



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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### **National Nutrition Month - Is Your Child Eating Healthy?**

Do you think what your child eats is healthy? According to the Journal of Pediatrics\*, the average preschooler consumes nearly 65 pounds of added-sugar annually, yet only weighs between 30 and 50 pounds. This is one example of how the quality of children's diets is declining. Research shows children naturally eat what they need as long as they are offered healthy choices. So, how do you know if your child is eating healthy?

First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission realizes toddlers and young children eat small amounts frequently, so providing regular meals and snacks is important for their health. However, all children have different appetites and different food preferences. One child might eat a lot more than another, and your child might eat a lot one day and less the next. Snacks help children get the calories and nutrients they need.

During National Nutrition Month, First 5 Butte County encourages parents to choose healthy snacks like fresh fruits, vegetables, unsweetened cereals, tortillas, cheese or yogurt. Iron and calcium are also important for young children.

#### **Iron-rich foods include:**

- Dried peas
- Dried beans
- Meat
- Enriched breads and grains
- Dry cereals that have at least 50 percent of the Daily Value of iron added
- Dark-green leafy vegetables

#### **Calcium-rich foods include:**

- Low-fat milk products
- Lean meats
- Canned fish with bones (such as sardines and salmon)
- Beans
- Tofu
- Broccoli
- Dark-green leafy vegetables
- Calcium-enriched orange juice

Kids can also be picky. They may not like mixed foods like stews or casseroles. They

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may not want their foods to mix or touch on their plates. They may eat a food once, but not the next time it is served. They may need to try a food several times before they like it. All of this is normal behavior for young children.

Parents and caregivers can make mealtimes healthy and fun with the following tips from First 5 Butte County:

- Introduce a new food with one that your child already likes.
- Give fun names to foods, like “little trees” for broccoli.
- Give kids finger foods so they can be independent and practice coordination.
- Allow your child to stop eating when he or she is no longer hungry.
- If appropriate, let your child leave the table for another activity.
- Don't feed toddlers and young children in front of the TV – it can make them anxious.

This month, First 5 California and its partners will launch a groundbreaking public education campaign aimed at parents, family members and caregivers through a series of childhood obesity prevention television ads. The goal is to communicate to parents and caregivers how the health and nutrition choices they make for their children early on adds up over the course of one day, and thereby, over the course of their lives.

To receive more information on the nutritional needs of children, contact First 5 California at (800) KIDS-025. For more information on nutrition or other First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission programs, please call (530) 538-7964 or visit their Web site at [www.buttecounty.net/bccfc](http://www.buttecounty.net/bccfc).

### ***About First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission***

Research shows that a child's brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child's growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. First 5 Butte County Children and Families Commission distributes approximately \$2 million a year in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs.

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\*Kranz, Sibyelle Ph.D, RD, Diane Mitchell, MSRD, Anna Maria Siega-Riz, Ph.D, Helen Smiciklas-Wright, Ph.D. “Adverse Effect of High-Added Sugar Consumption on Dietary Intake in American Preschoolers.” *Journal of Pediatrics* Jan. 2005: 105-111.