

What is BLEND?

BLEND (Better Living: Exercise & Nutrition Daily) is a local coalition working to reduce the epidemic of childhood obesity and improve the health of our children through both physical activity and healthy nutrition.



BLEND is funded through the CentraCare Health Foundation and partners with a number of medical, educational, and non-profit organizations.

Starting Early, Starting Healthy!



BLEND's web site

Learn more about BLEND Beginnings, healthy living, BLEND programming and events at www.BLENDcentralMN.org. The web site also offers healthy recipes for families, games, calendar of upcoming local events and more.

We are very grateful for our board members, community action partners and sponsors. To view our full list, visit:

www.blendcentralmn.org



BLEND

Better Living; Exercise & Nutrition Daily



BLEND Beginnings
A Nutrition and Physical
Activity Program Developed
for Child Care Centers



BLEND Beginnings

BLEND Beginnings is a Nutrition and Physical Activity program developed to encourage and enhance a young child's healthy beginnings. Through the collaborative work of dedicated and experienced early child care providers, nutritionists and educators, BLEND staff created an excellent, age appropriate resource for use with children ages 2-5 years old.

BLEND Beginnings is a research-based program developed to support young children to become active and learn about healthy foods. For example, research shows:

- *Children learn effortlessly through imaginative child's play*
- *Nutrition education during preschool years is essential and may provide a foundation for healthful eating habits that will be maintained for a lifetime*
- *Young children learn to prefer foods that are familiar and favor those presented as "acceptable" in their environment. If children are given the right environmental cues, they will "trust" that environment to be one in which to enjoy new foods.*

Through child's play and active indoor and outdoor play, BLEND Beginnings will help children learn about:

- Their Body -- head, shoulders, knees, toes, heart and lungs, and more.
- Their Five Senses -- sight, taste, touch, smell, and sound.
- How Fruits and Vegetables give us vitamin A (for healthy eyes and skin) and C (to help heal cuts and bruises); grains give us energy; protein helps us grow and build muscles, and dairy keeps our bones and teeth strong.
- Where their food comes from -- a garden, a farm, above ground, under ground, or on a tree.
- Colors -- red, blue, green, yellow, orange, and purple.



Key Units of BLEND Beginnings

My Healthy Body

Connects the human body with Nutrition and Physical Activity - - healthy foods and an active lifestyle promote a healthy body

My Senses

Teaches the senses through healthy food choices and physical activity child's play

My Healthy Foods

Promotes the best foods to make a child grow up strong and healthy

My Food Grows Where?

Incorporates agriculture education to promote wholesome and healthful food choices

Bonus Unit: Color Challenge

Integrates color education with Nutrition and Physical Activity to promote a eating rainbow of healthy foods

Testimonials

Child Care Centers can make a difference in a child's health; they play an important role in their lives and can positively impact their active lifestyle choices and can significantly influence their developing eating habits.

Here is what Child Care Centers have to say about BLEND Beginnings:

- "It's nice to have everything all organized in one binder. The kids enjoyed it! Thank you!"
- "My 3-5 year olds enjoyed the activities, especially My Senses, My Healthy Foods and the Color Challenge units! They loved the songs and poem!"
- "We were happy to be a part of this program—thank you for letting us!"
- "The program adapts very well to all ages—even my 2-3 year olds love the activities!"
- "The picture cards are fabulous!"
- "After using the BLEND Beginnings Program I will always integrate nutrition and physical activity in my classroom!"
- "The program is very easy to use and extremely adaptable."
- "Until I began using the BLEND Beginnings Program—I never realized how important it was to have nutrition and physical activity incorporated in the lessons."

