

*The Home of Wisconsin's Family to Family Health Information and Education Network
in Partnership with the Wisconsin Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs Program*

Health and Nutrition for Your Child with Special Needs



Summer is the time of fresh and abundant fruits and vegetables, trips to the farmer's market and feeding our children or youth more snacks and meals away from their usual school environment.



Eating healthy and nutritious food is important for all of us, including children with disabilities or special health care needs. However, there can be many challenges and barriers. Some children with special needs have food sensitivities, have a restricted diet or may have challenges with chewing and swallowing. Some medications can impact a child's weight or appetite. In addition, getting regular physical activity to burn off extra calories may be more difficult, or impossible, for some children with special needs.



However, with more nutrition information and a little creativity, many families have been able to find ways to give their children a more nutritious (but still affordable) diet as part of improving their family's overall health and wellness.



Did you know that obesity rates for children with disabilities are **38%**¹ higher than for those without a disability and for adults the obesity rate is **58%**¹ higher for those with a disability? This provides one more important reason to start improving our children's diet while they are young. It can also set the stage for lifelong healthy eating.



Below are a few suggestions for moving toward a more nutritious diet for children/youth with special needs. Keep in mind that making small changes to your child's diet and routines can really add up.

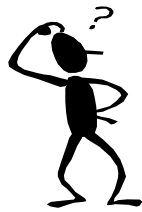


- **Offer more water** and decrease the amount of fruit juices, sugary sodas or other sweetened drinks. Your family will feel better, stay hydrated and save money.
- **Provide breakfast!** If your children wait until they are starving they will be less likely to make wise food choices. Try replacing whole milk with low fat or non-fat milk, and sugary cereals with whole grain cereals and bread.
- **Cut back on foods high in fat, salt and added sugars.** Examples include pizza, ice cream, most fast food, hot dogs, fries, etc. and replace them with more whole grains, fruits and vegetables. Make those high calorie foods a once-in-a-while treat for your kids.
- **Watch portion size**, especially when eating at a fast food restaurant. If a larger portion is more affordable, share it with one or two others. Keep in mind that children's meals may not be the healthy choice.
- **Be adventurous!** Try new fruits, vegetables and whole grains. If you have a farmers market in your community, take your kids and buy food they have never eaten before! There are several farmers markets around Wisconsin that accept SNAP (FoodShare) so this can be a more affordable way to shop for food (see the USDA site - <http://search.ams.usda.gov/farmersmarkets/> for details).

We also encourage you to talk to your child's primary care provider about ways to improve your child's nutrition. Go to Alliance for a Healthier Generation for details on talking to your doctor at www.healthiergeneration.org/live_healthier/everyday_health/talk_with_your_doctor/

1. CDC's Disability and Health - <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/obesity.html>

To learn more go to the listing of tools and resources for health and nutrition (page 3).



Did You Know? Now You Know!

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Children with Disabilities

WEB WATCH

For additional resources related to the articles in this newsletter, you can visit the following sites:

National Office of Family Voices

www.familyvoices.org

Family Voices of Wisconsin

<http://fvofwi.org>

MyPlate (USDA site)

<http://myplate.gov/>

Let's Move

www.letsmove.gov/eat-healthy

Wisconsin Nutrition, Physical Activity and Obesity Program

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/physical-activity/

Social Security Administration's

Understanding SSI for Children

www.socialsecurity.gov/ssi/text-child-ussi.htm

What is SSI?

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a publicly funded program, run by the federal Social Security Administration (SSA), that provides monthly income to a child or adult who has limited income, limited assets or resources **and** is disabled, blind or elderly.

What criteria does Social Security use to decide if my child is eligible?

A child must have a physical or mental impairment (or combination) that results in a **marked and severe limitation** in functioning, and the condition must have lasted (or be expected to last) for **one full year** or be expected to result in death.

Can I see what kinds of disabilities/ impairments they consider?

Yes, the Social Security Administration publishes and periodically updates their "**Blue Book**" that lists all disability categories, including descriptions for children. The SSA may also consider rare conditions that are not listed.

The Blue Book is available at www.socialsecurity.gov/disability/professionals/bluebook/ChildhoodListings.htm

What is the process for determining if my child is disabled?

The Disability Determination Bureau, within the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, is responsible for making the medical decision for Wisconsin residents applying for SSI.

After you have filed the SSI application with the Social Security Administration and they have found your child eligible for the non-medical requirements (your income and resources are not too high for eligibility), the Disability Determination Bureau will collect medical information from your child's doctors, therapists and school. Disability examiners and medical professionals evaluate the information to decide if your child is disabled based on SSA's definitions.

What happens when my child turns 18?

All children need to be reassessed for SSI eligibility when they become legal adults at 18. They will need both a financial assessment and a functional assessment. Check with your local CYSHCN Regional Center (see Regional Center listing) or SSA office to learn the best time to begin this process.

If you have questions about SSI, go to the Social Security Administration's website at www.socialsecurity.gov/ or call

NEWS FROM FAMILY VOICES OF WISCONSIN

Family Voices has several new fact sheets for families. The fact sheets take complex topics and break them down into more understandable information, usually in a question and answer format. The Family Voices website now contains 20 fact sheets. Topics include *Guardianship/Assisted Decision Making for Young Adults, Diapers/Incontinence Supplies and Medicaid, Comparing and Contrasting the Family Support Program and CLTS waivers, SSI and Children with Disabilities* and many more! Go to <http://fvofwi.org/publications/fact-sheets/>

The Family Voices of Wisconsin website also have an extensive page on the Affordable Care Act with fact sheets and links to both state and national tools and resources for families who have children with disabilities/special health care needs. Go to <http://fvofwi.org/public-policy/affordable-care-act/>

Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs News

Family Voices of Wisconsin Trainings

Did You Know? Now You Know! provides a comprehensive overview of insurance, including BadgerCare and the Affordable Care Act, long term supports and services, and resources for children and youth with disabilities and special health care needs from birth through young adulthood. *This training is designed for those who are new to systems and supports for their children/youth.*

What's After High School is a broad overview on transition to adult life for youth with disabilities and/or special health care needs. Topics include: envisioning a youth's future in the community; post-secondary education; long term supports; vocational resources; transitioning to adult health care; guardianship and other legal options; living in the community; and the fundamentals of self-determination.

- **Chippewa Falls** - September 29, 5:30 - 8:30pm
- **Dodgeville** - October 20, 5:00 - 8:00pm
- **Whitewater** - October 30, 5:00 - 8:00pm
- **Medford** - November 3, 5:00 - 8:00pm
- **Tomahawk** - November 4, 5:00 - 8:00pm
- **Oconto/Marinette County** - date to be determined.

Check our website for more details and registration information. Go to <http://fvofwi.org/training-and-events/training-dates-and-locations/>

Advocacy/Leadership Training Opportunities

Youth in Partnership with Parents for Empowerment (YIPPE) is a leadership development program for youth with disabilities and their parents to learn about the transition process. Youth and their parents will hear from speakers and take part in hands-on activities in parallel programs. YIPPE sessions will be held on 5 weekends (from Friday at 5:00pm - Saturday at 3:30pm) and will be held in Milwaukee, Rice Lake and Green Bay this year. For more details and registration go to <http://wspei.org/families/yippe.php> or call **1-877-4925**.

Parents In Partnership (PIP) is a leadership development opportunity for parents of children with disabilities. Parents and other caregivers meet together five times during the year to: share their family stories, challenges, joys and triumphs of raising their children. Participants will learn about resources for children with disabilities; explore issues around health, education, policy making, legislation, inclusion, self-determination, family well-being, and IDEA Special Education Law. PIP will be held this year in Danbury. For more details and to register go to <http://wspei.org/families/pip.php>

Partners in Policymaking is a six-session advocacy and systems change training program designed to develop a group of future leaders across the state, who are able to work with legislators and communities on policies that will support the inclusion of people with disabilities. For details go to www.wi-bpdd.org/projects/partnersinpolicymaking/partnersadvocacytraining.cfm



Children and Youth with
Special Health Care Needs

CYSHCN REGIONAL CENTERS

**Call with your
questions!**

Northeast Region

Children's Hospital of
Wisconsin - Fox Valley
1.877.568.5205

Northern Region

Marathon County Health
Department
Wausau
1.866.640.4106

Southeast Region

Children's Hospital
Milwaukee
1.800.234.5437

Southern Region

Waisman Center
Madison
1.800.532.3321

Western Region

Chippewa County Dept of
Public Health
Chippewa Falls
1.800.400.3678

Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council (GLITC)

Lac du Flambeau
1.800.472.7207



Family Voices of Wisconsin

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Summer 2014

Volume 9, Issue 2

This newsletter is funded in part by the MCH Title V Services Block Grant, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through a grant from the Wisconsin CYSHCN Program and with funds from the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau, MCHB grant # is H84MC21690-01-00.

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About Family Voices of Wisconsin

Family Voices of Wisconsin is the home of the Wisconsin Family to Family Health Information and Education Network. Family Voices of Wisconsin is part of a national grassroots network of families and advocates who support children with disabilities and/or special health care needs. We provide information, training and support around health care and community supports to families throughout Wisconsin, including the well received "Did You Know? Now You Know!" training program. Family Voices is dedicated to strong collaborative partnerships between families and essential allies to improve the systems of supports and services for children. A core commitment of Family Voices is to involve and support parents in decision making roles that affect program design and policy recommendations on local, regional and statewide levels.

Feedback Welcome

We want to make sure that this newsletter is an effective resource for you. If you have any comments, or wish to provide news and information for us to publish, please contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org. We look forward to hearing from you!

LIKE US ON FACEBOOK AND JOIN THE FAMILY ACTION NETWORK

LISTSERV (join-fan@lists.wisc.edu)

Would you prefer to have this newsletter emailed to you?

Contact Lynn at Lynn@fvofwi.org