

SUGGESTIONS FOR ENRICHING THE ENVIRONMENT

- For young children who need help eating and drinking, offer support, proper positioning, special equipment, and many chances to practice eating and drinking.
- Offer cups and spoons. Encourage children to feed themselves when they are ready.
- For children being breastfed, provide storage for breast milk, private areas for nursing mothers.
- Give children a safe and comfortable place to sleep.
- Ensure infants' safety by always placing infants on their backs to sleep in cribs that meet current safety standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Avoid putting blankets, bumper pads, and materials other than the child in cribs. Instead, place children in "sleep sacks" or warm pajamas.
- Provide areas for children to rest that accommodate individual sleep needs and individual nap schedules to meet their needs.
- Provide materials for pretend play for shopping, cooking, serving, eating, and cleaning up (nutritious foods in the *dramatic play* area, including plastic fruits and vegetables or empty food boxes, plates, utensils, napkins, wash clothes, etc.).
- Include books about nutritious foods, farm to table, movement, play, sleep, and *routines* that children should do to be healthy.
- Provide activities that encourage children to explore a variety of foods, textures, and use of utensils.
- Allow and encourage children to serve and clean up food.
- Schedule several periods of active physical play each day, with each period lasting thirty to sixty minutes for preschool age children.
- Include time for *child-directed play* and adult-directed activities and participate with children in the activities.
- Provide regularly scheduled outside time and take children out often in all seasons.
- During mealtimes, sit with children and join in eating nutritious foods (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, dairy products, and protein).

