

Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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Stonington Public Schools Nutrition Services
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BEST BITES

Salad + whole grains

Here's an easy idea for getting more whole grains into your youngster's diet. Toss cooked grains like brown rice or whole-wheat pasta into salads. He will probably enjoy the contrast of the warm grains and cool greens. *Tip:* Keep things interesting by swapping in different grains like barley or farro.

Active musical chairs

Put a twist on musical chairs the next time your child has friends over. For each round, call out a movement to do when the music stops and before players sit down. *Example:* "Jump up high to touch the sky." If a player forgets, or doesn't get a chair, she's out. The last person left wins the round and calls the next movement.



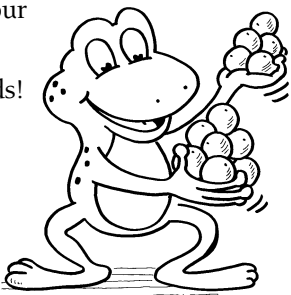
DID YOU KNOW?

If your child gets free or reduced-price meals at school, he can continue getting free meals through the summer under the Summer Food Service Program. Ask the school counselor about sites in your community. These may include schools, parks, or rec centers, and transportation may be provided.

Just for fun

Q: What do you have when there are five oranges in your left hand and seven in your right?

A: Big hands!



Smart summer snacking

Without the routine of school days to structure your youngster's eating, she may need a little extra guidance to make good choices. Consider these tips for healthy summer snacking.

Stock up

Let your youngster choose nutritious snacks at the grocery store and keep them in convenient spots at home. Maybe she'll put string cheese, carrot sticks, and grapes in a refrigerator drawer. Or she might place whole-wheat crackers, plain popcorn, and unsalted nuts in a basket in the pantry. *Idea:* Stick notes on the snacks with messages like "Pick me! I'm good for you!"

Make a menu

Does your child need snacks for day care or camp? Let her post a weekly snack menu, just like her school lunch menu. She'll have a say in what she eats, and she'll know what to take each morning. You might help her roll up apple slices and cheese in a whole-wheat tortilla or



leftover chicken and vegetables in a lettuce wrap, for instance.

Go on a snack-nic

Combine snacking with physical activity. Together, pack healthy snacks like hummus and celery sticks or bananas and peanut butter. Then, take along a ball, and walk or bike to a playground for a "snack-nic." Spread out a blanket on the grass or eat at a picnic table. Afterward, play a game of catch. ●

Fun under the stars

Playing outside on a warm summer night can create wonderful memories for your child. Get inspired with these active ideas.

● **Follow the stars.** Point out constellations, such as the Big Dipper. Your youngster can copy the "star picture" in the grass by laying small toys in the same pattern. Have him walk or jump along the starry path. *Tip:* Use a library book or smartphone app to identify constellations.

● **Flashlight tag.** In this version of tag, "It" tags other players with a beam of light. If the flashlight shines on a player, he's caught. Continue until only one player is left. That person becomes "It." ●



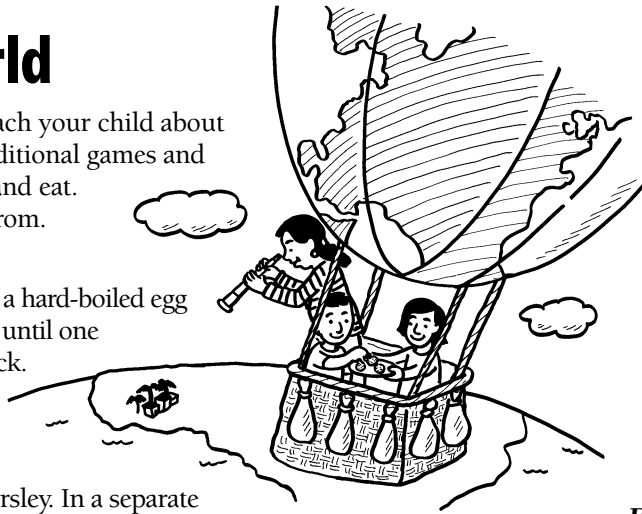
Around the world

Looking for a healthy way to teach your child about different cultures? Try a mix of traditional games and foods to explore how people play and eat. Here are two countries to choose from.

Armenia

Play egg jousting. Each player holds a hard-boiled egg like a sword. Tap your eggs together until one cracks. Then, save the eggs for a snack.

Eat cucumber and tomato salad. Cut 3 cucumbers and 2 tomatoes into 1-inch chunks. Combine with $\frac{1}{3}$ cup each chopped cilantro and parsley. In a separate bowl, stir together 2 tsp. lemon juice and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup olive oil, then drizzle over the salad.



Ghana

Play pilolo. With a group of five or more, paint a dozen rocks, and have a “leader” hide them around a yard. For each round, he stands at a finish line and yells *pilolo* (“time to search for”). The first player to find a stone and cross the finish line with it scores a point and becomes the leader. The new leader hides the rocks and the group plays again. The player with the most points after 10 rounds wins.

Eat omo tuo (rice balls). Prepare rice according to package directions, mash with a potato masher until smooth, and use an ice cream scoop or melon baller to form balls. Place *omo tuo* in bowls of your favorite soup.

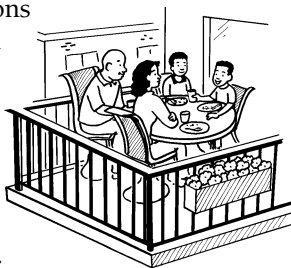
Tip: Help your youngster locate each country on a map. He could research foods from nearby countries—he’ll notice that similar dishes may be popular within the same region. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Sunday brunch

Between school, work, soccer practice, and Cub Scouts, our family’s life had become so busy there was barely time for dinner together. So I came up with the idea of a regular Sunday brunch.

I told my sons about the plan and asked for menu ideas. Pancakes, my younger son suggested. Scrambled eggs, my older one said. We decided on a month of menus and agreed we would all help to prepare the food.



After just a few weeks, Sunday brunch has become a family tradition. We look forward to a healthy meal—and each other’s company! Here’s the recipe for one of our favorites, cinnamon French toast. Beat 3 eggs with 1 tsp. cinnamon and 1 tsp. sugar. Dip 6 slices of whole-grain bread in the mixture. In a pan coated with nonstick spray, saute until crisp. ♥

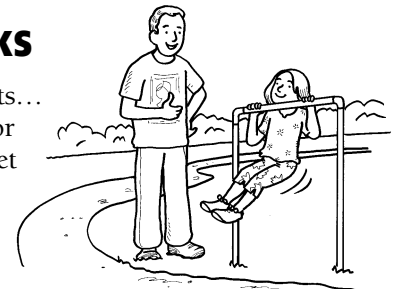


ACTIVITY CORNER

Discover your parks

Trails, nature programs, sports... parks are full of opportunities for your family to stay active. And many are free! Get to know your county, regional, state, or national parks with these suggestions.

- **Explore trails.** Hike trails that will interest your youngster—perhaps she’d like one with a waterfall or stream crossing. Or if a trail has fitness stations along the way, stop to do chin-ups, crunches, or other exercises.
- **Sign up for a special event.** Help the environment or learn about nature while you stay active. Maybe you can participate in a park cleanup day or go on a bird-watching expedition with other families.
- **Try a sport.** Look for courts or courses where your child can play tennis, disc golf, or beach volleyball, for example. She may find something she’d like to play regularly. ♥



IN THE KITCHEN

Fruity desserts

Celebrate the juicy fruits of summer with desserts that taste as good as they look. Your youngster will have fun making them with you, too.

Watermelon “layer cake”

Cut three round slices from a watermelon. Let your child stir together 1 cup plain fat-free Greek yogurt, 1 tsp. honey, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. vanilla extract. Then, she should spread the mixture on each watermelon slice and stack the “layers” into a cake.

Berry sundae

Have your youngster mix blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries with fat-free whipped cream. She can fill an ice cream cone with the mixture and top with chopped walnuts.

Fruit kebabs

Help your child thread a wooden skewer with grapes and chunks of apple, banana, and cantaloupe—alternating to make a colorful pattern. ♥



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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