

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

Nutrition Education



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Good nutrition can go far beyond the cafeteria—into the classroom! Nutrition education can be a separate curriculum or it can be woven into existing standards-based curricula.

Why is This Important?

By teaching the value of healthy eating, nutrition education helps kids grow healthy and stay healthy as adults.

Get Started

The CPS Wellness Policy provides the following requirements for schools:

- All students K-8 must receive nutrition education at all grade levels
- Middle schools must provide nutrition education in at least two grade levels
- High schools must provide nutrition education in two required courses

CPS encourages schools to use resources provided by the USDA and encourages schools to integrate nutrition into other school subjects, including math, science and language arts. Messages about nutrition should be consistent across classrooms and cafeterias.

Teachers can incorporate nutrition education into math, science and language lessons. Additional resources may consist of handouts or worksheets, posters throughout the room or class discussions and presentations.

Cafeterias can display posters, featuring a “food of the month” or “menu item of the week” and conduct taste tests with students to help expand their palates.

School gardens are another way students can learn about nutrition. Fruits and vegetables grown in the school garden can be served in the cafeteria, for taste testing, or even for parents! Serving food grown in school gardens requires training and district approval.

Try these Quick Tips

- Make school lunch a teachable moment.
- Praise children for making healthy choices.
- Challenge students to make their plates nutritionally balanced.
- Eat lunch with your students and encourage them to try new fruits and vegetables.
- Engage students in creating visual representations such as graphs of the number and types of healthy foods eaten during lunch.
- Decorate classrooms, hallways, cafeterias and other common spaces with healthy eating messages. Invite your students to help create these materials.
- Partner with local nonprofit organizations to provide in-school or after-school opportunities for nutrition education. For example, some organizations can help

you get started with a school garden and others can help teachers integrate lessons about healthy food.

- Integrate nutrition education into academic lesson plans. Read about how food is grown, learn about healthy food in different cultures or swap out a flash card featuring French fries for one that features fresh fruit. Work with the school principal to have classroom teachers weave lessons into daily subjects about specific food-related behaviors such as portion size and mindless eating. For example, have students learn about different food groups in science class and then have them create their own healthy meal using MyPlate resources.
- Think about ways you can extend nutrition education into the community. Start a healthy cooking club, partner with local organizations that can provide dietary advice, or host an annual health fair.



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Learn from Success Stories

Calmecca School, Chicago

Calmecca School in Chicago took part in Chef in the Classroom, an initiative inspired by Michelle Obama's call for chefs to get involved in schools. Through this program, a local chef visited Calmecca School and shared a fun veggie-tasting session with students. Since the chef's visit, students have embraced the fresh fruits and veggies they tasted that day. The school has been inspired to form a nutrition education partnership with a local community program to reinforce students' newfound appreciation for healthy eating. A special event can have a long-lasting effect!

Manuel Perez Elementary, Chicago

Manuel Perez Elementary in Chicago extends opportunities for healthy living to students and their families. Through its Bilingual Parent Resource Center, Perez is able to utilize one of its greatest strengths and resources: its engaged parents and community members. Ongoing health, fitness and nutrition workshops presented by the Bilingual Parent Resource Center give parents and community members the knowledge, resources and ability to support Perez in creating a school culture that recognizes the value of student health and its connection to academic success.



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Connect to Resources

The following resources have been reviewed and approved by the Health and Wellness Materials Review Board convened by the Office of Student Health and Wellness at Chicago Public Schools. Please note: This list of resources is continually updated as more nutrition education resources and providers undergo the review and approval process set forth by CPS. To learn more, please contact the Office of Student Health and Wellness at studentwellness@cps.edu.

Angelic Organics Learning Center

learngrowconnect.org

Martha Boyd / 312-243-5151 / martha@learngrowconnect.org

Empowers people to create sustainable communities of soils, plants, animals and people through educational, creative and experiential programs. The Learning Center, a nonprofit organization, is the educational partner to Angelic Organics, a vibrant biodynamic community supported farm.

American Cancer Society

cancer.org

Tanya Kimber / 312-279-7251 / tanya.kimber@cancer.org

The American Cancer Society is the nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy and service.

Chicago Partnership for Health Promotion

uic-cphp.org

Daylan Dufelmeier / 312-355-3659 / daylan@uic.edu

CPHP, founded in 2002, is a unit of the UIC Great Cities Neighborhoods Initiative representing a network of community based interventions designed to improve nutrition and reduce disparities in outcomes associated with nutritional diseases. CPHP provides high quality, age, gender and culturally tailored nutrition education in a variety of venues across the city.

Common Threads

commonthreads.org

312-329-2501 / classes@commonthreads.org

Common Threads is a national nonprofit organization that is committed to educating communities about healthy food choices through the power of cooking. For 10 years, we have been teaching school-based nutrition and health education programs to under-served communities.

Cooking Matters Illinois

ilmaternal.org/cookingmatters

Lilah Handler / 312-491-8161 / lhandler@everthriveil.org

Share Our Strength's Cooking Matters program empowers families at risk of hunger with the skills, knowledge and confidence to make healthy and affordable meals. Through hands-on classes taught by volunteer culinary and nutrition experts, course participants learn how to select nutritious and low-cost ingredients and prepare them in ways that provide the best nourishment possible to their families. Cooking Matters play a critical role in Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry Campaign, a national effort to end childhood hunger in America by 2015.



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The Gardeneers

gardeneers.org

Adam Zmick / 847-421-7074/ adam@gardeneers.org

Gardeneers is an exciting new school gardening program that brings professionals into your school to work with students to start and maintain a school garden. Gardeneers seeks to close the achievement gap by improving student nutrition and engaging students in social emotional learning.

Grow Your Giggle™

growyourgiggle.com or viviledish.com

Lori Lynes / 815-630-4552 / lynes@viviledish.com

Grow Your Giggle is a wellness education program for teachers of elementary-aged children that can be used to complement any nutrition education program being executed in schools. The program helps children establish healthy relationships with food by identifying “sometimes,” “anytime” and “everyday” foods while teaching moderation and portion control. Children learn how to make healthy choices by sharing a daily adventure with Miss Vivi LeDish™! Teachers can utilize information in the daily program or they may have the flexibility to customize their own lesson plans.

The Kid’s Table

kids-table.com

Elena Marre / 773-235-COOK (2665) / elena@kids-table.com

The school programs are designed to promote healthy eating by teaching age-appropriate culinary skills, exposing kids ages 4-18 to a variety of wholesome ingredients and encouraging good food choices. Students get to participate in every part of the process – from chopping, grating and rolling, to enjoying the fruits of their labor. With lots of smelling, touching and tasting along the way, even the pickiest students are tempted by their creations!

The Kitchen [Community]

thekitchencommunity.org

Steve Clark / 773.339.7642 / steve@thekitchencommunity.org

Established in 2011 as the philanthropic arm of The Kitchen restaurants to connect kids to nutritious food by creating Learning Gardens in schools and community organizations across America. Jen Lewin Studios designed the Learning Garden as an easy, affordable, scalable school garden solution; it is an attractive outdoor classroom and experiential play space with edible vegetables. Learning Gardens are designed to be places kids want to play and teachers want to teach, thereby helping to decrease childhood obesity, improve academic performance, and strengthen communities.

Midwest Dairy Council®

midwestdairy.com

Sandra Brown / 773-994-0531 / sbrown@midwestdairy.com

Midwest Dairy Council, an affiliate of National Dairy Council, is dedicated to dairy nutrition research and education, and is committed to child health and wellness through our collaborative program, Fuel Up to Play 60, an in-school nutrition and physical activity program, designed to engage and empower youth to take action for their own health by implementing long-term, positive changes for themselves and their schools.



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Purple Asparagus

purpleasparagus.com

773-991-1920 / info@purpleasparagus.com

Purple Asparagus educates children, families and the community about eating that's good for the body and the planet. We bring delicious, nutritious hands-on adventures to schools, community organizations and farmers' markets throughout Chicagoland.

Seven Generations Ahead

sevengenerationsahead.org

708-660-9909 / act@sevengenerationsahead.org

Founded in 2001, Seven Generations Ahead's mission is to promote the development of ecologically sustainable and healthy communities. SGA works with local government, community and private sector leaders to help communities make the changes they need to create a healthy and sustainable future. Through community-wide sustainability planning and implementation, educational conferences and consulting, and school-based zero waste and farm to school programming and consulting, SGA is a catalyst for local community solutions to global environmental issues.