**ECE214 Week Three Guidance**

Last week we researched and learned about the importance of food safety and menu planning as well as our role as caregivers in planning lunches and snacks for our students.  These essential topics afforded us the opportunity to connect this information to real children we know with malnutrition and obesity health concerns.  Week Three motivates us to think more about the early educator's role in promoting health and wellness of young children, involving parents and the community in children's health and wellness and limiting the spread of illness and infection in early childhood settings.

Throughout this class we have concentrated on the nutritional needs and issues of young children. Referencing the recommended standards and guidelines help us plan healthy snacks and menus for the individual and dietary needs of each preschooler in our classroom.  Our discussions also stressed how important it is to integrate health, safety and wellness in our curriculum so that the children can make connections as they experience learning that is fun.   We must not forget that exercise is also a critical part of the early childhood curriculum. [The American Heart Association](http://my.americanheart.org/professional/StatementsGuidelines/ByTopic/TopicsA-C/Children_UCM_320688_Article.jsp) recommends “all children age 2 and over should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate developmentally appropriate physical activities.” Sharing games, songs, plays, picture books, gardening, and cooking activities can help children become actively involved in healthy choices to  internalize and remember concepts long after the lesson is over. Eating healthy and exercising with young children can be fun! As my motto states, “Creative teaching that we share with others inspires creative learning!"

Teachers have the power to help parents influence their children's health habits by being positive role models. As an article entitled [Children's Nutrition and the Power of Parents](http://children.webmd.com/features/your-childs-nutrition-power-parents) states, "In most families, mom buys the food that's in the house. Dads influence their child's nutrition, too, and it's not just what's cooking in the kitchen. Both parents set the pattern for the family's lifestyle. If mom and dad are oatmeal-and-biking types, their kids likely are, too. If parents are more the chips-and-TV type, that's where you'll find the kids."  In other words, if Mom and Dad are couch potatoes, then the "little ones" are likely to be "sofa spuds." The article goes on to explain ten strategies that parents can do to benefit their children and their health and wellness. It is worth sharing with parents and coworkers.

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This week I would like to share a wonderful picture book called [Wallie Exercises](http://celebritybabies.people.com/2011/03/04/wallie-exercises-a-book-to-get-kids-moving/). Children enjoy listening to their teacher read aloud this simple yet motivating story. The author, Steve Ettinger, shares the importance of exercise with a lazy dog who works out with his elephant trainer. At the end of this tale,  there are step-by-step instructions for some easy-to-do exercises such as "Silly Shark Squats" that kids can try on their own. Ettinger goes on to say that he hopes parents will engage in exercising with their children after reading this book. Opportunities like this open the door for communicating healthful strategies with our students and their parents.

                                                                        
  
My favorite part of teaching is creating innovative strategies to help children make real life connections so that they can think critically, make good choices and help themselves. We want children to understand and have ownership in helping to keep their bodies well by practicing healthy lifestyle choices. . I look forward to “listening” to your thoughts on creating healthy opportunities for young children in our discussions this week as we think critically to be teacher health and wellness ***advocates*** for our children!   
  
As we further examine the health and wellness of the students in our classrooms, we debate the issue of to immunize or not to immunize our children.  The following PBS video examines each side of the story to better prepare us to discuss the benefits and risks of vaccinations with our students' parents. Check out the [Vaccine War](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/vaccine/) as you visit each side of the story.  
                                                              
                                                                                         
  
  
The possibilities of sharing fun recipes with children's and parents are endless. Are you a regular Pinterest pinboard follower? Some of the best ideas from teachers and parents are located on this website as we all strive to make learning fun for our students. Check out this one of many [Pinterest](http://vizedhtmlcontent.next.ecollege.com/http:/pinterest.com/christi1011/fun-and-healthy-food-for-kids/) pages of healthy lunch recipes for children.   
  
  
                                                                                 
Hope you enjoy the topics this week as we continue to learn more and more strategies to promote children's health and wellness with a community of teachers, students and parents who have this common goal.

American Heat Association. Children. Retrieved September 22, 2012 from http://my.americanheart.org/professional/StatementsGuidelines/ByTopic/TopicsA-C/Children\_UCM\_320688\_Article.jsp  
Your Child's Nutrition: The Power of Parents  Retrieved June 16, 2013 from http://children.webmd.com/features/your-childs-nutrition-power-parents?page=3   
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The Vaccine War.  Retrieved June 16, 2013 from  http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/vaccine/     
Fun and Healthy Food for Kids. Retrieved June 16, 2013 from http://pinterest.com/christi1011/fun-and-healthy-food-for-kids/

Discussion One

Several weeks ago, the Smith family enrolled their 4-year-old son, Trevor, in your child care center.  As Trevor's teacher, you have already observed that Trevor does not like to participate in activities that involve running, climbing, jumping, or more than minimal physical movement.  When presented with toys such as a ball or mitt, Trevor seems clumsy and unsure of how to use them, making him reluctant to play with the other children outdoors. Furthermore, Trevor’s parents shared with you that his pediatrician noted Trevor’s weight is above average for his height. His parents often send him to school with his lunch bag full of snacks such as cheese puffs and sugary drinks.  During her initial interview with Trevor's family, Mr. and Mrs. Smith mentioned to you that Trevor spends most of his free time playing handheld video games and watching cartoons.  The Smiths said they would like to spend more time with Trevor playing outdoors, but their work schedules make this very challenging.

1. What health concerns do you have about Trevor based on the information you have about Trevor and his family?
2. How can you encourage Trevor to participate in more physical activities at the center?
3. You have an upcoming parent-teacher conference with Trevor’s parents.  How can you respectfully discuss your concern about the type of snacks he brings to school?

Your discussion post should be at least 200 words in length.