

# ***Inclusive Nutrition Education***

Healthy eating is one of the most powerful tools we have to reduce the onset of disease; therefore, nutrition education should begin at early stages of life. The younger an individual is who starts practicing healthy eating, the more likely he or she is to continue this behavior throughout adulthood. Nutrition education should be accessible to and inclusive of people of all abilities. This means including disabilities in the planning process and ensuring that accessibility is guaranteed throughout implementation. Specifically, instructional techniques in the classroom, how worksheets are created, and demonstrating ways to use adapted kitchen tools and modify recipes for specific dietary needs should be considered. Additionally, chewing and swallowing difficulties can be a common condition in certain disabilities; therefore, a registered dietitian or other qualified health professional who makes recommendations for special therapeutic diets should be utilized. Programs should be designed to reach participants with different types of disabilities and to adapt to their diverse needs.



## **General adaptations while teaching**

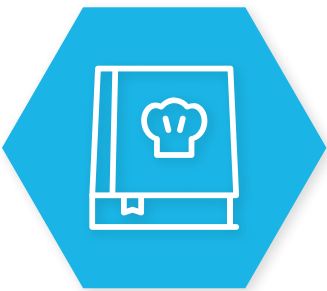
- Speak loudly
- Avoid background noises and eliminate distractions
- Provide extra time to complete the lesson
- Use food models and other objects for students to physically touch and/or visually see
- Allow answers to be given orally
- Speak directly to the student
- Use gestures, facial expressions, and common cues (thumbs up or down) to communicate with students
- Demonstrate tasks or final outcome expected for visual learners
- Consider how long lessons are or how much information is provided; allow sufficient learning time for students with an intellectual disability
- Use person first terminology
- Teach one concept or activity component at a time; this also supports memorization

## **General adaptations for worksheets**

- Provide large pictures and lettering for clear directions or examples
  - Types of foods
  - Types of physical activity
  - Keywords
- Keep directions short and easy to understand; break up instructions into small, attainable steps
- Use high contrast colors and bold fonts

- Provide Braille or different textures
- Define words or directions with pictures
- Consider categorizing foods similar to a stoplight
  - o Green: nutritious foods that should be eaten more often
  - o Yellow: foods that should be eaten less often
  - o Red: calorie-dense foods that should be eaten every once in a while
- Use a hedonic scale (smiley face, neutral face, frown face) to identify good and bad foods
- Use thumbs up for good foods; thumbs down for poor choices
- Allow students to practice knowledge by answering worksheet questions orally
- When comparing different portion sizes, show picture of correct and incorrect sizes
- Determine grams of sugar with sugar cubes
- Reduce answer choices (provide three answer choices instead of four)
- For handouts with song lyrics, use gestures and move lips clearly for students with hearing impairments; provide music or sing loudly and clearly for students with visual impairments

### General adaptations for recipes



- Provide pictures of ingredients
- Provide pictures of utensils
- Keep each step as short as possible (less words/short phrases)
- Provide a demonstration, video, or guide to assist with directions
- Be aware of food allergies and provide substitutes as needed
- Provide utensils with thicker handles
- Be aware of any chewing/swallowing difficulties and refer to a qualified health professional as needed

### General nutrition education links

- Action for Healthy Kids: <http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/game-on/find-challenges/cafeteria-challenges/1212-nutrition-education>
- Nutrition Education: Resources for Elementary School: <https://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nutrition-education/nutrition-education-resources-elementary-school>
- Nutrition Education: Resources for Middle and High School: <https://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/nutrition-education/nutrition-education-resources-middle-and-high-school>
- USDA Curricula and Lesson Plans: <https://fnic.nal.usda.gov/professional-and-career-resources/nutrition-education/curricula-and-lesson-plans>
- Power Panther Pals: [http://www.kansasteamnutrition.org/TN\\_Menus/TN\\_Power\\_Panther\\_Pals.htm](http://www.kansasteamnutrition.org/TN_Menus/TN_Power_Panther_Pals.htm)
- Eat Smart Be Smart: [http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School\\_Nutrition/eatsmart.html#gpm1\\_1](http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/eatsmart.html#gpm1_1)

