

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

March 2015

Crescent Elementary School
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BEST BITES

Let's fly a kite

Take advantage of March winds to fly a kite with your youngster. As he runs along with it, he'll get a fun workout. How long can he keep it in the air? *Idea:* Find a kite festival in your area where he could see interesting kites or fly his kite with others.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children who are overweight miss more school than other children. That's one more reason to work with your youngster's doctor on strategies for keeping your child at a healthy weight. Avoiding empty calories from junk food and soda will help, and so will building in lots of physical activity.

Do the "bird dog"

Here's a core-building exercise that's fun for the whole family. Get on all



fours. Lift your right arm up and straight forward, and at the same time, lift your left leg up and straight back. Hold for a count of 3. Switch to the opposite sides (left arm forward, right leg back), and hold. Alternate bird dog poses without falling over!

Just for fun

Q: Why did Bella want alphabet soup for lunch?

A: So she could read while she eats!



Supersize with fruits and veggies

The road to better health is paved with lots of fruits and vegetables, and yet fewer than 1 in 10 children eat the recommended amount. Inspire your youngster to supersize her fruit and veggie intake with these ideas.



Go halvesies

Give your child a visual image to shoot for: Tell her to fill half her plate with fruits and vegetables. Have her lay a piece of string down the center of her plate as a guide. The fruit-and-veggie half of her dinner plate might include mashed cauliflower, tomato slices, and half of a sweet potato. *Note:* The other half of her plate should have lean protein and grains (preferably whole grains).

Be colorful

Ask your youngster to draw a rainbow on a sheet of white paper. Whenever she eats a fruit or vegetable, she could write its name on the corresponding color

(apple on red, butternut squash on orange). She can put white items (cauliflower, jicama) on the white part outside her rainbow. How many different fruits and vegetables will she add in a week?

Party on

Host a tasting party featuring fruits and vegetables. You might put samples into muffin pans, one per cup. Do a family tasting, or let your child invite friends over. Your child could predict which fruit and which vegetable will be most popular. Then, let tasters vote for their favorites. Tally the winners, and use them in meals and snacks. ♥

Roll the dice

With a roll of the dice, you can get everyone moving. Here are two ways.

How many? On a sheet of paper, list six exercises, and number them. *Example:* (1) forward rolls, (2) jumping jacks, (3) high knees, and so on. Then, roll a die—the number shown tells which activity to do. Roll it again to find out how many times to do it. So if your youngster rolls a 1 and a 6, everyone does 6 forward rolls.

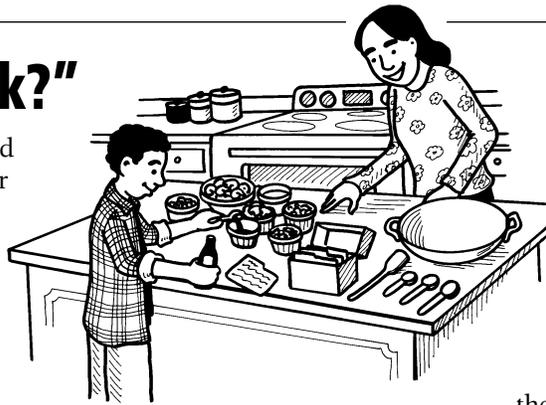
What's next? Cover all sides of a cardboard box with white paper. Together, think of a creative direction to write on each side. *Examples:* "Waddle backward like a duck." "Spin like a top around the room." Roll the giant die, and follow the instructions. ♥



Parlez-vous "good cook?"

Learning one French phrase can help your child (and you) be a better and more organized cook for a lifetime! It's *mise en place*, and it means to "put in place." What that really means is to set up everything he needs for cooking—before he actually begins cooking. Try these steps.

- 1. Read.** Have your youngster find and read through a recipe. Or he could create one of his own and write it down.
- 2. Gather.** Let your child get out the ingredients, measuring cups and spoons, bowls for measuring ingredients into, and equipment he'll need (saucepan, wooden spoon, colander).



Tip: Suggest that he use small bowls or ramekins for spices and other small quantities.

3. Prepare. Help your youngster dice, chop, or slice ingredients. He should measure each item into a separate bowl and

line them up in the order they'll be used. For a shrimp stir-fry, for instance, he might put

shrimp in one bowl and then, in separate ramekins, place canola oil, soy sauce, chopped garlic, chopped onion, sliced mushrooms, trimmed snow peas, water, and pepper.

Note: Do yourself and your child a favor, and teach him to clean up as he goes, too. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Wash your hands

This game will show your youngster the importance of washing his hands before eating or handling food.

Have a few family members or friends sit in a circle. Put "germs" (flour or baby powder) on your child's hands. Then, let him shake hands with the next person, who shakes hands with the third person.



When the last person holds up his hands, everyone will see he has flour—or germs—on his hands. Talk about what would happen if he had set the table or made a salad with his germ-covered hands (those germs would be on your plate or food).

Now play again, but have everyone wash their hands first. This time, when the last person holds up his hands—no germs! ♥

Q&A Choose action, not action games

Q: When it comes to video games vs. active games, my daughter will pick video games every time. What should I do?

A: The idea is to get your child to want to get off the couch and play—just telling her it's better for her probably isn't going to do the trick.

Think about the kinds of video games she likes.

How can you use those interests to encourage her to play actively instead? For instance, she might build obstacle courses like the ones characters jump through. Or she could create "worlds" with Legos, put on skits to tell a tale, or play the sport (hockey, basketball) for real.

Another thing that works for some families is to tie outdoor play time to video game time. That is, for each 30 minutes on the video game, she would spend an hour being active.

Note: Experts recommend no more than two hours—total—of screen time a day. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN Going bananas

Bananas are available year-round, rich in nutrients, affordable, and portable. Plus, kids love them. Keep a bunch on hand for ideas like these:

- Slice a banana into ½-inch-thick circles. Top each one with a spoonful of fat-free Greek yogurt (any flavor) and a few chocolate chips or peanuts. Freeze for about an hour.
- Place a banana inside a whole-grain hot dog roll. Swirl peanut butter and jelly on top as if they were

ketchup and mustard. Now you have a banana dog!

- Peel several bananas, and cut into pieces. Freeze in a zipper bag for a few hours. In a blender or food processor, blend the frozen chunks until they're a creamy consistency. Enjoy your banana "ice cream" in a bowl or cone.

- Use a marker to write an exercise on each banana in a bunch.

Examples: "Do 5 sit-ups" or "Run in place." Grab a banana, do the exercise, then peel and eat. ♥



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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