



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, led by Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., is pleased to announce the release of the [2025–2030 Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(DGAs\)](#). Head Start programs play an essential role in helping children develop healthy eating habits early in life, and the updated DGAs provide new opportunities to strengthen Head Start nutrition services, promote health, and reduce the risk of chronic disease across the lifespan.

The U.S. childhood obesity rate is nearly five times higher than some other developed countries. Forming healthy eating habits from a young age is critical for young children’s growth, development, and readiness to learn. Head Start programs have a unique opportunity to shape lifelong habits by offering balanced, nutritious meals and snacks and integrating food and nutrition concepts into classroom experiences and family engagement activities.

## What do the New Guidelines Emphasize?

- **Prioritizing protein at every meal**  
*Examples:* Grilled chicken, eggs, ground beef, turkey slices (without additives), unsweetened yogurt
- **Consuming dairy with no added sugars, including full-fat dairy**

- **Eating vegetables and fruits throughout the day**

*Examples:* 100% fruit or vegetable juice should be consumed in limited portions or diluted with water.

- **Incorporating healthy fats**

*Examples:* Avocado slices, and prioritizing olive oil or butter when cooking.

- **Limiting highly processed foods, added sugars, and refined carbohydrates**

- Highly processed packaged, prepared, ready-to-eat, or other foods that are salty or sweet, such as chips, cookies, and candy that have added sugars and sodium (salt) should be avoided.
- Sugar-sweetened beverages, such as sodas, fruit drinks, and energy drinks, should be avoided.
- Foods and beverages that include artificial flavors, petroleum-based dyes, artificial preservatives, and low-calorie non-nutritive sweeteners should be limited.

- **Prioritizing whole grains**

*Examples:* Oats, brown rice, barley, quinoa, buckwheat; one slice of bread; one tortilla

To support your efforts, you can access the [New Food Guide Pyramid](#) as a visual resource for parents and children. This tool can be helpful for staff professional development, classroom use, and family engagement.

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## Additional Resources

You can find more resources at [realfood.gov](http://realfood.gov), including practical tools and child-friendly materials designed to help programs and

families promote healthy eating habits. These resources are ideal for staff training, classroom activities, and family engagement efforts.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health and well-being of children and families. We appreciate the vital role you play in helping young children develop lifelong healthy habits.



The Office of Head Start (OHS) supports children's growth from birth to age 5 through services focused on early learning and development, health, and family well-being.

👉 Visit [Headstart.gov](https://headstart.gov)

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