

# Power is in the kitchen: Children nourished through food, family, relationships

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*We must feed ourselves to be sovereign, free and healthy. As part of my role as consultant nutritionist to Siletz Tribal Head Start, I offer information for families and remind the readers that I am available to support Head Start families by discussing nutrition-related concerns via telephone at no charge through the program (ask your teacher or the director for support from the nutritionist).*

The kitchen is a power center because that is where people are nourished through food and relationships. Kitchen and child-rearing duties have been primary roles for women. In modern times the value of this role was diminished. It is time to take back the power of the kitchen!

Nutrition is a community concern. Everything that is important in Head Start is also important to the community. Nutrition is the foundation of health. Health requires access to wholesome, safe, clean foods. Embracing the concepts of traditional foods and eating close to nature supports optimal nutrition for healthy growth and development for all concerned.

It appears to me that the loss of traditional practices has contributed to growing health problems. I believe that an important way to prevent and treat diabetes and other chronic disease is to transition back toward this traditional diet or to a holistic approach with nutritionally equivalent foods.

Traditional foods have many advantages, yet in many ways are a challenge due to limited access to land, potential con-

tamination and limited time (especially for busy Head Start families). Traditional foods include nutrient-dense foods that are low in starch and sugar.

For many busy families, nutritious foods need to be easy to prepare. Nutritionally equivalent foods can bridge the gap toward traditional foods. I invite families to move toward culturally optimal nutrition.

Please note: Traditional foods do not include wheat, milk or sugar (also known as white flour, milk, cheese and soft drinks). People might be confused by the USDA commodity foods that are in direct conflict with traditional foods.

In the kitchen children can be empowered to learn to cook, to help and to connect with family to share what happened each day and more. The kitchen is a place where children are nourished, not only by nutrients and flavors, but by affirmations that help them know just how special they really are.

Remember to include your children in nourishing cooking projects. Remember to have the dinner table be a place of love, support and sharing.

Children need to feel secure with a certain amount of routine around when and where meals and snacks are offered. Young children learn from making choices and are empowered with success when presented with healthy selections.

This nurturing work is ongoing. From my perspective, much of that nurturing is powerful magic that happens in the kitchen. Keep your kitchen a place of love, empowerment and magic.

Everything is connected – nothing in our body stands apart. Nutrition is at the core of health, yet it is not limited to what

we eat (or the nutrients we take in). Even when nutritious vital food is consumed, stress and trauma interfere with how our body uses our food (digestion).

Stress and trauma are Tribal concerns. When we learn about and support children's needs, we help Head Start children and their families.

Likewise, if we didn't get the support we needed as children and we address it now, we also help children, their families and a much greater world. Let our connection be rooted in the power of the kitchen.

## How does Head Start support kitchen power?

Siletz Tribal Head Start is an important and influential program. As a federally funded program, Head Start meets specific nutrition requirements and performance standards. Head Start focuses on the needs of children and helps connect needs with services.

Head Start provides nutritious food choices through snacks and family-style meals supported with nutrition curriculum. Students are coached to explore foods by tasting and describing them, growing them, and learning about why some are nutritious and how they may fit as traditional foods or their nutritional equivalents.

Food safety and sanitation is followed, monitored and taught. Additionally, the program tracks health screening to support access to health care. Screening includes measurements of height and weight (to calculate BMI, Body Mass Index), hearing, vision, blood pressure, lead, hemoglobin, immunizations, dental and physical exams.

Furthermore, to support health, the program assesses whether students have medical and dental homes as well as health insurance. In this process, referrals are made, as needed, and follow-up is also documented.

Sometimes referrals are made for growth measurements of height and weight (after a BMI calculation). A referral does not necessarily mean there is a problem, but a low or high BMI currently provides an opportunity for a child to receive attention. A referral may be in the form of a letter requesting a follow-up with a doctor.

If you receive a referral like that, another option would be to talk to me, the consulting dietitian/nutritionist, because we could talk about meaningful nutrition information in a personalized way. This service is available to all Head Start families, even if BMI is normal. Parents can request a nutrition consultation by asking the teacher or program director. There is no financial cost to the family for a telephone consultation.

Another purpose behind measuring health indicators is to measure outcomes and therefore, possible success or shortcomings of the program. If the program demonstrates success, funding seems more likely to continue. On the other hand, if health indicators indicate increased risk, a closer look is needed. This could mean changes to the program to better support families.

We must feed ourselves to be sovereign, free and healthy. There is power in our kitchens. Head Start supports kitchen power as a community resource for its students and their families with wide-reaching benefits.

## 2020 Census jobs available in all Siletz service areas. Help Tribal members be counted in survey

Work as a 2020 Census enumerator pays \$15-\$18/hour and also has a mileage reimbursement.

Since 1790, the Census Bureau has conducted a national population survey. This is mandated by the U.S. Constitution. After the April 1, 2020, response date, the bureau will use enumerators to go to the homes of people who have not responded to the survey.

Native Americans in general and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians specifically have been undercounted. The hardest to count groups are children and minorities in rural areas, but this is true in urban areas as well.

The undercount has resulted in being underrepresented and receiving less money from the federal government for the Tribe's transportation and welfare programs. In order to be fully counted, a response is needed from every Tribal household and member.

Show your Native pride and support your community by working in your community. Apply online at [2020Census.gov/jobs](https://2020Census.gov/jobs) or call 855-JOB-2020.

For general information about the 2020 Census, contact Terry Altemus at [TerranceA@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:TerranceA@ctsi.nsn.us) or Angela Ramirez at [AngelaR@ctsi.nsn.us](mailto:AngelaR@ctsi.nsn.us).



### Siletz Community Dental Clinic

Contact the Siletz Community Dental Clinic if you experience dental pain or a dental emergency. Staff will do everything they can to see you as soon as possible.

Morning check-in time is Monday-Thursday from 8:15-8:45 a.m. and Friday from 9-9:30 a.m. Afternoon check-in time is Monday-Friday from 1:30-2 p.m.

**APPLY NOW FOR SILETZ TRIBAL HEAD START**

**Siletz Tribal Head Start is accepting applications for the 2019-2020 school year. We have classrooms in Siletz, Lincoln City, Salem and Portland.**

**Children must be age 3 or 4 as of the school cut-off date, Sept. 1 for Siletz, Lincoln City and Portland, or Sept. 10 for Salem.**

**Applications are available on the Tribal website ([ctsi.nsn.us](https://ctsi.nsn.us)), at your local area office or by calling 800-922-1399 or 541-444-2450 and asking for Head Start.**

### Need Rental Housing?

The Siletz Tribal Housing Department encourages you to apply for the Low-Income Rental Program waiting list in Siletz (1-4 bedrooms) and Lincoln City (2-3 bedrooms – Neachesna Village).

Applications can be obtained at any Tribal area office (Eugene, Salem, Portland, Siletz) or online from the Tribal website – [ctsi.nsn.us](https://ctsi.nsn.us); follow links – Tribal Services-Housing-Low Rent Apartments & Home Ownership.

Questions? Call 800-922-1399, ext. 1322, or 541-444-8322; fax: 541-444- 8313