Nutrition Nuggets™
Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child
October 2019
Covington County Schools
Child Nutrition Program

BEST BITES

Meal prep + math

Make busy school nights easier—and give your child math practice—with this idea. On weekends, ask him to double recipes for whatever you plan to cook, such as the baked beans for Saturday's picnic or egg casserole for Sunday's breakfast. Then, freeze half to save for a weeknight.

Heart-healthy exercise

Getting vigorous physical activity every day is good for your youngster's heart and overall health. Right after she's active (runs around outside, walks home from school, plays hockey), have her do a quick check of her body. Is she sweating? Is her heart beating fast? If the answer is yes, then she has exercised vigorously.



DID YOU KNOW?

Dark leafy greens have more nutrients than iceberg lettuce. For your child's next salad, choose spinach, baby kale, arugula, or romaine lettuce. If he'll only eat iceberg, introduce other greens by gradually adding more of them to each salad he eats.

Just for fun

Q: What has a big mouth but never speaks?

A: A jar.



Fall for healthy outings

With cooler temperatures and a bounty of fruits and vegetables, fall is a great season for healthy family outings. Here are a few to try.



Go apple picking

Pick ripe, juicy apples at an orchard or the grocery store. Your child can choose different varieties, such as Red Delicious, Granny Smith, and Macintosh. Afterward, hold a tasting party to see which kind everyone likes best. Then, incorporate the apples into meals. For instance, add thin slices to turkey sandwiches or dice into oatmeal.

Visit a market

Stop by a farmers' market or produce stand, and let your youngster pick out colorful fall vegetables. Depending on where you live, she might find acorn squash, parsnips, broccoli, pumpkins, or cabbage. At home, she can play farm stand with your veggies. Pretend to be her customer, and talk about each food's taste and texture. Then, serve your healthy "purchases" for dinner.

Take a "bingo" hike

Go for a hike to get some exercise and appreciate fall scenery. First, have your child make a bingo card filled with things you normally see in your area this time of year. *Examples:* red leaf, acorn, squirrel, pinecone, flock of geese. Family members can check off each item as they spot it. Get five in a row and call out "Bingo!"

Build character with sports



Playing a sport not only helps your youngster stay fit and learn new skills—it can also be a great character builder. Help him succeed physically and mentally with these three tips.

1. Praise him for effort, a positive attitude, and good sportsmanship, rather than focusing on winning.

2. Encourage responsibility. Have him keep track of his equipment and wash his own uniform and practice clothes.

3. Set a good example by being respectful of players, coaches, and referees.

Tip: Make sure your youngster carries healthy snacks and a water bottle in his gym bag.

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Microwave "magic"



Give the microwave a starring role in your kitchen, and you and your child can prepare healthy foods in almost no time! Consider these ideas.

Potatoes. Pierce two russet or sweet potatoes several times with a fork to let steam escape (and avoid exploding spuds). Then, microwave 7–10 minutes.

Bread. Freshen up bagels and bread. Wrap in a dry paper towel, and zap 10–15 seconds until soft.

Veggies. Steam fresh or frozen vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, and green beans. Put in a covered microwave-safe bowl with 1 tbsp. water per cup of veggies. Heat on high 3 minutes, until tender-crisp.

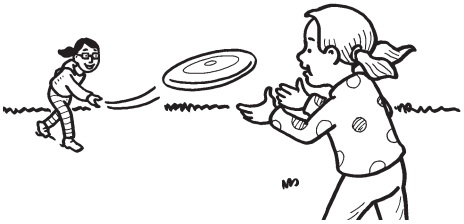
Corn. Microwave corn on the cob in the husks! Cook two ears 4–5 minutes, and easily slide off the husks and silk.

Bananas. Ripen a banana quickly. Leave the peel on, and poke holes all the way through with a fork. Heat 30–90 seconds, until slightly softened.

Citrus fruits. Get more juice out of your lemons or limes. Place a whole fruit in the microwave, and heat 20 seconds. When it cools, slice in half and squeeze.

ACTIVITY CORNER Frisbee toss

Playing with a Frisbee boosts your youngster's hand-eye coordination and keeps her active. Mix things up with these challenges:



- Stand a few feet apart, and throw the Frisbee to each other. Every time it is caught, you each take one step back. See how far apart you can get before a miss. Then, move back to the starting positions and play again.
- Hang a hula hoop from a tree. Players stand on opposite sides of the hoop and toss the Frisbee back and forth through the hoop. Count how many catches you make without missing.
- Who can throw the Frisbee the farthest? Take turns tossing it, and use a rock to mark the spot where it lands.

PARENT TO PARENT Cooking with a friend



My son Garrett loves to cook, so I wasn't surprised when he wanted to invite a friend over to cook together. We looked online for healthy, kid-friendly recipes and came up with a great idea: ice cube–tray "sushi."

When Garrett's friend arrived, they began by making the rice. (I had them use short-grain rice because it's sticky.) I let them measure and pour, and I handled the stove. While the rice cooked, they microwaved asparagus, green beans, and baby carrots to use for toppings. I chopped the vegetables and helped the boys make scrambled eggs.

After everything cooled, the kids sprayed an ice cube tray with nonstick cooking spray, put veggies and egg in each section, and packed rice over them. They refrigerated the tray for five minutes, then popped out their sushi and ate. Garrett's friend had so much fun that he has already invited my son to cook at his house!

IN THE KITCHEN Dip it in yogurt

Yogurt makes a nutritious breakfast—and it's also great for dipping as a snack or side dish. Using 1 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt, your child can whip up these quick recipes for a tasty treat.

Dill dipper

Stir $\frac{1}{2}$ tbsp. each fresh (or $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried) dill and chives into yogurt. Serve with whole-wheat crackers or baked pita chips.



Cinnamon twist

Mix $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cinnamon and $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. each nutmeg and vanilla extract into yogurt. Dunk whole-grain pretzel sticks or fresh strawberries into the dip for a cool after-school snack.

Maple almond

Add 1 tsp. maple syrup and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. almond extract to yogurt. Mix in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup slivered almonds. This is perfect for eating with fruit or low-fat graham crackers.

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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