

TENNESSEE *Shapes UP*

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences

Healthy Steps

Food and Physical Activity for Preschoolers





What is Healthy Steps?

Healthy Steps is a nutrition and physical activity program for preschoolers designed to prevent childhood obesity. It is part of *Tennessee Shapes Up*, a statewide University of Tennessee Extension initiative implemented by the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences in response to the obesity epidemic.

Unhealthy eating habits and lack of physical activity can begin at an early age. National surveys show that about one in four children ages 2 to 5 are overweight.

Who Can Participate?

Healthy Steps is available to child care centers and pre-kindergarten classes. Centers and classes interested in participating should serve children ages 3 to 5.

What Resources Are Provided?

Training—One of the most important resources provided by University of Tennessee Extension is teacher training. Training includes

- Research-based information on feeding preschoolers.
- Ways to increase physical activity.
- Strategies for implementing *Healthy Steps*.



Curricula—The curricula and resources provided are geared to preschoolers and include both nutrition and physical activity education.

Nutrition content is presented in popular preschool themes, such as

- Alphabet
- How I Grow
- Colors
- Counting
- Fall
- Home and Family
- Shapes
- Spring
- Summer
- Winter

Color Me Healthy, a nationally recognized preschool curriculum, is incorporated into the themes in addition to other resources, such as books and puzzles. Actual food preparation experiences are designed to promote food acceptance.

The physical activity curriculum, *Healthy Strides*, provides lesson plans that encourage active play and skills development. Each activity has been designed to achieve physical developmental milestones that are critical to the growth and development of preschoolers.

Curricula used in *Healthy Steps* meet Tennessee Department of Education's Early Learning Developmental Standards for Voluntary Pre-K and correlate with Head Start Performance Standards.



Young children learn healthy habits through

- Having repeated exposure to healthy foods and physical activity.
- Watching teachers and parents model healthy behaviors.
- Receiving carefully selected rewards for desired behaviors.

Healthy Steps is brought to you by University of Tennessee Extension Family and Consumer Sciences, developers of the successful training program for teachers called **First Steps**. For more information, contact your county Extension Family and Consumer Sciences agent or



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Visit the UT Family and Consumer Sciences Web site at fcs.tennessee.edu.

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