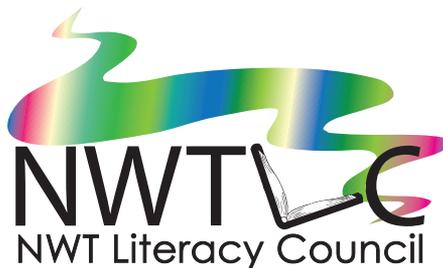
The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization with a mandate to support literacy development in all official languages of the Northwest Territories. For more information, please contact:

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# Early Childhood Nutrition

Childhood is an important time for a child's growth and development. This booklet has tips, activities and information to help you encourage a healthy lifestyle for the children in your life.

## **Nutrition and early learning – what's the connection?**

A lot of research tells us that children who eat healthy foods will often do better in school compared to children who eat unhealthy foods. Our bodies use food as a fuel for our daily activities. When you eat healthy meals and snacks that contain foods from all the food groups, your body is ready to work well.

Nutritionist Charity Alcocer, from Calgary, explains the nutrition and learning connection: "Adequate nutrition in children has been shown to improve learning skills, especially memory work. Inadequate nutrition contributes to lower test scores, irritability and poor concentration. We do see improvement in learning and behavior when children are well nourished."

Make healthy eating a habit for your child! Their body and mind will thank you for it.



Source: [www.canada.com/topics/lifestyle/fitness/story.html?id=05f2225a-f952-4a59-aa79-dcde3e612ec3&k=63776](http://www.canada.com/topics/lifestyle/fitness/story.html?id=05f2225a-f952-4a59-aa79-dcde3e612ec3&k=63776)

## Making Healthy Choices

A child's environment is one of the biggest influences in their nutrition choices. If they see their parents and teachers making good food choices, they will learn how to make healthy food choices for themselves. As children get older and become more independent, having healthy and tasty foods available in your home helps them to continue to make better food choices.

### **Processed foods**

Processed foods are factory made, and have added ingredients to increase their 'shelf life'. They also contain a lot of trans fat, saturated fat, sodium and sugar. Many processed foods contain preservatives and artificial ingredients like dyes, colours and flavourings. Make these 'occasional foods'. It's best to prepare your meals and snacks using fresh ingredients.

### **Share a traditional recipe**

Talk about traditional foods and share your special recipes with your family and friends. What types of foods are celebrated in your culture? Maybe you like dry meat or dry fish. Perhaps your auntie's bannock recipe is the best one around. It's important to pass on traditional recipes.

### **Cook out on the land**

Share a special time with your family cooking out on the land. It is a different experience spending time cooking together outside, instead of in the kitchen. If you find it too hard to do this yourself, take part in a community gathering. There is sure to be some delicious food available!

# Follow Canada's Food Guide

## Recommended number of food guide servings each day

	Children			Teens		Adults			
Age in Years	2-3	4-8	9-13	14-18 years		19-50 years		51 + years	
Sex	Girls and Boys			F	M	F	M	F	M
Vegetables and Fruit	4	5	6	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	3	4	6	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	2	3-4	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	1	1	1-2	2	3	2	3	2	3

- Children get all the nutrients they need by following the healthy eating guidelines in Canada's Food Guide.
- During early childhood, children need extra calories for growth. These should come from nutritious foods such as milk, peanut butter or avocados, which give them a healthy source of fat (fat that occurs naturally in food). Try to avoid foods that provide an unhealthy source of fat, such as fast food or processed food.
- Children need small meals throughout the day since they have small stomachs. Schedule regular snack and meal times to help them stay full and get the nutrients that they need.



## Make Mealtimes Happy Family Times

- Understand that children's appetites go up and down over time. Appetites change because of growth spurts, activity levels, excitement or when tired.
- Sit down with your children and eat with them. Be sure to turn off the TV, tablets and smartphones while eating. Make meals family time to talk and interact with your children while teaching them about healthy eating.
- Offer children new foods, and be patient with them if they are hesitant to try an unfamiliar food. Lead by example and eat a variety of foods, so they are encouraged to do the same.
- Let children help prepare food or get ready for meals. Depending on their age, they can help set the table, help wash vegetables, or help to measure, add and stir ingredients.
- Make sure your children have enough time to eat, don't rush them. Try to eat meals at roughly the same time every day. This helps to create a healthy routine.



# Helping Hands

Children can learn how to prepare and cook meals at a young age. You can teach them about healthy eating and help them learn the names of different foods. Remember to teach children about kitchen safety, and make sure they know what they can and cannot touch or do without supervision.

## Ages 2-3

- Wash fruits and vegetables
- Count ingredients
- Add ingredients to bowl
- Place muffin liners into muffin tins

## Ages 4-6

- Mix thicker ingredients (muffins, pancakes)
- Set the table
- Slice cooked veggies, soft fruit, cheese or tofu with supervision or using a plastic knife

## Ages 6-8

- Toss salad
- Make a smoothie
- Use basic kitchen equipment (blender, can opener)

## Ages 3-4

- Pour from a measuring cup
- Mix dry ingredients
- Help gather ingredients
- Mash potatoes or bananas
- Help make a sandwich or pizza

## Ages 8-11

- Chop vegetables, bread, fruit, tofu, cheese, meat
- Make and pack their school lunch
- Use the microwave or the stove with supervision
- Make fruit or vegetable trays

Source: [www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/cooking-kids-cuisiner-enfants-eng.php](http://www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/cooking-kids-cuisiner-enfants-eng.php)

## Juice, Pop, Water or Milk: Which Should I Give my Child?

Water is the best drink to give your child. It is the best thirst quencher. Whenever possible, choose tap water over bottled water. Help your child get used to drinking water at an early age so they have a healthy lifetime habit.

Milk includes calcium and other important nutrients and has only 12 grams of sugar a serving. Children should drink two cups of milk or fortified soy beverage every day to get enough vitamin D.

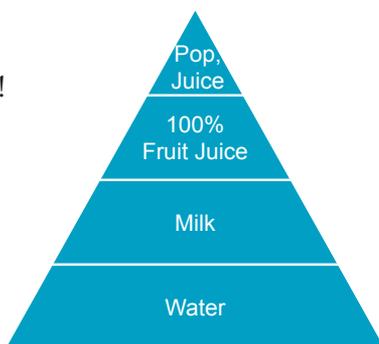
100% fruit juice provides some vitamins and nutrients that occur naturally in fruit. However your child gets better nutritional value from eating the fruit itself. It's important to limit the amount of juice a child drinks every day. Experts say that preschoolers should drink at most  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cup of juice a day. You can add water to juice to make it last longer.

Fruit punches and pop contain lots of sugar and provide little or no nutrition. A can of pop has about 10 cubes of sugar.

### Your drink pyramid

Water should be the main drink for your family. It is the healthiest choice!

Next should come milk, or options such as almond or soy milk. They have Vitamin D which helps bones and teeth grow strong. Children should drink only small amounts of fruit juice and pop. They contain lots of sugar and don't provide many nutrients. Drink pop only on special occasions as a treat, and not as an everyday staple.



## 10 Quick Tips for Healthy Eating

1. Keep raw vegetables cut and washed in the fridge for fast snacks.
2. Keep frozen veggies in your freezer. You can quickly add them to soups, stews and casseroles.
3. Put a copy of Canada's Food Guide on your fridge to remind you of your daily serving amounts.
4. Grate or finely chop vegetables such as broccoli, carrots, zucchini, celery, peppers or other veggies and add them to soups, stews and casseroles. It's an easy way to incorporate vegetables into your meals if you have fussy eaters.
5. Eat breakfast, it's the most important meal of the day. If you don't have much time in the morning, make a smoothie. They're fun, fast and delicious, and will help keep your energy levels up during the day.
6. Try whole grain breads and pastas, they are healthier than white bread and pasta. They also leave you feeling fuller.
7. Lead by example! Show your children that you like to eat healthy too.
8. Keep healthy snacks in easy-to-reach places to encourage your children to eat them. Keep a bowl of fruit on the table or counter.
9. Compare ingredient lists and nutrition facts of your commonly purchased item. Some brands or varieties of products can be healthier than others.
10. When you're making a meal you know will freeze well, double the recipe. Freezer-friendly meals are great to have on hand to quickly reheat and enjoy when you don't have time to make a meal from scratch.

## Recipes

### Super Smoothies

Smoothies are a great quick breakfast or snack. Add different fruits, juices, or yogurt for lots of variety! You can change the quantities of ingredients to fit the number of servings you need. Children have a great time adding ingredients and trying new things!

#### Ingredients

- 2 cups of fruit (fresh or frozen)
- ½ cup yogurt (plain, unsweetened is best)
- ½ cup 100% fruit juice or milk
- 1 cup ice



#### Preparation

1. Wash and prepare fruit (take off stems, skins etc.).
2. Put all ingredients into blender.
3. Blend until smooth.
4. Enjoy!

### *Try these great smoothies!*

**Raspberry-Orange:** 1 cup orange juice + 1 cup raspberries  
+ ½ cup plain yogurt + 1 cup ice

**Strawberry-Banana:** 1 banana + 1 cup strawberries + ½ cup  
vanilla yogurt + ½ cup milk + 1 cup ice + pinch cinnamon

**Triple Berry:** 1½ cups mixed blackberries, strawberries  
and raspberries + 1 cup milk + 1 cup ice

Source: [www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/articles/50-smoothies.html](http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/articles/50-smoothies.html)

## Quick Apple Muffins

These whole grain, quick-to-make muffins will be a hit in your house!

### Ingredients

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable oil
- 1 egg
- 1 apple, chopped
- 1 cup white flour
- 1 cup whole wheat flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon



### Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400° F. Grease or line a muffin tin (12 muffins).
2. Whisk together the milk, vegetable oil and egg in a large bowl.
3. Add the chopped apple and mix together.
4. Combine the flours, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon in a medium sized bowl.
5. Add the dry ingredients to the milk mixture and combine until just moistened. Do not over mix.
6. Bake for 25 minutes or until golden. A toothpick inserted into a muffin should come out clean (no batter clinging to the toothpick).

## Chili with Whole Wheat Bannock

The great thing about chili is that it is so versatile. Once you have a basic recipe, you can tweak it to suit your family's tastes.

### Chili

#### Ingredients

- 3 pounds lean ground meat (beef, caribou, moose)
- Oil
- 3 finely chopped onions
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 carrots, grated
- 3-6 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. cumin
- ½ tsp. pepper
- 2 cans tomatoes (diced or stewed)
- 2 cans kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 cups frozen corn



#### Preparation

1. Turn the stove burner to medium-high and heat the onion and meat in a large pot in a small amount of oil, until the meat is evenly browned with no pink.
2. Add garlic, celery and carrots. Cook until vegetables are soft.
3. Add the spices to the pot (chili powder, salt, cumin, pepper). Stir well to mix the spices in with the meat and vegetables.
4. Add the tomatoes, beans and corn. Stir, and bring to a boil.
5. Turn burner to low. Simmer 30 minutes.

Source: *Great Food for Northern Cooks*, page 48 (NWT Literacy Council, Yellowknife Health and Social Services Authority, NWT/Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program)

# Bannock

## Ingredients

- 3 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tbsp. baking powder
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 1 ½ cups water

## Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Mix flour, salt, baking powder in large bowl. Pour in melted butter and water, stir with a fork to make a ball.
3. Turn dough out on a lightly floured surface. Knead gently about 10 times. Pat into a flat circle, ¾ - 1 inch thick.
4. Bake for 25-30 minutes.



## Crafts

### Placemat collage

#### What you need:

- Old magazine with pictures of healthy food
- Glue stick
- Scissors
- Cardstock
- Clear packing tape

#### What to do:

1. Cut out pictures from the magazines.
2. Cut the cardstock to the desired size.
3. Glue pictures to cardstock.
4. Use clear tape to 'lamine' to make the placemat last longer.

### Feed the Cookie Monster

#### What you need:

- Large paper
- Markers / crayons / paint
- Tape
- Scissors
- Blindfold / scarf



#### What to do:

1. Have you or your child draw the Cookie Monster with an open mouth on the large paper, as well as a cookie.
2. Cut out the cookie and put a loop of tape on the back.
3. Tape the Cookie Monster to a wall.
4. Tie the blindfold around your child's eyes, and have them play 'Pin the Tail on the Donkey', but with cookies, trying to get the cookie as close to the mouth as they can.

## Stuffed Apples

You can change this craft to suit younger or older children. For younger children, use a stapler instead of a hole-puncher and yarn.

### What you need:

- Brown paper bags
- Paint/markers/crayons for decorating
- Scissors
- Brown and green construction paper
- Hole puncher
- Yarn
- Pencil
- Newspaper or other stuffing
- Glue



### What to do:

1. Trace and cut out two identical apple shapes.
2. Decorate. If using paint, be sure to let the apples dry completely before continuing.
3. Hole punch all the way around the edge of the apples (skip this step if using the stapler).
4. Sew or staple the two halves together,  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way around the apple, leaving room to add the stuffing.
5. Stuff shredded newspaper or other stuffing material into the apple.
6. Finish sewing or stapling your apple closed.
7. Cut out a stem (brown) and a leaf (green) from the construction paper, and glue or staple them into place.

## Create a Family Recipe Book

A family recipe book is a great way to share special recipes with your family and friends. Here are directions for a padded album that will hold the recipes and allow you to remove and add recipes easily.

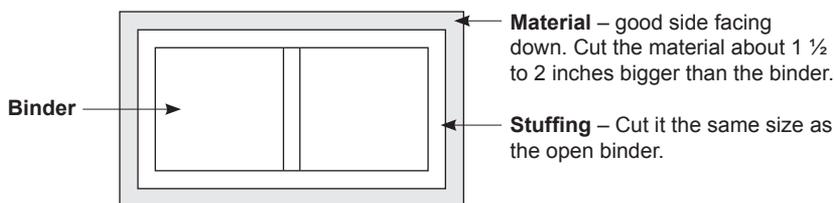
### Padded Binder

#### What you need:

- 3 – ring binder
- Cloth
- Batting / fiberfill / cotton stuffing
- Glue gun
- Scissors
- Page protector

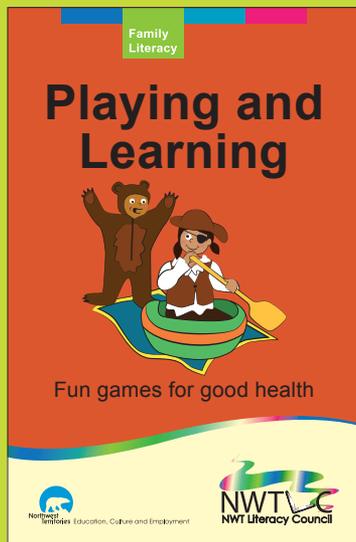
#### What to do:

1. Gather your supplies. Choose your cover material depending on what the book will be used for – baby book, Christmas, etc.
2. Lay the cover material on a flat surface. Put the open binder on top of it. Cut the material to be about 1 ½ - 2 inches larger than the open binder.
3. Lay the stuffing out on a flat surface. Put the open binder on top of it. Cut the stuffing so that it is the same size as the binder.
4. Put the cover material (good side facing down) on a flat surface, put the stuffing on top of the material, and then put the open binder on top of the stuffing. See the diagram below.



5. Put a line of glue on one edge of the inside of the binder with the glue gun. Pull the material over and attach it to the binder.
6. Repeat this for each side. It is best to do only a small section at a time because the glue cools quickly, and won't stick.
7. Cover the inside binder cover. Cut a piece of light cardboard or Bristol board (cereal boxes work well too) so that it is large enough to cover the inside cover.
8. Cut a piece of material that is a bit larger than the cardboard. Use the glue gun to glue the material to the cardboard.
9. Glue the covered cardboard to the inside front cover. Repeat this for the back cover.
10. Fill your recipe binder with recipes! You can print or handwrite the recipes. If you like, add dividers to your binder to separate different recipe sections, for example, 'Traditional', 'New Recipes' and 'Family Favourites'. Or have a different section for each meal, like 'Breakfast', 'Lunch', 'Dinner' and 'Snacks'.





Check out our Playing and Learning booklet too!