

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Westfield School District
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BEST BITES

Give this a whirl!

Bring out the gymnast in your children with this colorful idea. Help them knot different-colored ribbons securely to yardsticks or wooden dowels. They'll build coordination as they spin or dance around and wave their arms to create figure 8s, circles, and ripples with the ribbons.



Turn to turnips

Loaded with fiber, potassium, vitamin C, and protein, turnips deserve a spot on your child's plate. Peel a raw turnip, and grate it over his salad. Cut it into matchsticks and serve with hummus. Or dice turnips and add to soups, stews, and casseroles. *Note:* Try other root vegetables like rutabaga and parsnips, they contain similar health benefits.

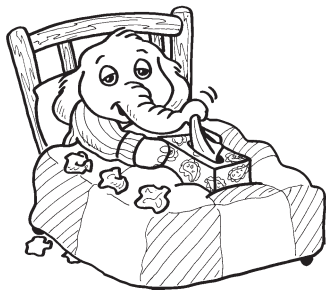
DID YOU KNOW?

Vitamin K helps blood clot and keeps bones healthy. To be sure your youngster gets the recommended amount, try adding spinach, kale, lettuce, and other leafy greens to her diet. More good sources of vitamin K include brussels sprouts, blueberries, broccoli, and figs.

Just for fun

Q: What can you catch in the winter with your eyes closed?

A: A cold.



Raise an adventurous eater

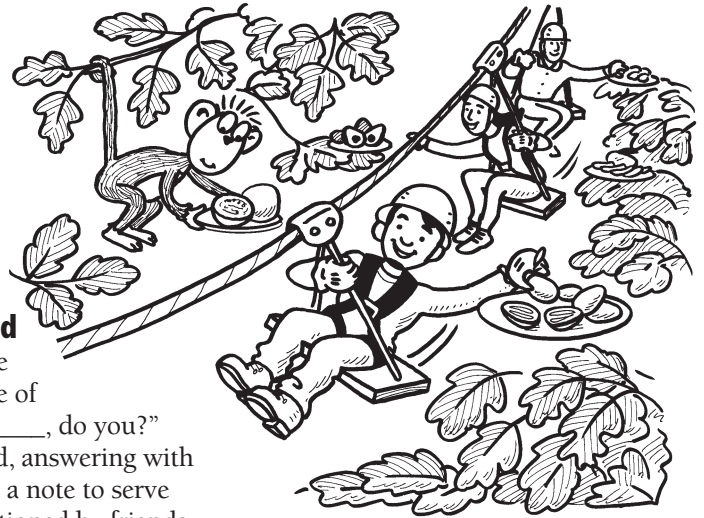
You want your child to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains. He wants macaroni and cheese. *Always.* Try these strategies to break through his picky-eater pattern.

Get friends involved

The next time you're carpooling, lead a game of "I like to eat healthy _____, do you?" The kids can go around, answering with foods they enjoy. Make a note to serve some of the foods mentioned by friends. Your youngster just may be willing to try ones that his peers like!

Guess the mystery ingredient

Add an unfamiliar food to a dish that includes a few of your child's favorite ingredients. For example, toss kiwi into a fruit salad. Or put lima beans in mixed vegetables. Have him close his eyes and take a few bites. Let him name the familiar foods and guess the new one.



Explore as a dinner guest

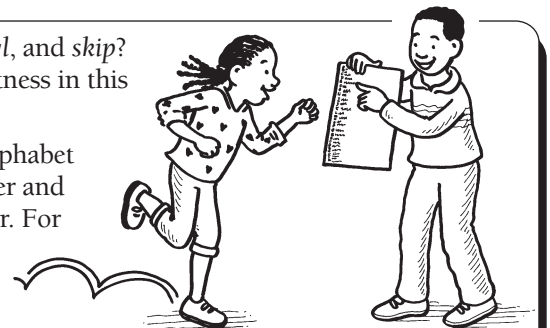
When your youngster eats at someone else's house, encourage him to sample a little of whatever is served. He could add a spoonful of beets to his plate, for example, or take a small piece of salmon. When he gets home, ask what he tried. Can he describe its taste? Then, consider making it at home—he might be willing to eat a dish "like the one at Joey's house." ♥

Fitness coding

When does ABC mean *hop*, *crawl*, and *skip*? When kids combine coding with fitness in this game! Here's how.

1. Have your youngster write the alphabet down the left side of a sheet of paper and fill in a movement beside each letter. For example, A = hop on one foot for 10 seconds, B = crawl like a crab, C = skip to the tree and back.

2. Now take turns secretly choosing a word and doing the movements for each letter. Other players consult the list and write the "code" by figuring out which letter matches each movement. So if the code is s-n-o-w, the secret word is *snow*. The first person to say the word picks the next one. ♥



Bullying and food allergies

Nearly a third of youngsters with food allergies report being bullied about not being able to eat certain foods. If your child has a food allergy or is friends with someone who does, she can use this advice.

Recognize bullying. If a classmate knows that someone is allergic to a food and waves it in her face, pressures her to eat it, or puts it on her



cafeteria tray, that's bullying. It's also dangerous and could make the child sick or possibly lead to death. Your child needs to let an adult know right away if this happens.

Keep food safe. If your youngster has food allergies, help her protect herself from bullies. For example, tell her to only accept food from a trusted adult who is aware of her allergy. Also, she shouldn't leave her food unattended. She could ask a friend to help her keep an eye on her cafeteria tray, or she can offer to

look out for a friend who is allergic.

Note: Make sure your child knows which foods she is allergic to and is familiar with the symptoms of a reaction. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Indoor scavenger hunts

Amp up the indoor fun this winter with a scavenger hunt for your child and his friends.

● **Color hunt.** Assign each child a different color, then hide a dozen Legos or blocks of each color. Players race to find all the blocks of their color.



● **Puzzle hunt.** Break out a 25-piece jigsaw puzzle and hide the pieces around the house. When the youngsters have all 25 pieces, they can put the puzzle together.

● **Shape hunt.** Ask the children to list all the shapes they can think of. They can run around and each try to find one item of every shape. Maybe the remote control is a rectangular prism, a soccer ball is a sphere, and a paper towel is a square. ♥

Q&A Organized sports: Finding the best fit

Q: My daughter wants to join a sports team, but I don't know where to start. Any suggestions?

A: Taking part in an organized sport is a terrific way for your child to stay active. Plus, it can boost her self-esteem and social skills. Start by talking with your daughter about her interests. Which sports does she enjoy playing during PE or on the playground?

Then, see what's available in your area. Your youngster's school and the parks and recreation department are good places to start. Look into the time commitment and costs involved in various sports.

To learn more, you could also talk to other parents whose children have participated.

Finally, consider having her try a few sports, perhaps one each season, to find her favorites. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN Stay warm with chili

Try these big-batch spins on family favorites.

Slow-cooker chicken chili

- In a slow cooker, combine the following:
- 2 lbs. boneless chicken breasts (cubed)
- 2 15-oz. cans pinto beans (drained, rinsed)
- 1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 15-oz. can tomato sauce
- 1½ cups frozen corn
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. each cumin, dried oregano, and minced garlic

Cook on high for 1 hour, then on low for 3–4 hours.

Lentil vegetarian chili

In a large pot, stir together:

- 4 14.5-oz. cans diced tomatoes
- 2 15-oz. cans kidney beans (drained, rinsed)
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 cups uncooked green lentils
- 1½ cups each diced onion and bell pepper
- 3 tbsp. chili powder
- 2 tbsp. garlic powder

Boil, then cover and simmer 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in:

- 1 8-oz. can tomato sauce
 - 1 6-oz. can tomato paste
- Heat 5 minutes more. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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