



## Talking Points

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### What is Active Early & Healthy Bites?

The Active Early & Healthy Bites guides were developed to support a healthier environment for children in the Early Care and Education setting. The guides were designed to get Wisconsin's youngest children eating nutritious foods and moving more throughout their day. The companion guides have been created for early care and education professionals to implement best practices for childhood physical activity and nutrition in their programs.

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### Why Early Childhood?

Over 30% of Wisconsin's low-income 2 to 4 year olds are overweight or obese; a statistic that more than doubles for Wisconsin's adults. We have to start early to encourage healthy habits for life and truly prevent obesity.

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### Why Early Care and Education?

Wisconsin has the capacity to serve 170,000 children in regulated child care programs. Children average more than 31 hours per week in child care. With so many children engaged in early care and education, it's an important environment for nutrition and physical activity.

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### How can Active Early & Healthy Bites benefit children?

Healthy foods and active bodies are a foundation for early learning. Movement benefits children's brain development, vision and hearing and muscle coordination, while proper nutrition benefits children's physical growth, immune system and brain development. Children who are regularly active and well-nourished are more likely to maintain a healthy weight and feel better about themselves.

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### How can Active Early & Healthy Bites benefit programs?

Healthy kids are happy kids. Children who are active and well-nourished are more alert and ready to learn, have energy to play and grow and have fewer behavioral problems. In fact, programs that have increased physical activity, have experienced a decrease in disruptive behavior. Additionally, when programs implement nutrition and physical activity policies, they are letting families know that nutrition and physical activity are valued and are a priority.

For electronic versions of the guides and other resources, visit:

<http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/health/physicalactivity/Sites/Community/Childcare/index.htm>

# How to use the guides...

## Where to Start

At the beginning of each guide there is an introduction. This presents information on why early care and education is such an important setting for the development of healthy habits and presents vocabulary that users will need to know. It also describes how nutrition and physical activity fit with the other major early childhood initiatives, like YoungStar, licensing, Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards and The Pyramid Model of Social Emotional Development.

Next, there are sections that describe the cycle of quality improvement. Each guide has a self-assessment to help programs know what they are doing well and what areas could be improved. Next the program sets concrete, measurable and realistic goals using the quality improvement plan. There are examples of quality improvement plans in each guide. The next section will help with implementation. Then, programs start over again assessing their progress.

## Take Action

Each guide has a Take Action section that will give programs strategies and tips for improving childhood physical activity and nutrition. Here's a layout of the sections in each guide and what can be found in each section.

### **Active Early includes the following sections:**

- \* Physical Activity Recommendations
- \* Development
- \* Child Assessment
- \* Daily Routines
- \* Environment
- \* Resources
- \* Business Practices

### **Healthy Bites includes the following sections:**

- \* Nutrition for Children Ages 1-12
- \* Nutrition for Infants
- \* Nutrition Environment

### **In each section, you will find:**

- \* An Overview of the Topic
- \* Quick Tips
- \* Activity Ideas
- \* Inclusion
- \* Cultural Competency
- \* Tools included in the Appendix
- \* Engaging Families
- \* Engaging Communities

### **In each section, you will find:**

- \* Serve These, Instead of These Recommendations
- \* Rationale (Why?)
- \* Action Steps (How?)
- \* Sample Program Policies

## Appendix

Lastly, each guide has an appendix that is full of hands-on tools for programs to use as they implement strategies for improvement.