

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

East Broadway Elementary School
Jeanmarie Wink, Principal

BEST BITES

No obstacle

For some fun exercise, help your youngster build an obstacle course. Use empty cereal boxes to scoot around, a table to crawl under, a large cardboard box to wiggle through, and a pile of pillows to dive into. The key? Create obstacles for your child to go over, under, through, and around.

Know their BMI



Find out your child's Body Mass Index. That's the number that measures height against weight and lets you know if your youngster is at a healthy weight. You can

use the parent-friendly online tool at apps.nccd.cde.gov/dnpabmi/Calculator.aspx, or ask your pediatrician to figure it out at your child's next visit.

Single servings

Keep portable snacks handy—and hold your food budget down—by buying items in bulk and making your own single-serve bags. Check portion sizes on nutrition labels of cereal, baked crackers, or nuts, and fill zipper bags with one serving each. Then, your youngster can grab a nutritious snack quickly.

Just for fun

Q: What did the teddy bear say when he was offered dessert?

A: No, thanks. I'm stuffed!



A good start

Did you know that breakfast is the most important meal of your child's day? It provides the nutrients and energy he needs to concentrate in school. Research even shows that kids who eat breakfast get better grades, pay more attention in class, and behave better. Help your youngster begin his day on the right foot.

Make time

Set the alarm to allow 10–15 unhurried minutes for breakfast. Suggest several healthy breakfast items, and let your child choose. *Tip:* If your youngster doesn't like to make decisions first thing in the morning, give him breakfast choices the night before.

Make it healthy

Give your child a mix of protein (such as milk, eggs, cheese, or meat) and carbohydrates (whole-grain cereal, fruit, or whole-wheat bread). The carbohydrates boost energy and help your child jump-start his day, while the protein keeps his body going strong until lunchtime.

Make it kid-friendly

These quick breakfasts are sure to bring an early-morning smile to your youngster's face:

● **Egg in a Basket:** Cover a frying pan with no-fat cooking spray. Tear a hole out of a slice of whole-wheat bread, put the slice in the pan, and



crack an egg into the hole. Cook two minutes, flip, and cook until the egg is set and lightly browned.

● **Waffle Wonder:** Toast a whole-grain frozen waffle. Put sliced strawberries around the edge and fill with a handful of blueberries. Serve with a side of low-fat flavored cottage cheese or yogurt.

Family meals

Do your kids rush through dinner and bolt from the table? Try these ideas to build quality family time into your dinner hour.

Keep the conversation light. Focus on the events of the day or fun weekend plans ahead. Of course, praising your children for a job well done at school or home is always welcome!

Take turns. Ask each person to tell one interesting thing he or she learned during the day. That includes you, too. You might mention something you read in the newspaper or learned about at work.

Play a game. Try the "name game." Start with the name of someone famous (George Washington). Go around the table, taking turns calling out another well-known person or character with the same first or last name (Curious George, George Washington Carver).



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It all adds up

Exercise doesn't have to be done all at once. Encourage your youngster to be active throughout the day—small amounts of time will add up! In general, school-age children should get at least an hour of physical activity each day. Here are some ways to put more exercise into your child's routine:

- Have her invite friends over for a backyard game of tag or capture the flag.



- Suggest that she jump rope for 10 minutes.
- Put on some music, and dance to it.
- Bike together to the library or a friend's house. *Note:* For safety, use sidewalks and wear helmets.
- When you do errands together, park far from the store to encourage more walking time.

- Take the steps rather than the elevator when you're shopping or at the dentist.

Remember: Regular exercise will not only make your child healthier—it will help her sleep better at night and be in better shape to learn and play all day. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

A walk a day

A daily family walk is a great way to get your child—and you—moving. Some families take a walk after dinner. Others plan a morning walk on the weekends. For parents who are home after school, that's often a great time to walk.

Figure out the best time for your family's schedule, and use the time to walk and talk—you'll be helping everyone get healthier, and you'll be spending special time together. Make the walk more fun by mixing it up: walk one block and skip for the next, or alternate walking fast and slow.

You can even sneak in some learning time on your walk. For example, have your child count how many trees you pass or read the signs along the way. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

Smoothie time

Here's a surefire way to get kids excited about eating healthfully. Toss fruit, a few ice cubes, yogurt, and juice into a blender, and mix until thick. With your supervision, your youngsters can even do it themselves! Try these combinations.

Red & White—4 strawberries, 1 banana, 1 container low-fat vanilla yogurt, 1 cup orange juice

Cool Blue—1½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries, 1 container low-fat blueberry yogurt, 1 cup 100% grape juice

Just Peachy—1 cut-up peach or 1 cup frozen peaches, 1 container low-fat peach yogurt, ¾ cup orange juice

Tip: Add a teaspoon of wheat bran (available at your grocery or health food store) to put fiber into your youngsters' treats. ♥



Q & A Too many snacks

Q: When my child comes home from school, he snacks all afternoon and then isn't hungry for dinner. How can I get him to change this habit?

A: You may be surprised to know that children actually need snacks. Their stomachs are small, so they can't get all the food and nutrients they need in just three meals a day. The trick is to give your youngster a snack that's both healthy and filling so he will be able to wait until dinnertime to eat again.

Try giving your child a choice of snacks when he comes home. Offer foods like microwave low-fat popcorn, string cheese and fruit, or "ants on a log" (peanut butter spread on celery stalks and covered with raisins).

Tip: If your youngster is in day care after school, find out when they serve the last snack of the day. Ask that your child not have one too close to your dinnertime. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630

540-636-4280 • educustomer@wolterskluwer.com

www.rleonline.com

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

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Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

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SHORT NOTES



Ticket, please!

If you want to limit your youngster's TV time, try this idea. Every week, give her seven slips of paper. Each is good for an hour of television. Remind her to plan ahead. For example, if she wants to watch a two-hour movie on Saturday, she'll need to save an extra ticket during the week.

Be there!

Regular attendance in elementary school sets up a good pattern for your child's entire school career. Show him that school comes first by trying to keep days off for illnesses and family emergencies. Also, schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments for after school or over school breaks.

Better concentration

Looking for a fun way to improve your youngster's concentration? Try this quick game. The first player makes one motion, like clapping or spinning around. The second person copies him and adds another movement. Continue adding new motions until someone forgets the sequence. The last player to get it right starts a new game.

Worth quoting

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."
H. Jackson Brown Jr.

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Study smarts

From a history test at the end of each month to a spelling quiz every Friday, studying is a skill youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Help your child study with these tips.

Start a habit. Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something he does the evening before a test. For example, he might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After he finishes his regular homework, he can spend a little time reviewing his notes and handouts.

Tackle textbooks. When your child has a chapter to study, have him "preview" it to increase his understanding. He should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words. *Tip:* If he finds a section hard to grasp, he could read a picture book on the topic. For a science unit on matter,



for instance, he could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

Mix it up. If your youngster reviews information in several ways, he'll be more likely to remember it. He might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, he can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that he spell each word or recite each fact aloud. ♥

After-school chats

"What's in your backpack?" Greet your child with this question, and you'll discover a lot about what she does in class.

- Set aside time each day to go through her papers. Try to do it first thing after school when her day is fresh in her mind.
- Look over your youngster's work together. Help her feel proud by making a specific comment about something she's done. For instance, if she shows you a picture she drew in art class, you might say, "The gray sky and big waves look just like our rainy day at the beach."
- Have her talk through math problems or science experiments to show you what she's learned. She might explain how she finds the perimeter of a triangle or why ants dig tunnels, for example. ♥



A recipe for respect

Ava listens quietly when her teacher talks. Ben claps for each performer at his piano recital. These children show respect for others. Here's how you can encourage your youngster to do the same.

Demonstrate

Your child will learn respectful behavior by watching the way you treat others. When she makes a mistake, for instance, gently tell her what she's done wrong—and out of earshot of others. Also, let her see you respect ideas and beliefs that are different



from your own. For example, point out that you're happy a friend is voting in an election even though you each favor a different candidate.

Notice

When you see your youngster acting respectfully, let her know that you've noticed ("I like the way you asked your sister before borrowing her sweater"). Your words and attention will encourage her to show respect in the future.

Tip: If you see disrespectful behavior on TV (a child rolling his eyes or talking back to a parent), tell your youngster that isn't okay in real life. Then, ask her to be on the lookout for respectful actions by characters. How many can she spot before the program ends? ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Paper bag city

Let your child create his own 3-D community. He'll practice map skills and learn about urban planning as he decides where to put the buildings in his town.

Materials: paper lunch bags, newspapers, crayons or markers, black construction paper, scissors, tape

Have your youngster think of buildings to include, such as a bank, a grocery store, a school, a library, and houses. He can make them by drawing doors, windows, and signs on flat bags (on the side without the flap). For every bag he decorates, have him stuff a second one with newspaper. Then, he should open each decorated bag and slide it over a stuffed bag so his "buildings" will stand up. For the roads, he can cut black construction paper into strips and tape them together.

Finally, have your child lay out his roads and arrange his buildings alongside them to make his very own town. ♥



Q & A

Bullying: The bystander's role

Q: My child came home from school upset because kids were picking on a classmate and wouldn't let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?

A: Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she may be able to help stop it!

There are several things she can do. If she feels safe, she could say something like, "That's not nice," and then walk away. She might invite the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.

Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: "Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee." ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Thinking games

Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"

My son came up with a game he named "Three Favorites." Someone picks

a category (outfits, movies), and we all tell our top three choices. My daughter thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out and why. The kids especially like this game because there can be more than

one "right" answer. For example, when I named "owl," "ostrich," and "eagle," my daughter said, "Ostrich, because it can't fly."

My son's answer was, "Owl, because it hunts at night."

Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas. ♥



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Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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JEANMARIE WINK
PRINCIPAL

EAST BROADWAY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
751 SEAMANS NECK RD
SEAFORD NY 11783