

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Central Islip Union Free School District
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BEST BITES

Alphabet exercise

For a fun exercise, have your child lie on her back and use her legs to “draw” the alphabet in the air. She



could form uppercase letters, take a break, and then do the lowercase alphabet. To give her arms a workout, she can stand up, hold her arms straight out, and move them around to make the letters.

Drink think

Get your youngster thinking about what he drinks with this idea. Each day, have him write down the drinks he has and how much (1 glass milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ can soda). Younger children could draw pictures of each one. Encourage him to have mostly milk and water—and tell him he can use his daily lists to see how he’s doing!

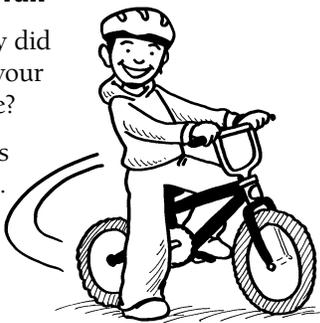
DID YOU KNOW?

The healthiest foods tend to be placed around the perimeter of a grocery store. This is where you’ll find fresh foods, such as fruits, vegetables, meats, fish, eggs, and milk. Try to shop from the perimeter first, and then fill in with the canned, packaged, and bagged items that you need from the center aisles.

Just for fun

Dad: Why did you ride your bike twice?

Ben: I was re-cycling.



I’m a cook!

There are many benefits to having a youngster who cooks. He gains an important life skill, and you get to spend time together in the kitchen. Plus, he’s likely to be a healthier eater, because homemade meals tend to be more nutritious. Help your child enjoy cooking with these ideas.

Play a starring role. If Grandma is coming for dinner, put him in charge of a dish. He will feel proud when you say, “Isn’t this meatloaf delicious? Evan made it all by himself!” *Tip:* Teach him how to make one of your family’s favorite foods so it can become “his” contribution for get-togethers or holiday meals.

Use the tools. Give your youngster a children’s cookbook, and let him put his name in it. You can tell him that chefs make notes on their recipes, and he could do the same. He might write, “Great recipe” next to one he liked, or “Use strawberries instead” if he didn’t like the



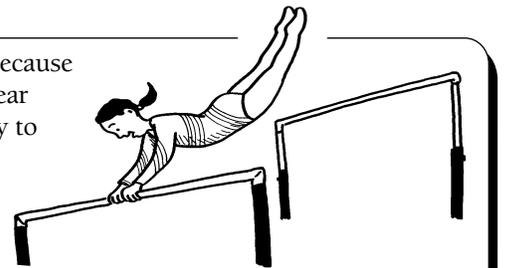
blueberries in a dish. Also, consider getting him his own apron, cookie cutters, or other “cook’s tools”—and let him keep his things in a special bin or drawer.

Be creative. Tell your child that a recipe is a guide. The fun in cooking can be personalizing the ingredients or coming up with his own creations. Encourage him to follow his tastes (and try not to cringe if they’re not yours). And remember, it doesn’t have to be perfect—if the cucumber slices are all different sizes, they will still taste good. If your child is comfortable in the kitchen, he’ll be more likely to cook now *and* when he’s older. ♥

Relevant facts

Telling your child to eat something because it’s “healthy” can backfire—she may hear “healthy” and think “yuck.” Instead, try to relate the food to something she cares about. For example, you might say:

- “I know you love to solve brain-teasers. Guess what? Eating fish is good for your brain. Which piece of salmon do you want?”
- “Nuts give you energy to play hard. How about taking trail mix for your snack tomorrow—you’ll have lots of energy at recess time!”
- “I see you’re excited about going to gymnastics today! This spinach salad has extra calcium to help your bones grow strong so you can swing on the uneven bars. How much would you like?” ♥

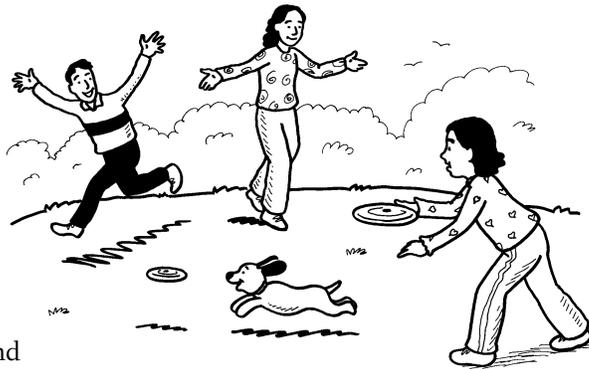


Frisbee games

Tossing a Frisbee is not only fun, it's a good way for your child to get more physical activity. Suggest these games.

Catch

Stand a few feet apart, and toss a Frisbee to your child. She catches it, takes a big step back, and tosses it to you. With each catch, the person moves back a step. Soon you'll be tossing farther and farther and running to catch the disc.



Obstacle course

Create a Frisbee obstacle course in your backyard or at a park. For instance, you might have to toss the Frisbee over a tree, in between swings, or into a soccer net. Time each person through the course to find the winner.

Race

If you have a lot of space, you can have a Frisbee race. Mark a start and finish line, and give each runner a Frisbee. At "Go," each runner flings her Frisbee, races to it, tosses it again, and keeps going until she reaches the finish line. *Note:* Try this at a school track if there aren't other people running. ♥

Q & A Should I coach?

Q: I love baseball. Should I sign up to coach my son's baseball team?

A: Volunteering is a wonderful way to show your child that you support his physical activity. You will also fill a need in your community—in fact, sports groups often have trouble getting enough coaches. And you can get tremendous satisfaction from helping a group of children.

But deciding to coach is a big decision, as it will affect your relationship with your son on and off the field. Ask yourself a few questions, such as, "How will I separate my role as parent and coach?" "How will my child respond when I pay attention to his teammates?" and "How will I react if my son doesn't play well?" It's also a good idea to talk to your youngster about how he would feel if you coached.

Finally, make a list of the pros and cons to help you come to the right decision for you and your family. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Spice it up

How can your youngster take a tour of the world and learn about a healthy way to add flavor to food? By exploring spices and herbs! Try these steps:

1. Put out spice jars. For each one, have your child read the name, look inside, and smell the spice. Does it remind her of a food she eats? For example, oregano might smell like pizza, or curry might make her think of Indian food. Together, look at the label to see where the spice is grown (or search for the information online).
2. Help your youngster make a spice guide. She can put dots of glue on construction paper and sprinkle a spice on each one. Have her write the name underneath and list dishes to use it in. *Hint:* She can find recommendations on the label or in cookbooks.
3. When you're making dinner, ask your child to pick spices to add. Let her taste the food before and after—what does she notice? ♥



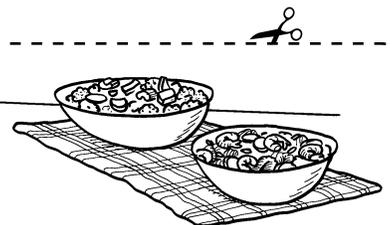
IN THE KITCHEN

No-cook dinners

Sometimes you just don't feel like cooking. On those nights, try one of these main-course salads that involve assembling—but no oven or stove.

Shrimp-bulgur salad

1. Put 1½ cups bulgur in a bowl, and cover with warm water. Let stand for about 2 hours, until the bulgur is tender. Drain.
2. Whisk ½ cup olive oil with the juice of 1 lemon and 3 tbsp. chopped dill. Add the bulgur, along with 1 lb. cooked shrimp (available from a grocery store or fish market), 3 cups fresh spinach, and 2 tbsp. chopped almonds. Season with salt and pepper.



Chicken-apple slaw

1. Shred the meat from a rotisserie chicken.
2. Toss with:
 - 1 cup broccoli slaw
 - 1 diced apple (cored)
 - 1 celery stalk, thinly sliced
 - 1 can water chestnut slices (drained)
 - ¼ cup low-fat ranch dressing
3. Using an ice cream scoop, put a portion on a bed of lettuce.

Variation: Use canned tuna (packed in water) instead of chicken. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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