

Fit WIC Families:

Activities for Learning about Nutrition and Physical Activity

Inter Tribal Council of Arizona, Inc.
WIC Program
2214 North Central Avenue, Suite 100
Phoenix, Arizona 85004



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Welcome to the Nutrition and Physical Activity Fun for WIC Families Resource Manual!

This manual was designed to:

- Introduce nutrition and new foods to preschool children in WIC
- Provide opportunities for physical activity in WIC
- Help caregivers establish good feeding relationships with their children
- Help make WIC a fun place to visit and work
- Improve coordination and partnerships with other programs

Family-centered Approach

The activities in this manual are designed for families. Although the manual is divided into three sections, a preschooler section and a caregiver section, the optimal format for providing the activities to families is to provide the sessions together. However, the activities may also be offered separately.

Caregiver Section

The caregiver section is designed to be provided in a facilitated learning style. This means that the staff person is merely guiding the discussion, but the participants in the group are instructing each other through the discussion.

Preschooler Section

Each activity includes both nutrition and physical activities and is designed for the preschool age group. An entire activity should take about 30 minutes to complete with a group of 4-6 children and 1-2 adults. Each instructional sheet includes information on what you will need to prepare for the activity, a description of each activity and any safety concerns to be aware of. A section on activities for children is also provided in the preschooler section.





Preschoolers love to learn about things. They will often ask lots of questions and let you know about all of the things they are discovering about the world around them. WIC can provide a great opportunity to help preschoolers learn about food, nutrition and activity.

Preschoolers are a fun group to work with. Since we often don't have a lot of experience in working directly with preschoolers in WIC, it is important for us to learn a little about them first.

About preschoolers

Preschoolers are full of energy. They use this energy to explore the world and develop their skills. Since preschoolers are still developing skills, some may have difficulty running, jumping, etc. But remember, all children have different abilities. It is normal for one child to be able to jump on one foot while another child of the same age can hardly jump on two feet.

Activities with Preschoolers

Preschoolers are usually ready to join in on the fun and do so with an abundance of energy. However, some preschoolers may feel uncomfortable participating in the activities. If they don't want to join the group, don't force them. Let them join when they feel like it. It helps to not be too intimidating. You can help by getting down to their level by kneeling or sitting on the floor. Try to have a moderate amount of stimulation. Too many things going on, too much noise and too many people can sometimes frighten children.

Always observe the division of responsibility in feeding children during the food preparation activities. The caregivers or adults are responsible for providing the food. The children are responsible for choosing which foods to eat, whether or not to eat and how much to eat. The food can be offered to the child, but children should not be encouraged or cajoled into tasting the foods. Snack time should focus on the social interactions such as pleasant conversation with others rather than on the food being eaten.

Preschoolers have short attention spans. Don't expect them to be able to pay attention for long periods of time. They also tend to move around quite a bit. Expect them to stay in their own space, but don't expect them to sit perfectly still.

It is important to set some simple rules with your group of preschoolers. A list of rules is on the next page.

Listen to the person talking. Tell the children that they need to listen to whoever is talking. They should not talk when another person is talking.

Stay in your space. Have the children spread out their arms. Tell them this is their space. They should not go into anyone else's space and no one should be in their space.

Play safely. Tell the children that you don't want them to get hurt. They should not run or climb on things.

Take turns. Remind them to take turns and share.

Dealing with Misbehavior

Sometimes preschoolers may misbehave during the activities. If a child misbehaves, you can firmly tell him that his behavior is not allowed. For example, if a child climbs onto a chair and stands on it, you can say, “Johnnie, please stand on the floor. We don’t stand on chairs, it isn’t safe.” If a child continues to misbehave he should sit out for a few minutes. Certain behaviors are unacceptable such as purposely hurting another child, in this case the child should not be allowed to participate in the group. You can tell the child that the behavior she used is not allowed and she cannot be in the group if she does that.

Tips for Children’s’ Activities

- Set rules with children in the beginning.
- Be extra enthusiastic about what you are doing.
- Give praise to individual children often. “I like the way you are jumping in one place.”
- Smile frequently.
- Have fun with the kids.
- Participate in the activities with the children.
- Encourage the caregivers to join in.
- If you notice children aren’t enjoying an activity, change it a little.





CHILDREN'S RULES

★ Listen to the person talking.



★ Stay in your space.

★ Play safely.

★ Take turns.





Preschooler Activity



Learning Objectives

- To understand the signals the child's body sends when they are hungry or full.
- To be able to tell if the child's own stomach is hungry, full or satisfied.
- To introduce children to new foods or new ways to prepare foods and food preparation.

Supplies You Need

- The Hungry Caterpillar Book
- Soap
- Paper Towel
- Jug of water
- Paper plates
- Small cups
- Recipe ingredients
- Bowls or plates
- Knife
- Cutting board

Welcome

Greet each child and know each child's name. Use name tags if you need to. Tell the children your name. Have puzzles and other toys for children to play with while they are waiting for everyone to join the group.

Group Time

Read the book *The Hungry Caterpillar*.

Talk about the book with the children. Ask the following questions:

- The caterpillar must have been very hungry at the beginning of the story. What does your stomach feel like when it is hungry?
- How do you think the caterpillar felt at the end of the story? What does it feel like when your stomach is full?
- How do you know when it is time to stop eating?
- When do you know that you should eat something?
- Have each child tell how his stomach feels now-hungry, full or in-between.

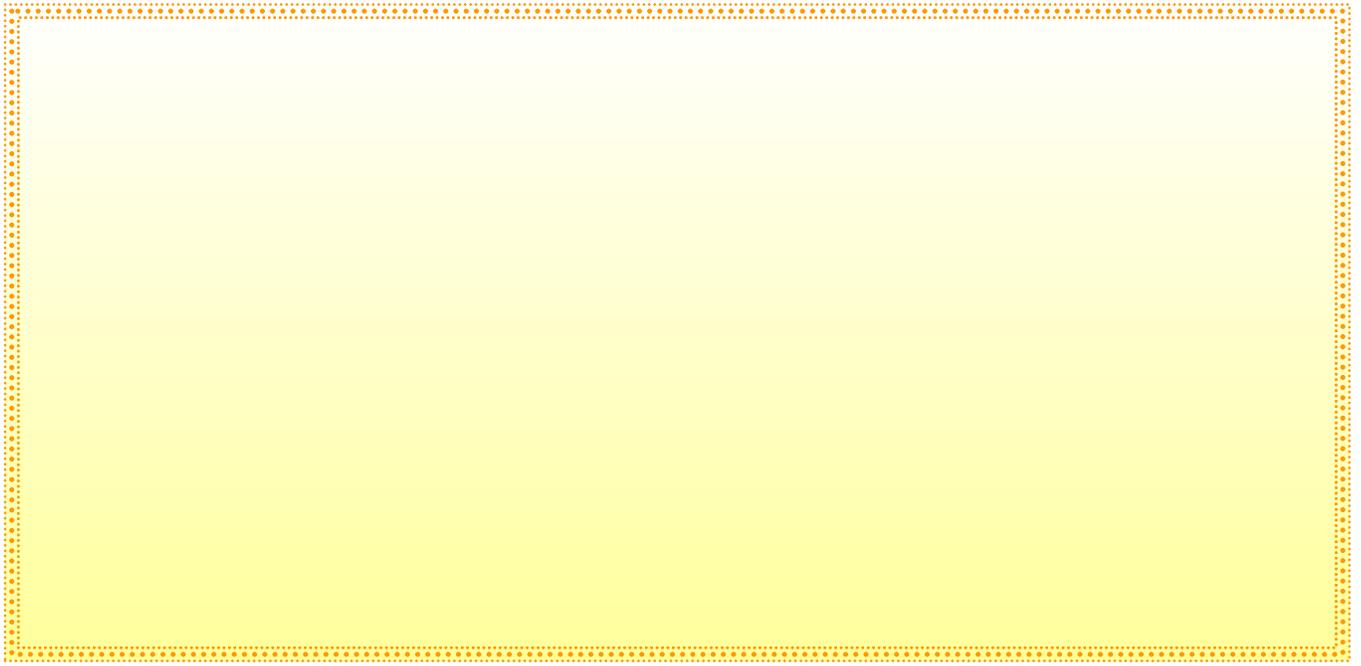


Physical Activity

Play some activities from the *Sport for Fun Guide* for about 10 minutes.

Cooking Time

Let the kids know that they will be making *Funny Fruity Pizzas!* Have all children wash their hands. Stress the importance of handwashing.





Preschooler Activity

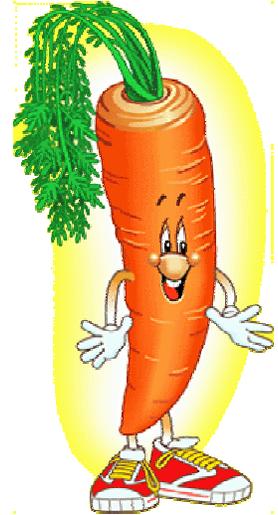


Learning Objectives

- To understand where carrots come from and how they grow.
- To introduce children to gardening.
- To allow children to experience different types of carrots and ways to eat carrots.
- To introduce children to food preparation.

Supplies You Need

- 10 Crunchy Carrots tape
- The Carrot Seed Book
- Package of carrot seeds
- Raw carrots with tops
- Peelers
- Mixing Bowls
- Soap
- Jug of water
- Small cups
- Paper towels
- Paper plates



Welcome

Greet each child and know each child's name. Use name tags if you need to. Tell the children your name. Have puzzles, toys for children to play with while they are waiting for everyone to join the group.

Group Time

Read the book the Carrot Seed.

Ask the following questions:

Show the children carrot seeds. How did the little boy feel when his carrot seed didn't grow?

Look at the picture that shows the top of the carrot sticking out of the ground. Where do they think the orange part is?

Have they ever grown a carrot?

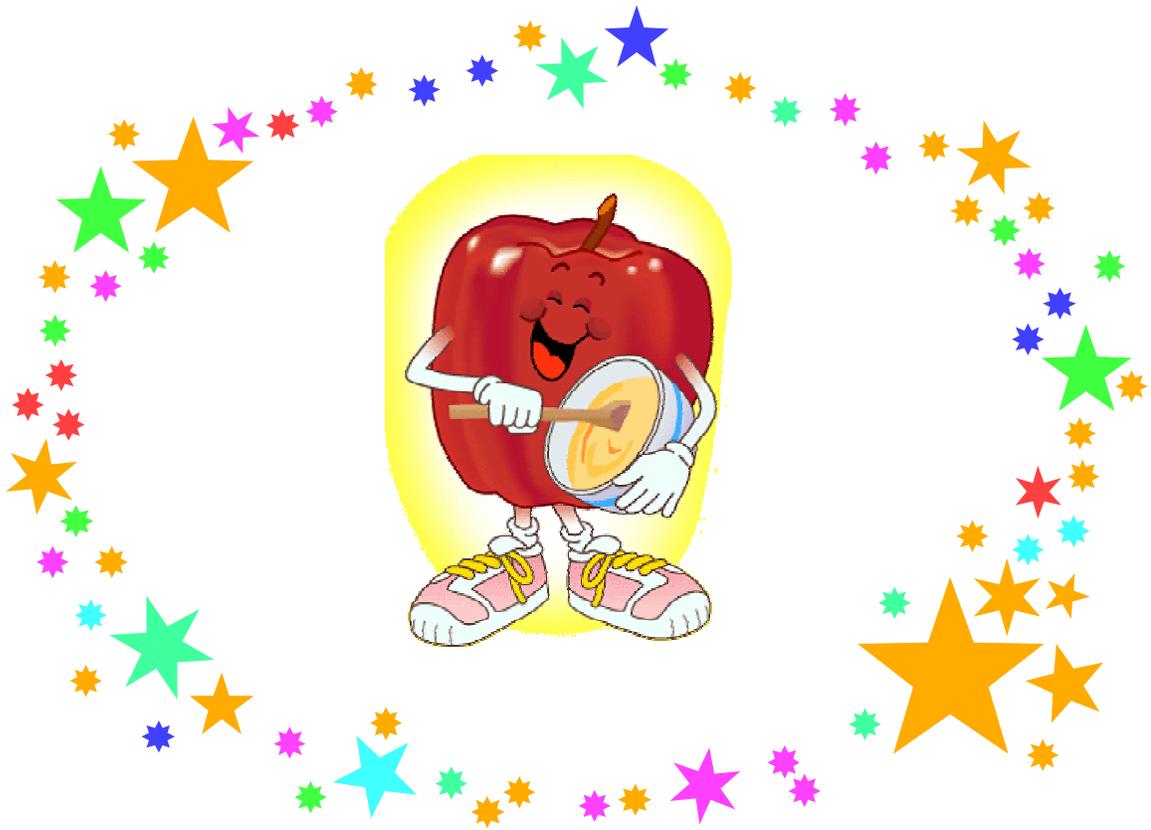
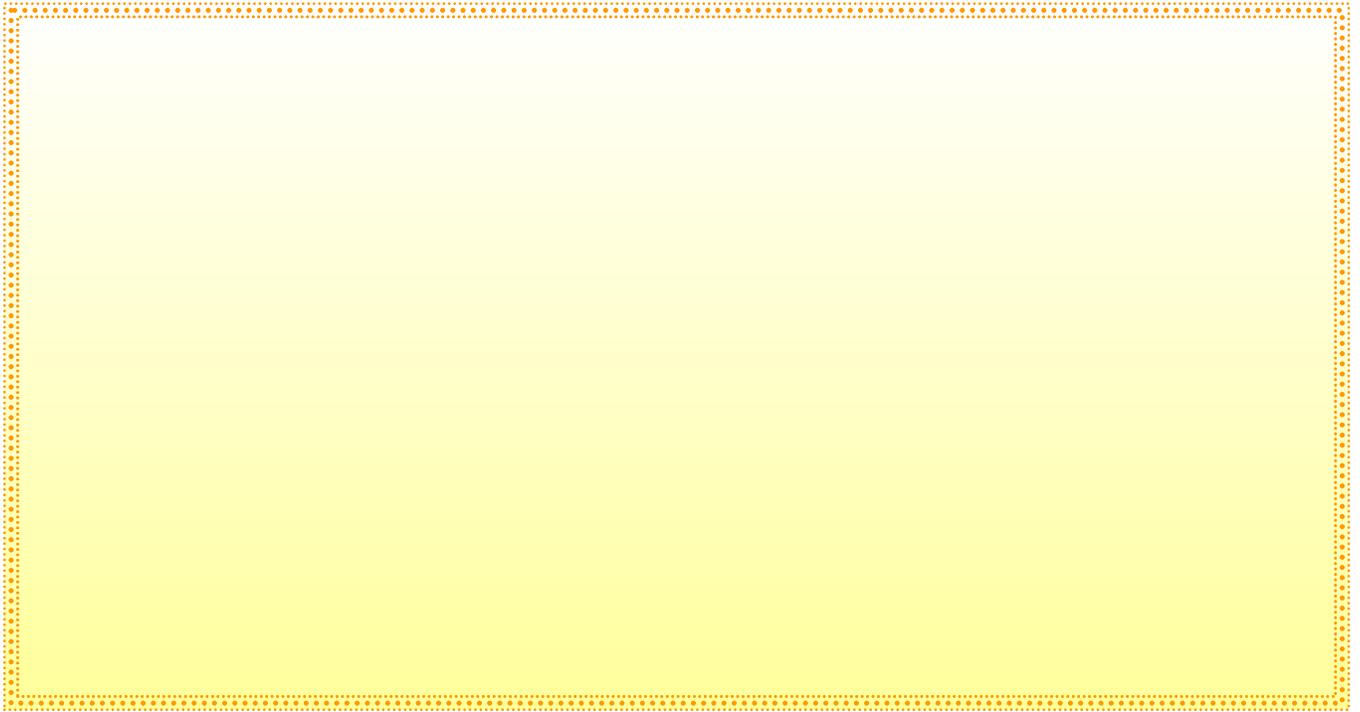
What do they think the boy did with the huge carrot?

Physical Activity

Play activities from the Sport for Fun Activity Guide for 10 minutes. Try to use an activity with music and play the 10 Crunchy Carrots song.

Cooking Time

Let the kids know that they will be making trying during kinds of carrots with Peanut Dip! Have all children wash their hands. Stress the importance of handwashing.





Preschooler Activity



Learning Objectives

- To understand that we need to eat 5 fruits and vegetables a day.
- To introduce children to new vegetables.
- To introduce children to food preparation.

Supplies You Need

- Oliver's Vegetables book
- Mixing Bowls
- Soap
- Paper towels
- Jug of water
- Small cups
- Paper plates
- Different fresh vegetables (spinach, squash, potatoes, corn on the cob, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage)

Welcome

Greet each child and know each child's name. Use name tags if you need to. Tell the children your name. Have puzzles, toys for children to play with while they are waiting for everyone to join the group.

Group Time

Read the book Oliver's Vegetables.

Ask the following questions:

Did Oliver like vegetables in the beginning of the book?

Show the children some different vegetables. Ask them if they can name them.

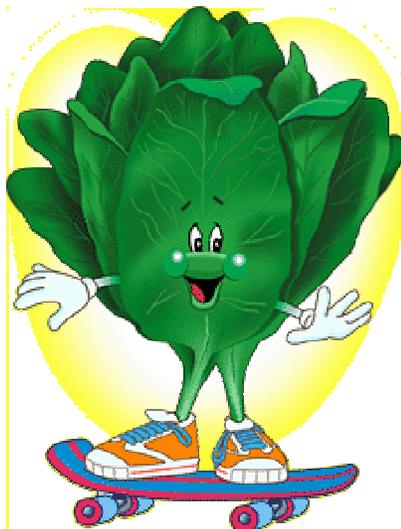
What vegetables have you tasted? Carrots? Peas? Cabbage? Spinach? Broccoli? Squash? Corn?

Physical Activity

Play activities from the Sport for Fun Activity Guide for 10 minutes.

Cooking Time

Let the kids know that they will be making trying during kinds of carrots with Peanut Dip! Have all children wash their hands. Stress the importance of handwashing.





Preschooler Activity



Learning Objectives

- To understand that activity is healthy and fun.
- To introduce children to new foods.
- To introduce children to food preparation.

Supplies You Need

- Blender
- Jug of Water
- Small cups
- Ingredients for recipe
- Soap
- Spoons or straws
- Blender
- Paper towels

Activities

Greet each child and know each child's name. Use name tags if you need to. Tell the children your name. Have puzzles, toys for children to play with while they are waiting for everyone to join the group.

Group Time

Physical Activity

Play activities from the Sport for Fun Activity Guide for 20 minutes.

Cooking Time

Let the kids know that they will be making trying during kinds of carrots with Peanut Dip! Have all children wash their hands. Stress the importance of handwashing.





WIC DISCUSSION GROUPS

Guidelines, Concepts And Techniques Which Encourage Clients To Participate In WIC Nutrition Education Discussions

Adapted from the Southwest Regional Teleconference, Texas Department of Health

Providing discussion sessions for WIC participants is an attempt to provide them with a more meaningful nutrition education experience that involves interactive learning. As the WIC Nutritionist or paraprofessionals, you will be the facilitator and moderate a group conversation style discussion.

The WIC participants take on an active role in this learning process by letting you know what information they need at this stage of their life (or their childrens'), and by sharing with you and other members of the group what they have experienced. Learning becomes more effective when they learn from each other as well as from the information you can share with them, especially since it is information relevant to their needs. Sessions will vary in content and style, depending on the session objective(s), the specific topics that the participants bring up, and personalities of the participants involved.

Here are some specific guidelines and techniques to help your facilitation of WIC Discussion Groups:

Build Your Group From Within.

Assure the members that this is their group, and that it will be structured to fit their needs and concerns.

Establish Group Norms or “Ground Rules.”

For example, set the time, agenda and length of sessions; establish rules on confidentiality and sharing of group responsibilities; and clarify procedural issues, especially listening to others and respecting ideas or comments of others. Allow the group to establish its own norms, which need to be acceptable to all members of the group.

Begin Each Session with an Icebreaker.

This not a rigid rule, but often useful in many groups. For example, you could use an “icebreaker” where every member of the group shares—perhaps a brief statement of who you are, the child’s name and age, any special needs of the child, and anything new that has happened over the last month. The main objective is to help participants feel comfortable and safe in expressing their concerns.



Delivering the Opening Question.

Silence and hesitancy are normal in the early stages of a discussion. Before or after delivering your first open-ended questions (end below), you can prepare the group for this usual period of silence by telling them it's okay to take a moment to think of their response. If the silence continues past what you would consider to be normal, you can ask or guess aloud about what it may mean. Also, you can voice the fact that "it's sometimes hard to be that first to respond," or pick someone you know will be comfortable answering the question.

Ask Open-Ended Questions.

This is a skill that gets people involved in describing their own experiences as they relate to the session objective(s). A conversation should then develop that flow naturally and spontaneously. Asking open-ended questions is the most direct way to find out what is that particular WIC participants need to talk about. These questions must be worded so that people do not feel they are being interrogated, yet should enable you to find out important and specific information.

An open-ended question is one that cannot be answered by a "yes" or "no" which would only give you only minimum of information and close the conversation. There are no right or wrong answers to open-ended questions. Open-ended questions require more informative answers and are the same questions a good news reporter asks: Who, What, When, Where, Why, How, How Much, How Often.

In asking open-ended questions, you must take care not to pose too many questions in sequence which can make people feel they are being interrogated. If you set up a friendly atmosphere from the beginning, this will encourage participants to talk on a conversational level rather than just answering a series of questions. Also, balance your use of open-ended questions with the other facilitating skills such as clarifying or focusing.

Guide the Discussion.

To facilitate means to allow things to happen and make them easy. The facilitator is moderator, allowing others speak and then bring topic to a conclusion. At the same time, you must stay in control of the discussion and avoid it becoming a "free for all." If that happens, the quieter people will not have the opportunity to be heard, and no one will learn anything. Here are some specific points to bear in mind when guiding the discussion.

- Guide the discussion by suggesting topic to be discussed, so that it doesn't lose momentum, and keep the topic focused on the session's objective(s).
- Actively encourage participants to give more information and better define their situations, as well as focus on specific concerns. The conversation will need to be "directed" in order to better pinpoint issues and feelings on which the participants would like to concentrate.
- Recognize fears, prejudices, and disagreements, and bring them out into the open.
- Look for feedback – yawns, stretching and other feedback, which indicates whether or not people are listening.
- Avoid letting group members monopolize "air time." To someone dominating the discussion, you can say "your points are really interesting, but we also need to discuss

some other issues. Why don't you catch me after the session, or call me tomorrow, and we can talk some more" – or however you can say this with out embarrassing the person.

- Avoid strong agreement or disagreement over a subject that leaves the impression that there's no sense discussing it.
- Find ways to limit continual complaining or blaming of others.

Encourage Participation.

Ways to reinforce the importance of each participant's contribution and encourage him or her to take part are:

- Focus on the person who is speaking; pay close attention to her (or him).
- If someone speaks too softly, repeat their questions and/or comments to the group before replying.
- Give positive reinforcement and feedback to every person who speaks; a nod of the head or word of praise will encourage that person to speak again.
- Watch for non-verbal signs that may indicate someone else's desire to respond or ask a question.
- Use words that are familiar to everyone; avoid technical or medical terms.
- Check the seating arrangement to make sure the circle will include everyone.

Focus on Topics.

Focusing emphasizes a particular subject that you think would be helpful to the group to explore (or rather, the group has made it obvious to you that they want it to be further explored). Commonly, a specific topic (or topic area) repeatedly surfaces in the flow of the conversation, in which case it may seem natural to further discuss and clarify it. This may happen spontaneously, or as the facilitator, you may need to ask more open-ended questions relating to the specific issue. The purpose of focusing the conversation in this case would be to help everyone better understand then further express their feelings about an issue that they have shown is relevant to them.

Another reason to focus the discussion would be to help make sense of conversation that has ended up rambling, jumping from topic to topic without any sense of clarification, or has become unrelated to the session's objective(s). When the conversation seems to have confused both yourself and the participants, it is time to get things back in focus. To do this, you could select one particular point to repeat or condense a number of points into a selective summary in order to concentrate on how the participants are feeling, how their babies or children have been acting, etc.

Focus On Feelings.

Place primary emphasis on the feelings or experiences of each group member. Avoid debating ideas; this is a place for support and information sharing.

Practice Active Listening.

Some people tend to speak more than listen. Listening is a technique that can be developed beyond the everyday practice we are all familiar with. It means that you must be silent and allow the participants to talk. We are all guilty of sometimes listening with half an ear to the speaker while busily figuring out what to say next, or how to change the subject to something we would rather talk about.

However, in order to help someone, you must listen carefully to what they are saying and avoid the temptation to intervene with your own thoughts and interests. Many times someone has mixed feelings or several concerns, and may need more time to talk before you can be sure of how they really feel. Listening skills can give you this time. Encourage group members to listen to and understand what other group members are saying.

Clarify.

This simply means make a point clear. To do this, you will first need to use your listening skills to help gather enough information about what a person has said to clearly understand their message and to restate what you heard. This involves becoming an “active” listener, encouraging people to respond to your interpretation of their statements and them showing acceptance of what they have said.

Stay With the Speaker.

When one person is speaking, stay with that person until they are finished, rather than allowing other members to interrupt or take the floor. Discourage side conversation.

Accept People as They Are.

Effective learning and comfortable communication can only occur when there is an atmosphere of acceptance. The point here is to learn to accept and respect someone’s feelings without necessarily agreeing with their point of view. Respond to the feelings that are behind the comments being made; realize that you don’t have to “teach” something, but are here to listen to, talk with and learn something from the participants and their experiences.

Dealing With Strong Feelings, Doubts and Disagreements.

Effective learning and comfortable communication can only occur when there is an atmosphere of acceptance. The trick there is to learn to accept and respect someone’s feelings without necessarily agreeing with their point of view. Respond to the feelings that are behind the comments being made; realize that you don’t always have to “teach” something, but are here to listen to, talk with and learn something from the participants and their experiences.

Dealing With Erroneous Information.

When someone’s input to the group discussion includes incorrect information, you can make a statement that emphasizes the worth of their experience and your respect for their decision, whether you agree with it or not. Some possible responses, which avoid embarrassing the person, are:

- “I’m very glad that worked for you. Other people have found that _____ worked better for them.”
- “I’m very glad that worked for you, but all the references we’ve seen do not recommend it”.

- “I’m glad you brought that up. That used to be what was generally recommended, but new research has found that...”
- You’ve brought up a really interesting issue. Let’s look it up in _____ and see what they say about that.
- “That’s too bad. What could you have done differently if you had all the information we have talked about today?”

Summarize the Discussion.

As much as possible, bring ideas together, highlight certain conversations or repeat relevant points, and complete one topic before going on to another. Some groups find it helpful to end the session with each participant sharing what the session has meant to them, and what they learned or discovered during the session. This way, the group can see that their input and shared experiences helped everyone to learn something. It can be particularly valuable for them to realize that they even helped you, the facilitator, learn something new!

Assist Members in Gaining Resources.

Provide sources of additional information such as pamphlets, videos, or by referral.

Above All – Have Fun!

Remember that it takes time for a group to grow and develop trust. Be patient and never define success by the number of people attending the session. Enjoy yourself and the group members, and encourage them to do the same.





Caregiver Activity



Materials Needed:

- Flipchart or board
- Marker or chalk
- Video- “Feeding with Love and Good Sense section”
- Group Rules



Getting Ready

Before class starts, post group rules and write the Division of Responsibility statements on the board or flipchart.

Caregiver’s Job: To provide healthy foods at regular meal and snack times

Child’s Job: To choose which of the foods the caregiver provides to eat. To choose how much of the foods to eat.

Introduction/Ice Breaker

Welcome everyone to the group. Explain the purpose of today’s group meeting. Have everyone say their name and how many children they have and their ages. Also have them tell a story about an unpleasant eating experience they may have had as a child. Go over the group rules.

Show the video.

Facilitated Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that are your job in feeding your children?
2. What things are not your job?
3. What are some things that are your child’s job in eating?
4. Who knows best how much your child needs to eat?
5. What do you think happens when you try to decide how much your child should eat?
6. What do you think happens when you try to decide which foods your child should eat?





Caregiver Activity



Materials Needed:

Flipchart or board
Marker or chalk
Group Rules



Introduction/Ice Breaker

Welcome everyone to the group. Explain the purpose of today's group meeting. Have everyone say their name and how many children they have and their ages. Also have them tell the group what their favorite activity is that they do with their children. Go over the group rules.

Facilitated Discussion Questions

1. What types of activities do your children like to do that gets them moving a lot?
2. Why do you think that it is important to get children to move around a lot?
3. How do you think television affects activity levels?
4. What activities could your children do if it is hot outside? Cold? Rainy? What are some indoor activities?
5. Are there any places you go with your children for activity?
6. How do you think you could get your children to be more active?





Caregiver Activity

Materials Needed:

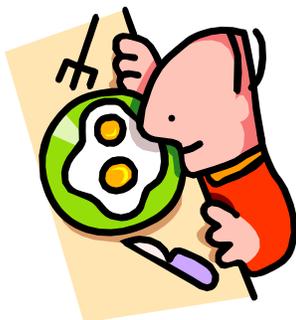
Flipchart or board
Marker or chalk
Group Rules

Introduction/Ice Breaker

Welcome everyone to the group. Explain the purpose of today's group meeting. Have everyone say their name and how many children they have and their ages. Also have them tell the group their children's favorite foods. Go over the group rules.

Facilitated Discussion Questions

1. What foods do you think are healthy for your children?
2. Are there any foods that are unhealthy for children?
3. Should children ever be allowed to have unhealthy foods?
4. How can you make sure that children don't get too much unhealthy food?
5. How do you handle children who want unhealthy foods often?
6. How do you know how much food to serve to a child?
7. How do you know when to give your child more helpings of food?
8. How do you feel if your child doesn't eat all or some of his meal?
9. How do you feel if you have to throw away some food because your child didn't eat it?





Caregiver Activity



Materials Needed:

Flipchart or board
Marker or chalk
Group Rules

Introduction/Ice Breaker

Welcome everyone to the group. Explain the purpose of today's group meeting. Have everyone say their name and how many children they have and their ages. Go over the group rules.

Facilitated Discussion Questions

1. What do you think it means to set limits for children in relation to feeding?
2. Why is it necessary to set limits?
3. How do you set some limits?
4. What are some things that you should set limits on?
5. What are some things that you should not set limits on?
6. How should you handle children that don't want to listen to the rules you have made?

