Better Beverages in Child Care

Infants

- **Choose breast milk and infant formula.** They have the water healthy babies need to grow and thrive!
- **Avoid water until after 6 months.** Infants may only need a small amount of water in hot weather or after active play.
- **Avoid cow’s milk before one year.** Cow’s milk should not be served until an infant turns one year old. Following a child’s first birthday there is a one month weaning period. During this month formula can still be served as part of a reimbursable meal.
- **Don’t serve juice.** Juice is not creditable for infants.

Children

- **Choose plain cow’s milk and water.** They are the best drinks for toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children.
- **Avoid sugary drinks.** Examples include sodas, flavored milk, and fruit drinks. They are linked to excess weight gain, tooth decay, and diseases later in life.
- **Avoid serving too much juice.** Serve whole fruit instead of juice whenever possible. Juice is linked to unhealthy weight gain and is one of the top calorie sources among toddlers. Juice is creditable once a day.

Fun Fact
Breast milk is creditable for all children no matter their age.
Better Beverage Tips

Cow’s Milk
- **Children 1-2 years old:** Serve pasteurized whole milk.
- **Children 2 years or older:** Serve pasteurized fat free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Non-Dairy milks require a Special Dietary Needs form

Water
- Make water readily available throughout the day, especially during active play and warm weather.
- Add fun flavors to water. Try watermelon, lemons, oranges, limes, berries, basil, or mint.

Juice
- Serve no more than 4-6 ounces of 100% juice no more than one time per day.
- Only 100% full-strength fruit or vegetable juices are creditable.