

Mindfulness

Welcome to LiveWell Tots!

Beach Cities Health District is partnering with your child's preschool to educate students about the importance of eating nutritious foods, practicing mindful behaviors, and participating in physical activity in an effort to instill healthy behaviors from an early age. Your child will receive five LiveWell Tots lessons throughout the school year, along with various "extension activities" to help reinforce healthy concepts.

As a parent, you are your child's most important role model. Your encouragement regarding healthy behaviors is vital to support the concepts learned during the LiveWell Tots lessons. Together we can celebrate healthy living and maximizing your child's growth and development.

Our first LiveWell Tots lesson was about Mindfulness. Mindfulness means being in the moment and paying attention to your surroundings and yourself. This concept is especially important for students to understand so that they can better recognize internal cues for hunger and fullness. Children learned about mindful breathing by mindful tasting using all of their senses to identify the different characteristics and qualities of a variety of fruits and vegetables, including mindfully tasting pomegranate seeds using all five of their senses.

Helpful Tips for Mindfulness at Home

Try practicing mindful behaviors with your children to help them focus and regulate their emotions. Here are some tips to help increase mindfulness at home:

Increasing mindfulness through senses:

- Try a mindful tasting exercise by using all of your senses. Ask your child how their food looks, smells, feels, tastes and sounds.
- Take a mindful family walk through the neighborhood or park. Encourage your child to describe the things they haven't noticed before. Designate one minute of the walk where all of you are completely silent while paying attention to the surrounding sounds.

Mindfulness tips to help regulate emotions:

- Use Personal Weather Reports to encourage children to describe their feelings at that moment as if it was the weather (sunny, rainy, stormy, calm, windy, tsunami).
- Encourage calmness by practicing slow, deep breathing
- Create a Happiness Board as a family by printing family photos, drawing pictures of fun memories or cutting out happy scenes from magazines to make a collage. Have everyone share why the images they chose make them happy.

Family Reading Recommendations

A great way to be in the moment with your child is to read together. Look for children's books that effectively promote an appreciation for food and good health.

The following books support the messages from this month's nutrition lesson:

- *My Five Senses* by Aiki
- *Mindful Monkey, Happy Panda* by Lauren Alderfer

Pomegranate Quinoa Salad

1 cup quinoa
3 scallions, thinly sliced on the bias
½ cup chopped parsley leaves
½ cup chopped mint leaves
1/3 cup raisins
1 apple diced
1 cup pomegranate seeds
2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice (1 to 2 lemons)
Salt & pepper to taste
2 tablespoon olive oil (optional)

- Rinse 1 cup quinoa with cool water in a fine mesh strainer until the water runs clear.
- Add quinoa to 2 cups of water and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and continue cooking covered for 12-15 minutes, or until all water has been absorbed.
- Remove from heat, and let stand for 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
- Toss with remaining ingredients and serve warm or at room temperature.

Opening a pomegranate. Cut the pomegranate in half. Place the pomegranate in a bowl of water, loosen the seeds (arils), and then drop them in the bowl. The seeds will sink to the bottom. Use a spoon to scoop out the pieces of white membrane that have floated to the top. Pour the remaining liquid through the strainer. Place the seeds in your favorite dish and enjoy.

