

Loudoun County Health Department's
"It's Water Time!" Program
for Use in Preschool and Elementary School Classrooms



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Background

The prevention of childhood obesity is a public health imperative. Currently, 1 in 3 children in the US are either overweight or obese and 1 in 6 children are obese.¹ The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommends increasing water consumption as a practice for obesity prevention, especially when water replaces the consumption of calorie-laden drinks.^{2,3}

Sugar-sweetened beverages add up quickly and are a major source of extra caloric intake in children.^{4,5} In the last 50 years, sugar-sweetened beverage consumption has increased by almost 500%. By making it easier for children to access water and harder for them to access sugar-sweetened beverages, children can develop healthy habits at a young age that they will carry into adulthood.

The Loudoun County Health Department's Obesity and Chronic Disease Prevention Division developed the "It's Water Time!" water promotion campaign for use in all preschool to elementary school classrooms. Early childhood teachers are essential players in helping young children learn behaviors like choosing to drink water when they are thirsty. To help teachers create a culture of drinking water in the classroom, our team developed a water mascot: a superhero penguin named "Capt. Hydro", with a water lesson plan, classroom activities, and water education resource materials for children to share with their families.

This toolkit provides all of the information needed to assist a preschool or elementary school in eliminating sugar-sweetened beverages in their classrooms and transitioning to a school that encourages water consumption for students.



Teacher Training

Prior to launching the “It’s Water Time!” lesson in the classroom, it is recommended to hold a teacher training to present the materials to the teachers. This session serves as an important step in the planning process for integration of the “It’s Water Time!” program into the classroom. Working with the teachers helps to identify best practices in the individual classroom for increasing water access throughout the day and how to incorporate Capt. Hydro’s image as a visual reminder to drink water, making “It’s Water Time!” a part of the daily routine.

A key piece of teacher training is providing a background on current regulations and policies regarding water access in schools and to review statistics on obesity rates and sugar-sweetened beverage consumption to help teachers recognize the need for a drinking water campaign in their classroom. Explain that an important step in helping children develop healthy habits is seeing healthy habits in their role models. By teachers modeling drinking water throughout the class day, students will learn to choose water when they feel thirsty.

Review the “It’s Water Time!” curriculum with the teachers and provide them with all of the materials. The full packet includes a script for the lesson plan, a read-aloud “It’s Water Time!” storybook featuring Capt. Hydro, a link to a song about drinking more water with interactive hand gestures and running and dancing in place to boost physical activity, a Capt. Hydro coloring page, a poster for the classroom, a sheet of laminated Capt. Hydro images to tape onto the classroom’s daily schedule, and a “Choose Water First” water education document available in English and Spanish to send home in students’ backpacks.

Optimally, reusable water bottles are also provided for each child enrolled in the Head Start program for use in the classroom. Water bottles can be kept in the classroom during the school years, washed daily by cafeteria managers and returned to the classroom each morning. A labeling system for the water bottles should be developed which can be decided at the teacher training. At the end of the school year, each student can take their reusable water bottle home with them to allow for continuation of habitual water drinking in the home environment.

Script for “It’s Water Time!” Lesson

INTRODUCTION:

Hello kids!

Thank you for having us in your classroom today. My name is _____ and with me are _____.

We are here today to talk to you about water! Who likes to drink water?

(raise hand)

What do you like about drinking water?

(Take answers from students. Prompts: If no one is answering, say “I like to drink water because it....tastes great....is healthy...make me less thirsty, etc”)

Does anyone know why water is important?

(Take answer from students.)

That’s right! Water helps your energy, your mood, your teeth, and your brain. So whenever you’re thirsty, it’s water time!

What else do you usually drink when you are thirsty?

(Take answer from students.)

What do you usually drink at meal time?

(Take answer from students.)

What do you usually drink after you play?

(Take answer from students.)

(The kids will likely give lots of different answers, including sugar-sweetened beverages, juice, milk etc. Engage in discussion about water being the best choice, white milk is a good choice too. Juice and soda are not good choices for their bodies – they are a lot like candy.)

So what time is it when you are thirsty? That’s right. It’s Water Time

Now, who likes stories?

(raise hand)

_____ is going to read you a great story about drinking water, so put your listening ears on.

STORY READER:

Hi Kids! Has anyone here heard of Captain Hydro?

(The kids say no or yes)

Well, I met Captain Hydro and he gave me this story to share with you.
Would you like to hear it?

(Have book displayed on Promethean Board, hold laminated book, and read "It's Water Time" to class)

Captain Hydro learned that after drinking water like the animals, he is no longer thirsty! So, remember, whenever you're thirsty, Captain Hydro says "It's Water Time!".

(have children call and response: Whenever you're thirsty, what time is it? "It's water time!")

SONG LEADER: [Drink More Water music video by Andy Z⁷](#)

Okay, everyone. Now we are going to learn a song and dance to help us Drink More Water like Captain Hydro! Jump up on your feet because we need to learn our dance moves!

When you hear the word...

Cool *(thumbs up)*

Water *(create waves)*

Glass/Sip/Drink *(pretend to hold a glass of water and drink it)*

Head to your Feet *(point to head and then reach down to feet)*

Better *(Jumping jack move)*

Dance* *(move hips with arms on the hips)*

Running* *(run in place)*

**ask kids to dance any time during the song and run in place when they run in the video*

Ok, let's repeat it one more time.

(repeat hand gestures)

Now we are ready to sing and dance!

(press play for "Drink More Water" song and make sure volume is on!)

DRINK MORE WATER LYRICS

I TAKE A SIP, I TAKE A SIP
A SIP OF COOL, CLEAR WATER
I TAKE A SIP, ANOTHER SIP
A SIP OF COOL, CLEAR WATER
I DRINK A GLASS, BUT NOT TOO FAST
A GLASS OF COOL, CLEAR WATER
I TAKE IT SLOW, IT'S BEST YOU KNOW
TO SIP SOME COOL, CLEAR WATER
I DRINK MORE WATER EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK
I DRINK LESS JUICE, IT'S TOO SWEET FOR MY TEETH
AND I FEEL GREAT FROM MY HEAD TO MY FEET
'CAUSE WATER MAKES MY BODY WORK BETTER

Thanks, everyone! That was great! Now, it's time to sit back down.

CAPT. HYDRO "MAGNET": *(led by teachers or us)*

Who remembers who this is?

(hold laminated title page or have title page displayed on board)

(Children respond)

Yes, Captain Hydro. And do you remember what he says? He says: It's water time!

Every time you see Captain Hydro, you know that it is water time.

Can anyone name some times when it is good to drink water?

(Take answers from students)

(Start call and response)

Whenever you're thirsty, what time is it? It's water time!

When it is lunch time, what time is it? It's water time!

When you're playing outside, what time is it? It's water time!

This little Captain Hydro is going to stay here in your classroom, so that your teacher can put him on your schedule and you can remember to drink water all day long!

WATER BOTTLES:

And now we have a surprise for you!

Captain Hydro gave us water bottles to give to each of you. They are special water bottles to help you drink more water at school!

(pass out water bottles to students)

(After everyone has a water bottle, call and response again)

So when you see Captain Hydro, what time is it? IT'S WATER TIME!

One more time!

What time is it? IT'S WATER TIME!

THANK YOU:

Thank you for letting us visit your classroom and talk to you about water! We have one more present for you today: A Captain Hydro poster for you to hang up in your classroom and use to remember that whenever you're thirsty, what time is it? It's..... WATER TIME!

(give coloring pages and "Choose Water First" document to teachers for them to place in backpacks or pass out later in the day)

THE END

"It's Water Time!" Book

The "It's Water Time!" book can be read by a teacher or is a great opportunity to bring in a guest reader from the community. Reach out to community partners or elected officials to offer them a chance to read to the students.

In the classroom, hold a copy of the book while reading, but also have the digital version up on a smart board, if available, to allow for larger pictures.

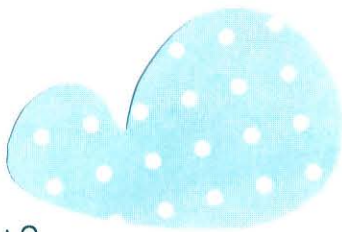


Image of "It's Water Time!" being read to students with book and use of smart board.

It's Water Time!



Captain Hydro is so thirsty.
Is there something he can drink?
He decides to ask the Animals
To see what they might think





"Water!" says the
Hippo
"Water!" honks the
Goose
"I like water," says the
Panda
"Give me water!"
shouts the Moose





"Let's drink water",
says the Toucan
perched high up in
his tree
The Kangaroo
agrees with him -
"It's water time for
me!"





"Water time? What's water time?"
Captain Hydro asks the Sheep
"For me," she says, "it's water time
before I go to sleep"



"Morning is our water time,"
The Border Collies bark.
The Leopard likes her water time
Even when it's dark.





"When I'm thirsty,"
says the fox,
"I'll drink the whole day
through".
The elephant agrees
with her –
"That's when I like
water, too".



Captain Hydro fills a glass
"Delicious!" says the cow
And all the animals agree -
It's water time right now!



THE END.



Thank you to all of our community contributors!

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Additional Materials for the Classroom

A.

The sheet of Capt. Hydro images can be laminated and used in the classroom to stick on to the daily schedule wherever the teacher would like to encourage an “It’s Water Time!” break for the students. Recommended options include: mealtimes, snack times, and active play times, but may be placed at any point in the daily routine where the teacher would like to include a moment to encourage water consumption.

B.

The coloring page is a resource that the teachers can use as an in-class activity for the students or for the teachers to give to the students to take home and color on their own time.

C.

The “It’s Water Time!” poster is available to teachers to hang in the classroom to promote the water curriculum. It can be hung where water bottles are stored or by the classroom’s water source as another reminder to drink water.

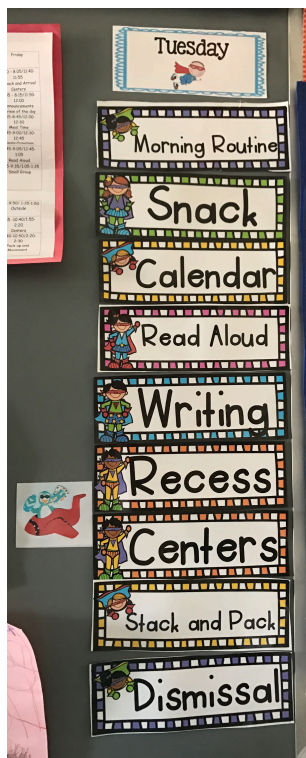


Image of Capt Hydro as part of the daily schedule.

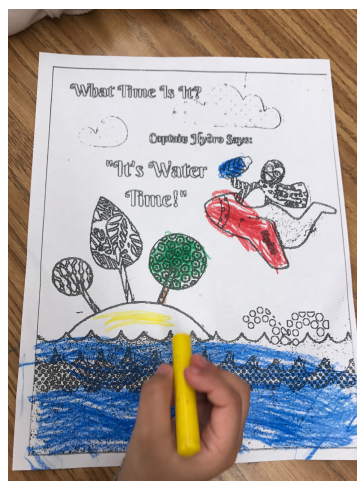


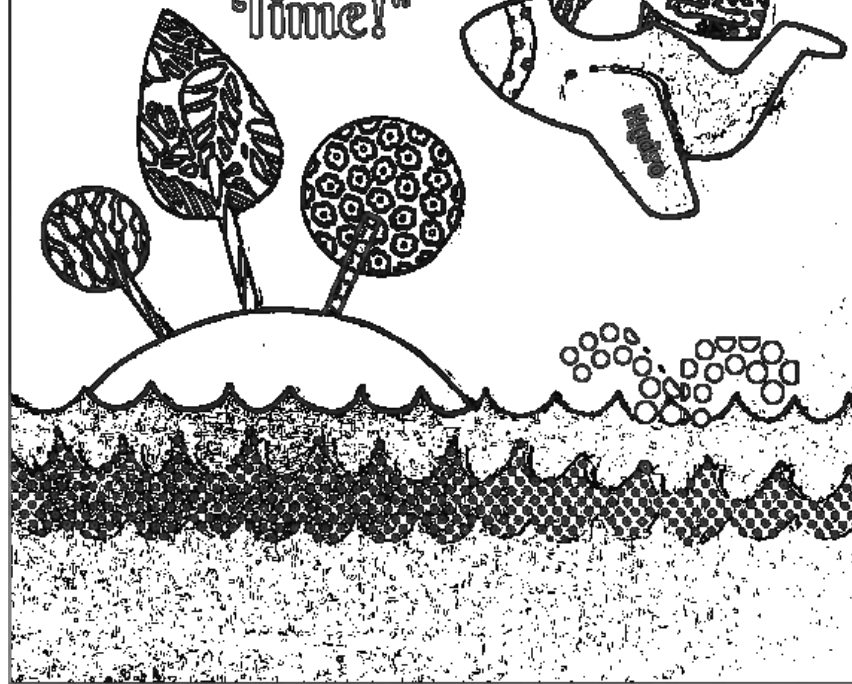
Image of student with coloring activity.



What Time Is It?

Captain Hydro Says:

"It's Water
Time!"



What Time Is It?

Captain Hydro Says:

"It's Water
Time!"



“Choose Water First” Resources for Parents

“Choose Water First” resources were developed in English and Spanish to go home in students’ folders or backpacks in order to raise awareness about the benefits of water to the whole family and encourage water consumption in the home as well as the classroom. The “Choose Water First” document covers the points that water is the best choice when you are thirsty, water is good for your body, water tastes great, and that drinking tap water is free.



Choose Water First

Drink water throughout the day.

Whenever You're Thirsty - It's **Water** Time!

Drink water with your meals.
Drink water with your snacks.
Drink water when you're playing.
Choose water first!



Save Your Money

Drink tap water instead of soda, juice, and sports drinks to save hundreds of dollars.
Drinking tap water is cheap and easy.



Always Stay Hydrated

Staying hydrated can help your energy, mood, and skin.
Listen to your body, drink water!



Power Up Your Brain

Staying hydrated helps your brain work better.



Protect Your Teeth

Choose water over sweet sugary drinks to protect your teeth. Sugar can damage your teeth. Tap water has minerals to keep your teeth strong.



Water Tastes Great!



Chill your water.
For extra flavor,
add lemons, limes,
strawberries, or mint.





Elige Primero el Agua

Bebe agua durante el día.

Cuando Sientas Sed - Es Hora de Beber Agua!

Bebe agua con tus comidas.
Bebe agua con tus meriendas.
Bebe agua cuando estes jugando.
Elige primero el agua!



Ahorra Tu Dinero



Bebe primero agua del grifo en lugar de gaseosas para ahorrar muchos dolares.
Beber agua del grifo es barato y facil.

Siempre Mantente Hidratado

Estar hidratado ayuda a tu energia, tu estado animico y a tu piel. Escucha a tu cuerpo, bebe agua!



Enciende Tu Cerebro



Mantenerte hidratado ayuda a tu cerebro actuar mejor.

Protégé Tus Dientes

Elige el agua del grifo en vez de bebidas dulces y proteger tus dientes.
El azucar puede danar tus dientes.
El agua contiene minerales para mantener tus dientes fuertes y saludables.



Agua Tiene Un Gran Sabor!



Toma agua helado.
Agregale limones, limas, fresas o menta para más sabor.



Reusable Water Bottles

Reusable water bottles that students have access to throughout the school day are an excellent way to increase access to water and encourage consumption. Water bottles with an attached lid and no additional pieces are a good option for this age group. A system that works for the individual classroom needs to be identified for labeling and washing the bottles. A designated place in the classroom for storage of the bottles should be identified for when students are not actively drinking out of the water bottles. A storage area is ideal for limiting spills and creating an identifiable and consistent water access spot. At the end of the school year, water bottles should go home with the students to assist with promotion of water in the home setting.



Image of reusable water bottles with detachable name card labels.

References

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