



# Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit

March 2023



# BETTER TOGETHER FAMILY CAFÉS TOOLKIT DEVELOPMENT TEAM

---

## **Nemours Children’s Health:**

Roshelle Payes, MPH  
Caliste Chong, MS  
Hannah Press, MPH

## **Tufts Medical Center, HOPE National Resource Center:**

Robert Sege, MD, PhD  
Dina Burstein, MD, MPH

## **Curricula Concepts:**

Jamie Ward, MS  
Robbie Belew  
Amy Routt  
Deborah Blackburn

## **Go NAPSACC:**

David Yates, MBA  
Aviva Starr, MSW  
Emily Alexander, BA  
Falon Smith, PhD

## **For more information, please contact:**

Nemours Children’s Health: [\*\*\*BetterTogether@nemours.org\*\*\*](mailto:BetterTogether@nemours.org)

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

---

This Toolkit is a product of Better Together, a three-year project of Nemours Children’s Health (Nemours Children’s) and Go NAPSACC at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Better Together focused on four main components 1) Learning Collaboratives to provide focused learning and coaching support to low-income ECE programs; 2) Statewide systems change; 3) Building a Statewide Go NAPSACC network; and 4) Family Cafés focused on nutrition and physical activity topics. These components aimed to improve physical activity, child nutrition, breastfeeding support, and screen time practices, policies, and environments in ECE settings in four states (Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, and Mississippi).

Partners developed and piloted the Better Together Family Cafés exclusively in Arkansas. The authors acknowledge the invaluable contributions of organizations and consultants in Arkansas for their dedication to ECE professionals and children’s health and development.

Finally, we’d like to acknowledge former Nemours Children’s staff, Alexandra Hyman and Chidinma Nwankwo, whose support and guidance directly informed Toolkit development.

## INTRODUCTION

---

What are Family Cafés? .....	3
Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit .....	3
HOPE Building Blocks .....	4
Guiding Principles .....	6

## PLANNING

---

Host a Planning Meeting .....	7
Family Café Roles.....	7
Select Your Better Together Family Café .....	8
How to Deliver the Family Café .....	8
When to Host the Family Café .....	9
Budgeting for Family Cafés.....	9
Plan the Evaluation .....	10
Planning Checklist.....	11

## IMPLEMENTATION

---

Setting up the Family Café .....	12
Review the Better Together Family Café Materials.....	13
Better Together Family Café Materials .....	14
Additional Considerations .....	16
Closing the Family Café .....	16
After the Family Café .....	16
Implementation Checklist .....	17
For More Information .....	17

## GLOSSARY

---

Glossary .....	18
----------------	----

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

---

- [\*\*\*Better Together Family Cafés Background\*\*\*](#)
- [\*\*\*Better Together Family Cafés Project Outcomes\*\*\*](#)

## Family Cafés: Materials and Resources

The Better Together Family Cafés materials and resources can be found at <https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/trainers/better-together/familycafes/>. You can also download materials for each Family Café using the links below:



- **Building HOPE and Resilience Together**

- ◆ [PowerPoint with Notes](#)
- ◆ Handouts
  - [Four Building Blocks of HOPE](#)
  - [Building HOPE in the Face of Adversity](#)
  - [Ten Ways to Promote Positive Childhood Experiences](#)



- **Active Play: Active Families, Active Children:  
How Everyone Benefits from Movement**

- ◆ [PowerPoint with Notes](#)
- ◆ Handouts
  - [Four Building Blocks of HOPE](#)
  - [Physical Activity Calendar](#)
  - [Ten Tips to be an Active Family](#)



- **Child Nutrition: Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles**

- ◆ [PowerPoint with Notes](#)
- ◆ Handouts
  - [Four Building Blocks of HOPE](#)
  - [Child Nutrition Resource Links](#)



- **Family Style Dining: Creating Memories at Mealtime**

- ◆ [PowerPoint with Notes](#)
- ◆ Handouts
  - [Four Building Blocks of HOPE](#)
  - [Family Style Dining Tips](#)



- **Screen Time: Managing Screen Time in a Technology World**

- ◆ [PowerPoint with Notes](#)
- ◆ Handouts
  - [Four Building Blocks of HOPE](#)
  - [Managing Screen Time in a Technology World](#)
- ◆ Resources
  - [AAP Media Plan \(healthychildren.org\)](#)

### Additional Resources



- **Evaluation Surveys**

- ◆ [Building HOPE and Resiliency Together](#)
- ◆ [Active Families, Active Children](#)
- ◆ [Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles](#)
- ◆ [Creating Memories at Mealtime](#)
- ◆ [Managing Screen Time in a Technology World](#)

## Introduction

Whether you work at an early care and education (ECE) program or a community organization that supports children and families in your area, it takes a concerted effort to provide children good nutrition and physical activity opportunities. The Better Together Family Cafés provide an approach to support good nutrition and physical activity opportunities in children through facilitated conversations that deepen connections between ECE programs, families, and other primary caregivers.

### What are Family Cafés?

A Family Café is not a physical space. It is an approach to creating an environment where parents and primary caregivers feel safe to engage in conversations with other families. Family Cafés are guided discussions that help parents and caregivers identify challenges and find solutions while building social connections. When used by ECE professionals, Family Cafés strengthen an ECE program's connection with families.

The Café model has been used across the nation for over a decade to help parents and caregivers build their leadership skills, create social connections, and promote the **Strengthening Families protective factors developed by the Center for the Study of Social Policy**. The Better Together Family Cafés use the **common elements of this approach** to increase the understanding of families and caregivers of early childhood nutrition and physical activity.



[Click here to view video](#)

### Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit

The **Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit** includes materials you can use and adapt to facilitate conversations with families about nutrition and physical activity topics. The Cafés are flexible, adaptable, and designed for individual parent groups, caregiver groups, and blended groups. This Toolkit supports the delivery of five Better Together Family Cafés, including:

- 1 Building HOPE and Resilience Together
- 2 Active Families, Active Children
- 3 Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles
- 4 Creating Memories at Mealtime
- 5 Managing Screen Time in a Technology World

While each Café's focus is different, the overall structure includes:

- Guided conversations to share information with family members and to engage them in meaningful conversations.
- Tools to encourage participants to reflect on what was learned and how to incorporate learnings into daily life.
- Nutrition and physical activity resources to support continuing engagement with families.

### Purpose

The purpose of the **Better Together Family Cafés** is to bring together family members and other caregivers of young children to learn together and commit to individual action focused on nutrition and physical activity topics.

The purpose of **Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit** is to provide ECE programs and other community organizations easy-to-use resources to promote the healthy development of young children. Information presented in the Better Together Family Cafés align with standards endorsed by the [National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care and Early Education](#), [American Academy of Pediatrics](#), and the [United States Department of Agriculture](#).

The Better Together Family Cafés were implemented as part of the [Better Together Learning Collaboratives](#) in Arkansas. While providing education and encouragement to ECE programs to make healthy changes, participating programs were given the chance to expand the Learning Collaborative impact by offering families an opportunity to participate in the Family Cafés.

### Who should use this Toolkit?

This Toolkit was created for ECE program staff, consultants working with ECE programs or families, or other community members interested in engaging caregivers of young children in conversations around nutrition and physical activity. Please review the entire Toolkit before planning and launching your own Better Together Family Cafés.

While we designed this Toolkit based on our experiences with a variety of partners in diverse settings, it is not a one-size-fits-all guide. Users are encouraged to adapt the guidance, tools, and resources provided to meet the unique needs of children and families with whom you are working.

### HOPE Building Blocks

The Better Together Family Cafés integrate the Tufts Medical Center [Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences \(HOPE\) framework](#) and Building Blocks into the conversations with families, which combines insights from a public health approach to preventing child maltreatment with a broader understanding of how children grow to become strong, healthy, and resilient adults.



## HOPE, Nutrition, and Physical Activity

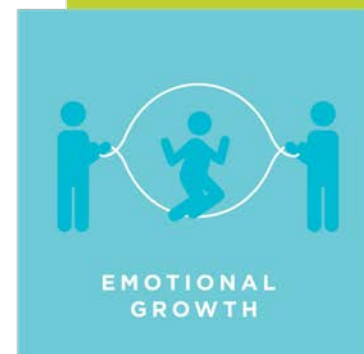
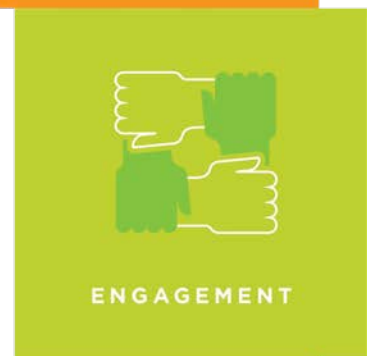
Throughout life, each of us has both positive and challenging experiences. Based on the latest science, the HOPE (Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences) framework focuses on the kinds of positive childhood experiences that lead to lifelong health and well-being. These key positive childhood experiences correspond to the HOPE framework that sets the stage for a strength-based approach. HOPE-informed nutrition and physical activity strategies in the ECE setting build from the four evidence-informed Building Blocks:

- 1. RELATIONSHIPS.** Nurturing and supportive relationships are essential for the healthy development of children. Both mealtime and physical activity offer opportunities for building relationships with children. In the HOPE framework, meals serve to nourish body and soul. No matter how it looks within a particular family, preparing food, sharing a meal or snack, and cleaning up together builds relationships with children. Physical activities, such as taking a trip to the playground or even tummy time for infants, naturally build relationships between children and adults.
- 2. ENVIRONMENT.** In order to ensure a safe, stable, and equitable environment, healthy food needs to be available to all children. Particular attention must be paid to families who may experience food insecurity or live in areas that lack access to healthy foods. Additionally, children need safe places to play and engage in physical activity in their community, including parks and playgrounds. Opportunities for children to engage in organized sports and physical activity are also vital. Early childhood educators can help families find safe playgrounds or indoor spaces for active play.
- 3. ENGAGEMENT.** Meals present many opportunities for connecting with children. Involving children in the planning and preparation of meals, eating together, and clean up are all chances to engage with children. Joining other children for active play or sports helps children build a sense of belonging and to know that they matter.
- 4. EMOTIONAL GROWTH.** Children need opportunities to develop self-regulation and awareness skills. Negotiating around mealtimes can offer opportunities for emotional growth. Engaging in child-centered play with peers is also a way for children to develop critical skills. Educators can help parents understand that when 4-year olds argue with each other about the rules of a game, they are really growing emotionally by learning how to negotiate, explain themselves, and make compromises.

To Learn More about the HOPE Building Blocks and available resources, visit [www.positiveexperiences.org](http://www.positiveexperiences.org).



[Click here to view video](#)



### **Guiding Principles\***

Cafés honor the contributions of everyone in the room. Guiding principles set standards for behavior in a meeting, and they foster collaborative dialogue, active engagement, and constructive possibilities for action. Take into consideration the different factors that may impact your families, your approach to offering the information, and the conversations that are facilitated throughout the process. Consider the following principles and practices when planning and implementing the Better Together Family Cafés.



**Create Hospitable Space:** Cafés should feel safe and inviting for all participants. When people feel comfortable to be themselves, they do their most creative thinking, speaking, and listening. Consider how the invitation and the physical or virtual set-up contribute to creating a welcoming atmosphere.



**Explore Questions that Matter:** Knowledge emerges in response to compelling questions. Powerful questions that are relevant to the real-life concerns of the group build collective energy, insight, and action as participants move through a Café.



**Encourage Everyone's Contribution:** Encourage everyone in the Café to participate and contribute their ideas and perspectives, while also allowing anyone who wants to participate by simply listening to do so.



**Connect Diverse Perspectives:** Promote opportunities to move between tables (or virtual breakout rooms), meet new people, and link the individual and shared discoveries.



**Listen Together:** Listening is perhaps the most important factor that determines the success of a Café. By practicing active listening, participants begin to sense a connection to the larger group. Encourage people to listen for what is not being spoken along with what is being shared.



**Share Discoveries:** During the last phase of a Café, participants reflect on what has been learned and discussed throughout the Café's small group conversations, and opportunities for each participant to share with each other are important to build connections among participants.

\*Adapted from The World Café Community Foundation. (n.d.). Design Principles. The World Café. <https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/design-principles>



**Curricula Concepts and Little Lighthouse Educare Video Testimonial**

[Click here to view video](#)



## Planning

Ideally, planning should begin four to six weeks prior to the Family Café session. The following section outlines the primary activities to be completed during the planning phase. They are presented in the recommended sequence, but you may need to work on many of these steps at the same time.

### Host a Planning Meeting

Invite key partners to a planning meeting. This may include ECE program staff, parents, family members, potential table hosts, and others who represent the Café participants. If you are partnering with an ECE program to offer the Family Café, invite staff to join. The ECE program staff knows their families best and will provide important insights that will inform your planning. You should also research community stakeholders who directly or indirectly support healthy eating and physical activity for young children and families and inform them about your plans to host a Family Café with families and caregivers in your area. These groups may be able to provide resources or incentives for your participants. These organizations may also help recruit families to participate.

### Family Café Roles

Before hosting a Family Café, identify who will organize the event, recruit participants, and conduct the Café. Below are descriptions of primary roles and responsibilities for a successful Family Café.

#### Facilitators:

- Lead the planning meeting with key partners and the ECE program director and staff if hosting in partnership with an ECE program
- Share responsibilities and tips for table hosts
- Welcome participants to the Café and create a respectful and safe environment using the guiding principles
- Engage participants while presenting the topic content
- Model how participants can reflect on their own experiences by being prepared with their own personal stories and examples
- Help participants transition between tables/breakout rooms and different parts of the Café
- Answer questions and assist table hosts, if needed
- Understand how the HOPE Building Blocks apply to their own lives so they can share real life examples to help participants better understand and relate to the framework
- Listen and respond to questions with empathy, validation, and without bias

#### Table Hosts:

Table hosts can be program staff, family members, or other partners present at the Café. Table hosts:

- Facilitate the conversation, striking a balance between talking and listening
- Understand how the HOPE Building Blocks work in their own lives
- Use active listening skills and respond with empathy, validation, and without bias
- Intervene if participants begin to give advice, make judgments, or have side conversations
- Share relevant personal experiences to engage other participants in conversation
- Share key insights from prior conversations so participants can benefit and build on ideas and perspectives
- Encourage the conversation by being patient and making eye contact; nod to acknowledge contributions—be comfortable with silence




## Participants

Develop a clear understanding of the audience you want to recruit for the Family Café. If you are partnering with an ECE program, the program staff can provide support to encourage families to participate. If you are hosting the Family Café for other members in your community, consider asking community partners to help you recruit families to participate based on the parameters you set. For example, you may want to recruit participants from a particular city or neighborhood, or families with children of a certain age. Participants may include parents, family members, other primary caregivers, and ECE program staff. Participants:

- Share information and engage in the guided conversations
- May need time to listen and process before being willing to share. Participation will look different for each person
- Should have a fun and enjoyable experience

## Select Your Better Together Family Café

There are five Better Together Family Café sessions available for facilitators to use:

Building HOPE and Resilience Together 	Active Families, Active Children 	Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles 	Creating Memories at Mealtime 	Managing Screen Time in a Technology World. 
--	---	--	--	--

Each Family Café can be offered individually or as a series. If offering an individual Family Café, poll the participants to determine which session might be most relevant and requested. If offering as a series, schedule all Cafés in advance and share those dates with participants early in the process so they will have plenty of time to prepare to attend.

## How to Deliver the Family Café

### Considerations for choosing an in-person venue:



- If offered in partnership with an ECE program, it is recommended for the Café to be hosted on-site at the ECE program if space allows to reduce barriers for families to participate.
- The location should be:
  - ◆ Accessible to public transportation and offer free or low-cost parking, if possible.
  - ◆ In a safe, well-lit neighborhood where participants will feel comfortable.
  - ◆ Accessible to those with disabilities.
- If child care is offered, it should be in a separate room. If possible, find a quiet space for babies and toddlers and a larger play area for older children.

### Considerations for choosing a virtual venue:



- Facilitators and participants need accessibility to technology
  - ◆ Facilitators should provide a list of local facilities with free wi-fi or hot spot technology that participants can utilize.
  - ◆ Facilitators must have access to a platform that has screen sharing features (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.).
- A co-facilitator is needed to monitor the chat and manage technical issues during the Café.

## When to Host the Family Café

The time of day matters when planning a Café. Ideally, facilitators would gather partner input during the planning meeting to determine what works best for most families. Cafés can happen at any time of the day, including around breakfast, brunch, lunch, or dinner. Be mindful of months that are typically busier for families, and it's best to schedule when there are no upcoming holidays. You can poll the participants to learn more about their needs and what will work best.

## Budgeting for Family Cafés

There are expenses you may incur while hosting a Family Café. However, Family Café costs will vary based on your delivery method.

### Costs for in-person delivery may include:



- Meeting space or venue rental
- Envelopes, postage, and blank paper/cards for reminder memos
- Meals or snacks, including beverages
- Child care
- General materials (cost of handouts, facilitator materials, name tags, pens, table decorations, fidget toys, laptop, projector, portable screen, etc.)
- Mileage reimbursement for travel to and from the venue
- Incentives for participation
- Door prizes

### Costs for virtual delivery may include:



- Cost to use a virtual platform with screen sharing capabilities (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, etc.)
- Incentives for participation
- Door prizes (in-person and virtual, including shipping charges for mailing prizes to participants)

### Once your budget has been determined, the next steps for planning are to:

- Determine who is responsible for coordinating meals/snacks and child care.
- Create an invitation using language that will appeal to participants to let them know what to expect from a Family Café. If participant email addresses were collected before the Café, send out reminder emails the day before, and for virtual Cafés, an hour before the Café starts.
- For in-person Cafés, create a welcoming environment where all participants feel comfortable. When determining a meeting space, consider the following:
  - ◆ Lighting - soft or natural lighting
  - ◆ Decorations - simple decorations work best and keep decorations gender neutral
  - ◆ Tables- set up tables in a way where participants can see one another. Use round tables when available
  - ◆ Music - upbeat and soft, similar to what is played in a nice restaurant
- Assign the team roles, including the facilitator and table hosts (one per table/breakout room). This allows the facilitator and table hosts to focus on a single task during Café conversations. Avoid asking individuals to play multiple roles.

“

*The connection that I was able to make with my families was amazing last night. All three families that I currently serve entered my day care home at the height of COVID. So those connections have been challenged. Being able to do this cafe via Zoom, not only were the two families able to make that important connection, but I was able to connect with them as well.”*

**Debbie Combs, Family Child Care Provider and HOPE Family Café Participant  
Little Light House Educare**

”

### Planning Incentives

The incentives offered to participants should appeal to participants. Before advertising any incentives, discuss incentives during the planning meeting. Some ideas include:

- **Monetary incentives/gift cards.** Check your organization or agency's policies and requirements for issuing monetary incentives and what formats are acceptable. Make sure to collect the appropriate paperwork from the recipients for tax purposes.
- **Mileage reimbursement or reimbursement for use of public transportation.** Acknowledge the time and effort it takes for families to participate in an in-person Family Café, and plan to offer mileage reimbursement or reimbursement for the use of public transportation to reduce a potential barrier to participation.
- **Materials for families to use at home that are relevant to the Café session.** For example, for “Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles,” offer child safe cooking utensils like child-friendly plastic or nylon knives, cutting boards, vegetable peelers, or apple cutters.

### Plan the Evaluation

Determine your evaluation plan and the methods you will employ to gather input and feedback from a planning team and participants up front to host a successful and effective Family Café.

Whether you need to conduct a formal evaluation due to grant requirements or you would like to assess how effective the Family Café is, you should develop a plan to evaluate the Family Café. Evaluating the program can be as simple as keeping a log of activities to document the process or using an evaluation survey for participants to complete after the Family Café. Survey results can help you assess how effective or relevant the Family Café was for participants. Below you will find links to example surveys you can use for each of the Family Cafés. These surveys can be printed and completed by hand at an in-person Café, or you can consider setting up an electronic survey using an online tool, such as Google Forms.

- [\*\*Building HOPE and Resiliency Together\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Active Families, Active Children\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Creating Memories at Mealtime\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Managing Screen Time in a Technology World\*\*](#)

“

*In my mind I always think of planning a big outing when we take our son into the outdoors. This cafe reminded me that things such as walking around the house outside, or maybe just sitting on the back porch and letting him play and watch the birds, animals, etc. can make a big difference.*

”

**Family Café Participant**

## Planning Checklist

Before hosting your Family Café, review the checklist below:

Family Café Planning Checklist	
	Invite key partners to a planning meeting.
	Identify who will take on the key Café roles.
	Decide on your audience and decide methods for recruiting families and other caregivers to participate.
	Decide how you will deliver the Family Café (in-person or virtually).
	Determine when to host the Family Café.
	Consider all potential expenses and ensure you have funding for each expense.
	Decide on participation incentives you will provide and how to provide them.
	Develop an evaluation plan.

## Implementation

### Setting Up the Family Café

#### In-person Cafés:



- The room should be able to accommodate three to nine small, round tables, seating four to six people each, and the space should allow up to 36 people to move around comfortably.
- Make the space resemble an actual Café with simple decorations, such as colorful tablecloths, pretty glass jars with tea lights, colorful placemats, etc.
- Provide large index cards or pieces of paper on tables with pens or markers for participants to write or draw on.
- Provide an additional table in the front of the room for facilitator materials and another table or place for participants to sign-in as they enter.
- Have soft music playing as people arrive and during Café conversations.
- If food is provided, have a space set aside for easy access.
- Facilitator Kit for in-person Cafés:
  - ◆ Name tags/tents
  - ◆ Table décor
  - ◆ Pens/markers
  - ◆ Scissors/tape
  - ◆ Stamped envelopes
  - ◆ Blank cards or paper for reminder memos
  - ◆ Café handouts
  - ◆ Café question tents
  - ◆ Sign-in sheet
  - ◆ Music
  - ◆ Fidget toys - must be easy to sanitize
  - ◆ Chime or soft alarm - to gently indicate the end of conversations

#### Virtual Cafés:



- For larger groups, provide a co-facilitator to help monitor the chat and manage technical issues.
- Play soft music as participants join the virtual platform.
- Identify table hosts ahead of time, so they are easy to place in breakout rooms.
- To avoid technical challenges, practice creating and launching breakout rooms before the day of the Café if you haven't used those features before.



*One concept that stood out to me was allowing children to share in the responsibility of meal time by allowing them to choose how much to eat helps to cut down on conflict and makes meal time more enjoyable for both parent and child.*

**Family Café Participant**



## Review the Better Together Family Café Materials

Each Better Together Family Café has the same basic agenda and structure and are designed to last 90 minutes. During the Café, the facilitator should monitor the time and adjust as needed, giving precedence to the Café guided conversations. The facilitator should review the materials in advance and make any necessary adjustments to best serve the participants.

Anticipated Time	Agenda Item	Activity Description
8 minutes	Introduction and Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief introduction of the facilitator of the Café and welcoming of the participants</li> <li>• Icebreaker question - This allows the participants to get to know a little about each other and the topic in a fun way. (Example: <i>What is something you enjoy doing as a family?</i>)</li> <li>• Review objectives</li> </ul>
10 minutes	Overview of Building Blocks of HOPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relationships</li> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Engagement</li> <li>• Emotional Growth</li> </ul>
30 minutes	Introduction of Content - Overview of Family Café topic	Partner Activity - This gives participants a chance to interact with each other in a safe, comfortable way in smaller groups (three or four participants) before discussing the Café topic in conversation questions
2 minutes	Conversation Guidelines	Create an emotionally safe space for the participants by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging active listening</li> <li>• Promoting a judgment-free environment</li> <li>• Respecting confidentiality</li> <li>• Welcoming all responses</li> </ul>
30 minutes	Family Café Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three guided conversation questions or prompts</li> <li>• Eight to ten minutes for each question or prompt</li> </ul>
5-8 minutes	Reflection/ Harvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an opportunity for participants to share out what they heard during the Café that stood out to them, ideas they want to try, or validation/support in what they are already doing</li> <li>• Participant Activity:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ For in-person, write reminder memos. (Facilitator will mail letters participants write to themselves two weeks after the Café.)</li> <li>◆ For virtual, write a personal letter using <a href="http://www.Futureme.org">www.Futureme.org</a>. (FutureMe is a website that allows individuals to write a letter to themselves that will be emailed to them at a later date.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
2 minutes	Closing	

### Better Together Family Café Materials

All materials are available at <https://healthykidshealthyfuture.org/trainers/better-together/familycafes/>. You can also access all materials using the links below.

During 2021-2022, Curricula Concepts offered the “Building HOPE and Resilience Together” session first to ECE program staff only to help them better understand the HOPE Building Blocks and to explore their role to support children and families on their journey toward health.

- **Building HOPE and Resilience Together**
  - ◆ This Café introduces the Four Building Blocks of HOPE and the role that self-care and well-being play in promoting the Building Blocks while exploring resiliency and growth.
  - ◆ **PowerPoint with Notes**
  - ◆ Handouts
    - **Four Building Blocks of HOPE**
    - **Building HOPE in the Face of Adversity**
    - **Ten Ways to Promote Positive Childhood Experiences**
- **Active Families, Active Children: How Everyone Benefits from Movement**
  - ◆ This Café presents how the Four Building Blocks of HOPE support the physical development of the child and family. Participants will also understand how being physically active as a family can positively impact the whole child, their well-being, as well as their growth and development.
  - ◆ **PowerPoint with Notes**
  - ◆ Handouts
    - **Four Building Blocks of HOPE**
    - **Physical Activity Calendar**
    - **Ten Tips to be an Active Family**
- **Cooking Up Healthy Lifestyles**
  - ◆ This Café focuses on how nurturing healthy eating habits creates positive experiences with nutritious foods and mealtime activities.
  - ◆ **PowerPoint with Notes**
  - ◆ Handouts
    - **Four Building Blocks of HOPE**
    - **Child Nutrition Resource Links**
- **Creating Memories at Mealtime**
  - ◆ This Café engages families in conversations focused on how eating as a family supports the whole child and the family while strengthening the Four Building Blocks of HOPE. Participants will discuss strategies to make mealtime an opportunity for building positive relationships with families through conversations and nurturing interactions.
  - ◆ **PowerPoint with Notes**
  - ◆ Handouts
    - **Four Building Blocks of HOPE**
    - **Family Style Dining Tips**
- **Managing Screen Time in a Technology World**
  - ◆ This Café facilitates learning and conversations on how families can manage screen time by using a family media plan and consider alternate activities to reduce passive screen time.
  - ◆ **PowerPoint with Notes**
  - ◆ Handouts
    - **Four Building Blocks of HOPE**
    - **Managing Screen Time in a Technology World**
  - ◆ Resources
    - **AAP Media Plan (healthychildren.org)**- Facilitator will need to create a Family Media Plan to be prepared to briefly demonstrate the plan during the Café.



**PowerPoint Presentations**

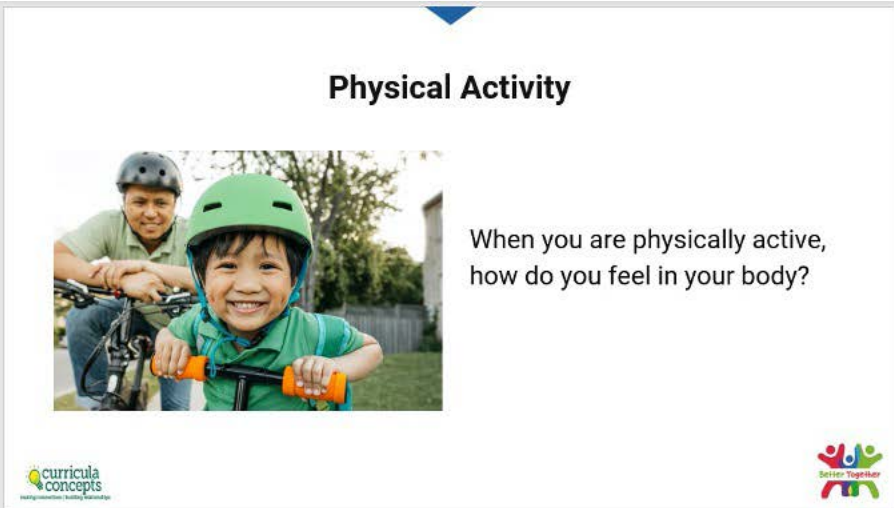
Each Better Together Family Café’s PowerPoint presentation walks the facilitator through the whole Café process and provides tips and ideas for facilitation.

The screenshot below shows how the slides are set-up. Some slides are meant for the facilitator to share the content with participants. Other slides serve as conversation prompts for the facilitator or table hosts. Each slide provides suggested guidance, a sample script, and directions for the facilitator.

**Notes Section Key**

*Italicized words* indicate content the trainer will present to participants.

**Bolded words** are notes and instructions specifically for the facilitator to consider as they lead discussions and/or activities.



*Physical activity plays a key role in personal wellness. How do you feel after you are physically active? Do you notice a difference in your mood or in your body?*

**Trainer Note:** Pause to give participants a chance to respond. Prepare to share a personal example.

*Let’s look at the many benefits of being physically active.*

### Additional Considerations

#### In-person Cafés:



- Participants should travel from table to table individually, not as a group.
- The table host(s) remain at the same table(s) throughout the Café.
- Table hosts will introduce themselves to each new group and ask participants to introduce themselves.
- Facilitator will gently pause participants' conversations (using a soft chime or other sound) and cue them to move to the next table when time.

#### Virtual Cafés:



- Place participants in groups of three to four per breakout room.
- Distribute staff evenly among breakout rooms so there isn't a breakout room made up of mostly staff.

#### In-person or Virtual:



- If your overall group is small (five participants or less), participants may stay at the same table or in the main virtual room to discuss all questions/prompts together as a group.
- Table hosts will read each Café question aloud.
- Everyone will discuss each set of questions—the order doesn't matter.



- Table hosts will ask guests to “go deeper” and reflect on the question through personal experiences and understanding.
- The table hosts should make sure the conversations flow without directing or controlling the discussion. Don't go around asking each participant to speak.
- Facilitator will let participants know only when one minute of conversation remains.
- Emphasize that everyone is an expert about their own experiences and feelings. There are no wrong answers.

### Closing the Family Café

#### Reminder memos for in-person Cafés:



- At the end of each Café, participants reflect on what they learned and their takeaways from the discussion. Participants will write themselves a letter that the facilitator will mail to them two weeks after the Café.
- Facilitator may need to provide a friendly explanation or example of how to address the envelope. Many people have not addressed a letter to themselves and will need support.
- Facilitator should provide brightly colored envelopes and blank paper/cards. These make it feel special when the participants get the memos in the mail.

#### Use this time to:

- Answer any questions.
- Complete evaluations.
- Discuss any next steps (e.g., relevant resources, future Cafés).
- Give away door prizes.

### After the Café

Facilitators will follow-up with participants by sending an email thanking them for coming to the Café. Include any resources and a copy of the handouts in the email.

For in-person Cafés, mail the reminder memos to participants two weeks after the Café.

## Implementation Checklist

Review the checklist below to think through all implementation considerations.

### Family Café Implementation Checklist

	Ensure all materials are prepared in advance for set-up to be quick and easy.
	Revise PowerPoints as needed to make more relevant to participants.
	Confirm participation with families. Share the details of the Family Café (e.g., time, place and parking for in-person, time and link for virtual).
	Implement Family Café.
	Provide incentives.
	Follow-up with participants after the Family Café to share resources or other materials. (For in-person, mail reminder memos to participants two weeks after the Family Café.)
	Complete final evaluation.
	Report findings to stakeholders and funders.

### For More Information

For more information about the Better Together Family Cafés or for support to begin the process of planning and implementing the Family Cafés, please email [BetterTogether@nemours.org](mailto:BetterTogether@nemours.org).

Visit [www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org) for more resources.

## Better Together Family Cafés Toolkit Glossary

<b>Better Together</b>	A three-year initiative and research study conducted jointly by Nemours Children’s Health (Nemours Children’s) and the University of North Carolina-Go NAPSACC to support improvements in ECE programs’ physical activity, healthy eating, breastfeeding support, and screen time practices, policies, and environments. One component of this initiative was Family Cafés.
<b>Early Care and Education (ECE)</b>	The field, sector, or industry that includes care and learning experiences for children from birth to age five.
<b>Early Care and Education Program (ECE Program)</b>	A business or organized service that provides care and learning experiences to groups of children from birth to age five. ECE centers and family child care homes (FCCH) are common types of ECE programs.
<b>Early Childhood</b>	A developmental period of time, typically birth to age five.
<b>Facilitator</b>	The individual responsible for planning, organizing, and leading Family Café events
<b>Family Café</b>	Events where family members are engaged in learning and conversation on a particular topic. For the Better Together Family Cafés, the topics include physical activity, child nutrition, family style dining, and screen time. A Family Café is not a physical space or building but an approach to creating an environment where parents and primary caregivers feel safe to engage and to participate in facilitated conversations with other families.
<b>Guiding Principles</b>	Any guidelines that establish common expectations for behavior, engagement, and creation of an environment that encourages open and honest sharing of ideas and dialogue.
<b>Implementation Toolkit</b>	A collection of adaptable documents and resources that can be used to inform and facilitate implementation of interventions. The Better Together Family Café materials were developed, tested, and refined based on implementation of Curricula Concepts staff and feedback from participating trainers, ECE programs, and families.
<b>Harvest</b>	A time at the end of the Café session where individuals are invited to share insights or ideas from their small group conversations with other participants. Often, the ideas that are shared are documented in a visual way. For example, some Family Café facilitators choose to use <b><u>graphic recording</u></b> to capture reflections that are shared.
<b>HOPE</b>	Healthy Outcomes from Positive Experiences is a program at Tufts Medical Center that seeks to create a “paradigm shift in how we see and talk about the positive experiences that support children’s growth and development into healthy, resilient adults.”
<b>HOPE Building Blocks</b>	“Composed of key Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs) – and the sources of those experiences and opportunities – that help children grow into healthy, resilient adults.”
<b>HOPE National Resource Center</b>	Based out of Tufts Medical Center in Boston, The National Resource Center works with health care practitioners, social service providers, and community-based organizations across the United States to implement the HOPE framework.
<b>Table Host</b>	Individuals that are responsible for helping facilitate and guide small group conversations during a Family Café event, both in-person or virtually.





[www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org](http://www.healthykidshealthyfuture.org)