

COMPETITION OF IDEAS AND PUBLICATION

„Health and health awareness through nutrition and movement games“

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In 2006, the NIHD carried out a **national competition of ideas** “Health and health awareness through nutrition and movement games” aimed at preschool child care institutions.

The purpose of this competition was:

- To incite teachers and parents to think more about daily choices, including nutritional choices and behavioural patterns affecting the health and well-being of children.
- To enhance the cooperation between children, parents and personnel of child care institutions.
- To collect examples of good practices (as many as possible) which can be used in daily work with preschool children.

Preparing of the competition of ideas:

- NIHD experts prepared the principles, including the evaluation criteria and the requirements for preparation/submission of works.
- All Estonian kindergartens/kindergarten-primary schools were invited to participate and submit the offer through the county health promoter’s network.
- Children and parents were asked to be included in preparation of games.
- The time frame for submitting work was two months, the works along with illustrating material (drawings, photos) were sent to the NIHD either on paper, by post or by electronic means.



Participants were informed to use following structure:

1. Title of the game.
2. Authors/Institution and contact details.
3. Purpose of the game.
4. Age of participants.
5. Number of participants.
6. Skills to be created/developed by the game.
7. Necessary tools for the game.
8. Description of the game.



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Submitted games had to:

- improve the knowledge and skills of children for making healthy choices about food and nutrition;
- develop positive attitude towards healthy eating and everything related to healthy food;
- promote physical activeness of children;
- develop social skills.

The evaluation criterias for the games:

- conformity of the content with the purposes of the competition;
- extent of participants (children) inclusion;
- need for game tools;
- clarity of the content presentation and game description;
- compatibility of the age and skills of the players.

The games were created in three different categories:

- the board games developing and strengthening healthy nutrition (didactical and developing thinking games);
- the movement games developing and strengthening healthy nutrition and physical activeness;
- other activities and games promoting healthy nutrition (dramatizations, singing games, family events, etc.).

Achievements

49 different games from 20 Estonian preschool child care institutions participated in the competition of ideas. Many of the games were created by team work, engaging also children in this process.

The jury decided to give one main award and six surprise awards.

- The timeframe for submitting the work was two months, award was given to the movement game promoting healthy nutrition, which was dynamic, amusing and contained the elements of active movement.
- “The game of food pyramid” stood out among other developing and board games by interesting interpretation of the subject and the best development.
- Other works submitted to the competition included performances, family parties, health events, singing and outdoor games which can be carried out either at the territory of kindergarten or on the hiking trail.



Publication „Health and health awareness through nutrition and movement games” was prepared to present best examples of the games promoting healthy nutrition.

- In order to improve the knowledge/skills of teachers, we added separate chapter regarding proved opinions about healthy nutrition into the book. The background information helps to conduct discussions and games with children in relation to this theme and improve the knowledge of the kindergarten personnel in this area.
- Most of the games have been prepared for the age group from 3 to 7 years; it is possible to play some games also with 2-3 year old children.
- The personnel of preschool child care institutions can use the publication for teaching and educational activities and it is possible to use the games in the human studies lessons in elementary schools when dealing with the healthy nutrition topic.
- The book was published and distributed to all Estonian preschool child care institutions in 2007. Additional publication was published and sent to all elementary schools at the end of 2008.
- Survey conducted by NIHD in 2009 showed that Estonian preschool child care institutions use the games from publication in everyday practice and are satisfied with the publication.

Success of the first competition gave idea to organise new competition in 2008, which was called “Health and safety in teaching and educational work of kindergarten”. Based on the results from this competition a new publication of best practices will be made.

Valuable experiences and interesting ideas from Estonian kindergartens regarding dealing with the theme of healthy nutrition and movement through different games are helpful for the ones who care about the well-being and health of children.