This curriculum was created as part of the CHILE Project.

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CHILE includes 16 Head Start centers, families, local healthcare providers, and the surrounding community including local grocery stores.

http://hsc.unm.edu/som/prc/
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**Head Start Teachers:**

The CHILE Team is very excited to present to you and your Head Start the CHILE classroom nutrition curriculum. Enclosed in this binder are tips for successful implementation, followed by the module lessons, teacher evaluation forms, and lesson checklists.

Over the 2007-2008 Head Start school year, the CHILE team tested a variety of nutrition lessons in Head Starts all across New Mexico. During that year, CHILE staff members listened to concerns from teachers, directors, nutrition coordinators, parents, aunts, uncles, and grandparents about their children’s health and eating habits. Based on feedback from all of our communities, the CHILE team developed this curriculum which has since been carried out in several Head Starts in New Mexico. We are excited to share this curriculum with you and your Head Start.

The CHILE team designed the nutrition lessons to fulfill Head Start requirements. Each CHILE nutrition lesson is designed to meet a Nutrition Education Requirement by addressing one or more of the following: cooking experience, encouraging whole grains, taste testing, and trying new foods. In addition, every lesson addresses several of the Head Start Learning Domains. An enrichment is also included in each lesson that suggests (but, does not require) a related activity that will address specific indicators.

Each of the eight modules is comprised of eight lessons which focus on one new vegetable and one new fruit providing children with four exposures (or tasting opportunities) to each new food. Each exposure to a new fruit and a new vegetable is completed in one of four lessons: Food Detective, Taste Testers, and two Let’s Get Cooking lessons. Each lesson requires that children participate in dramatic play by becoming a food detective, official taste tester, or a chef. Part of taking on these new roles involves tasting new foods. Along with the food service staff at your Head Start (who will be providing an additional four exposures to each new vegetable and new fruit), you have the ability to shape the taste preferences of the children in your classroom.

Research has clearly shown that pre-school age children often experience food neophobia, or are hesitant to try new foods. As adults, we often assume that our young children do not like vegetables, for example, because they have refused to try them in the past. While there is no “magic” number, repeated exposures to new foods have been demonstrated to result in children developing a taste preference for that food. Even more exciting, children are more likely to try a new food when an adult models the behavior. By systematically providing opportunities for children to taste new fruits and vegetables and tasting these new foods yourself, you have the opportunity to greatly impact their nutrition now and over the course of their lifespan.

We look forward to working together with you, your Head Start, and your community for the duration of the CHILE project!

Sincerely,
TIPS FOR SUCCESS

PLAN AHEAD!
Space lessons out according to the schedule at your Head Start. Tasting experiences should be separate, so do not combine lessons. Combining lessons or having them too close together may actually lead to a further aversion to that food.

TALK WITH OTHER TEACHERS
Work with other teachers and classrooms at your Head Start to coordinate when lessons will be completed. Some teachers have found it easier when all classrooms do the same lessons on the same day.

COLLABORATE WITH FOOD SERVICE STAFF
Remember that the food service staff will also be serving each fruit and vegetable four times in meals and snacks throughout the module. Work with your foodservice staff to schedule lessons around when they will be offering CHILE foods on the menu so they’re not being offered on the same day. It may also be helpful to introduce a new food in a classroom lesson before the food service staff serves it in a meal. For example, children may be more interested in eating asparagus at lunch if they have already tasted asparagus in a classroom lesson. You may also need to use the kitchen for food storage and to prepare food for your lessons.

GET TO KNOW YOUR GROCER
Don’t hesitate to contact your local grocery store to let them know that you will need a particular food. Even if they don’t typically carry a certain item, they may be willing to order it for you.

PARENTS AS PARTNERS
CHILE take-home materials include ideas and tips for parents to serve these foods at home as well. Remind parents that their children are tasting these new foods at the Head Start and encourage them to try these foods at home.

YOUR OWN TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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DESCRIPTION OF TEACHER EVALUATION FORMS

The CHILE teacher evaluation forms have been developed to obtain information and feedback from you regarding the nutrition lessons. Please fill out each evaluation form.

THE LEFT-SIDE COLUMN INCLUDES:

**DATE LESSON WAS COMPLETED:** Please indicate this on every form.

- **LEARNING OBJECTIVE RELATED TO EXPOSURE TO A NEW FRUIT OR NEW VEGETABLE:** *This is the most critical objective.* Please indicate if children were provided the opportunity to complete an exposure to a new food. Every child may not taste the new food, but indicate (yes or no) if children were given the opportunity to taste the new food. You may need to make slight changes to a lesson plan in order for this objective to be met. For example, a lesson in Module 1 directs your classroom to make a cantaloupe salad with cottage cheese. The objective states that children complete the fourth of four melon tasting experiences. If you were unable to get cottage cheese and prepared another healthy snack with your classroom that included melon, this objective was met. **Remember:** providing systematic tasting exposures to specific foods is the ultimate goal of CHILE. Please modify a lesson if needed as long as it still addresses the first objective.

- **HOW MANY CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM TASTED THE NEW FOOD?** Please indicate the number of children who tasted the new food. Tasting simply means that a child took one bite (can be very small). CHILE recognizes that some children may refuse to taste a new food and this is okay.

- **TOTAL NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN YOUR CLASSROOM:** Please indicate the total number of children who were actually in your classroom during the particular lesson. This number may not necessarily be the number of children enrolled.

- **SECONDARY LEARNING OBJECTIVE:** Please indicate if children were provided the opportunity to complete this second objective specific to the lesson type (Food Detectives, Taste Testing, and Let’s Get Cooking). While this objective is important, it is not as important as the first learning objective.

- **TEACHING OBJECTIVE RELATED TO MODELING:** Please indicate if teacher(s) modeled healthy eating behavior for that lesson. This simply means that teacher(s) participated in all parts of the lesson, including tasting the new fruit or vegetable.

- **ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY:** Please indicate if your classroom completed the suggested (but, not required) enrichment activity at the end of the lesson.

THE RIGHT-SIDE COLUMN INCLUDES:

- **COMMENTS OR REACTIONS MADE BY CHILDREN:** Please comment if children in your classroom made any comments or reacted specifically to their tasting experience.

- **CHANGES MADE:** Briefly describe any changes you made to the lesson plan in order to meet the objectives.

- **DIFFICULTIES:** Briefly describe any difficulties you experienced in completing this lesson.

- **ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:** Any other comments you may have.

- **STAFF LEADING LESSON:** Please list the names of any Head Start staff leading the lesson (including teachers, teacher aides, etc) and the number of other adult volunteers.
INCLUDED IN EACH MODULE IS A NUTRITION LESSON CHECKLIST:

- **DATE LESSON WAS COMPLETED:** Please indicate the date you completed the lesson in your classroom.
- **DATE TEACHER EVALUATION FORM WAS COMPLETED:** Please indicate the date you filled out the teacher evaluation form.

**ATTENTION: TEACHERS!**

Please be prepared to hand in the following at the end of each module:

- [ ] Teacher Evaluation Forms for each lesson
- [ ] Nutrition Lesson Checklist
PREVENTING CHOKING

Why are young children at risk of choking? Children under the age of four may not be able to chew their food well enough and large chunks may be swallowed and plug a child’s airway. Young children also have smaller airways and weaker coughs than older children and adults, making it easier for food to become and stay lodged.

WHAT FOODS ARE YOUNG CHILDREN MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO CHOKING ON?

Foods can be choking hazards based on size, shape, and texture. Foods that are small, round, smooth, and/or slippery (cherry tomatoes, grapes, hot dogs) should be avoided as they can be swallowed whole and are the perfect shape to plug a child’s airway. Chunks of hard or fibrous food (raw vegetables) can also be choking hazards if children are not able to chew the food completely and swallow a piece that is not small enough to go down easily.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends cutting foods into small, easily chewed pieces no larger than one-half inch. Finally, foods that are sticky (spoonfuls of peanut butter) can form to the airway and should be avoided.

The following foods have been identified as choking hazards for young children by the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- hot dogs
- nuts and seeds
- chunks of meat and hard cheese
- whole grapes
- hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- popcorn
- chunks of peanut butter
- raw vegetables
- raisins
- chewing gum

Other foods that can cause a choking incident in a young child include sausage, whole cherry tomatoes, raw carrots, fruit seeds, apple chunks, cherry pits, raw celery, and large chunks of any other foods such as meat, potatoes, raw vegetables, and raw fruits.

WHAT CAN I DO TO PREVENT A CHOKING INCIDENT IN MY CLASSROOM?

Avoid serving foods that are potentially hazardous or prepare them in a way that reduces the risk of children choking on them (for example, slice hot dogs lengthwise and into small pieces no larger than ½ inch; cut a cherry tomato or grape into quarters, and, in general, cut foods into pieces no larger than ½ inch as recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics). Do not rush children to finish a meal or snack. Children should not eat while they are walking, running, or laughing. An adult should always supervise children while they are eating. Finally, learn to provide early treatment by taking a course in basic lifesaving skills and first aid so that you are prepared in case of an emergency.
OTHER IMPORTANT SAFETY MESSAGES

ALLERGIES
If you are unable to complete a lesson due to food allergies, it is okay. Please work with your Head Start’s Nutritionist, Nutrition Coordinator, and Food Service Staff to ensure that all lessons are safe for children with special dietary needs.

COOKING
Children should not be around open flames, hot stoves, or hot ovens. “Cooking Times” are to be completed by a teacher or other Head Start staff member at a later time without the assistance of your class in order to prevent injury. Be careful not to place hot baking pans near the children. Please place cooked items on a serving plate that is cool.

KNIVES AND OTHER SHARP OBJECTS
Please exercise caution when using sharp knives. NEVER keep or leave a knife within reaching distance of a child.

CONTACT INFORMATION
If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a CHILE Staff member at (505)-272-4462.
SAFE FOOD HANDLING PRACTICES

The CHILE team is very excited that Head Starts across New Mexico will be completing lessons that will provide hundreds of children with repeated opportunities to taste new fruits and vegetables. Young children are particularly susceptible to food borne illness. The following tips will help to ensure that safe food handling practices are being followed in order to prevent food borne illness.

HANDWASHING

*Always* wash hands before touching food. This applies to children and teachers. Wash with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Wash the front and back of hands, between fingers, up to the wrists, and under fingernails. Rinse well with warm water. Let’s Get Cooking lessons require child participation. Modify the lesson plans if you have any concerns regarding safe food handling. Carefully watch young children as they may need to wash their hands frequently during an activity if they are touching their nose, mouth, etc.

PURCHASING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Check that fresh fruits and vegetables are not bruised or damaged. Do not purchase fresh cut items that are not refrigerated. If using canned items, do not purchase dented cans.

PREPARING FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Wash hands for at least 20 seconds before handling any food. Clean surfaces and any knives, cutting boards, pans, etc. that will touch fruits and vegetables. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water. WASH skins and rinds that will later be discarded or removed, especially melon. Harmful bacteria can spread through the item when cut if the outer surface is not rinsed. Use only clean towels or paper towels to dry fruits and vegetables. Remove and throw away any bruised or damaged portions of a fruit or vegetable.

KEEP FRUITS AND VEGETABLES SEPARATE

Purchase and store fresh fruits and vegetables separate from any chemicals, cleaning agents, raw meats, poultry, and seafood. Do not use the same cutting board that is used for raw meat. *Remember:* The Food Service workers at your Head Start are very experienced in handling food safely. Work with them to ensure that safe food handling practices are being followed.

STORAGE

Refrigerate all cut, peeled, or cooked fruits and vegetables within two hours. If not refrigerated within two hours, throw away.

The information above is from the Partnership for Food Safety Education. *Visit their website at www.fightbac.org for more information.*