

# TALKING WITH PARENTS

## APPROACHING PARENTS

The following conversation models how to politely speak with a parent whose team snack falls outside the YMCA's healthy snack guidelines.

"Hey Mr. Smith, thank you so much for bringing snack today. I wanted to remind you that our youth sports program asks that all team snacks be fruits, vegetables, and water. I really appreciate your thoughtful gesture, but we'll hold off on providing that snack today."



## TALKING POINTS

- **EMPTY CALORIES.** Children under the age of 13 are allotted roughly 140 "empty calories" a day, meaning those calories provide no nutritional value whatsoever. If a child were to have one soft drink or juice pouch and a small bag of chips, he or she could easily meet or exceed that 140 empty calorie recommendation and get very little nutrition in return.
- **IMPROVE NUTRITION.** This is a great opportunity for kids to increase their nutritional intake. Most NC children only consume 2 of the recommended 5 fruits or vegetables a day.
- **IT'S OUR GOAL.** It is the Y's goal to provide an environment that encourages participants to lead healthy lifestyles.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **COMMUNICATE EARLY.** Communicating healthy sports snacking practices at the beginning of the season and at the beginning of team gatherings, and continuing to remind parents of those practices, will be most helpful in ensuring that parents are on board with healthy sports snacking.
- **BE GRATEFUL.** Acknowledge the parent's kind gesture and willingness to provide. Be kind and patient.
- **LISTEN.** Show a willingness to listen if the parent provides pushback.
- **SMILE.** Approach parents with a smile and a gracious attitude.

<sup>5</sup> ChooseMyPlate.gov and the United States Department of Agriculture. (n.d.) "Empty Calories." Retrieved from <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/weight-management-calories/calories/empty-calories-amount.html>

<sup>6</sup> NC State Center for Health Statistics. (2011). 2011 Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program data. Retrieved from <http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/champ/2011/topics.html#n>