

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2019



BEST BITES

Foods to sing about

Get your youngster excited about eating new foods by encouraging her to make up songs about them. She could pick a familiar tune (say, “Mary Had a Little Lamb”) and change the words to describe the food’s taste, color, texture, or scent. *Example:* “Mary had a roasted yam. It tasted sweet like jam.”

Recess games

Head outside with your child, and teach him playground games you enjoyed at his age, such as freeze tag or capture the flag. He’ll discover new ways to be active at recess—and learn games to share with his classmates. *Idea:*



Ask him to show you a recess game that you’ve never played.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly one in five children in the U.S. is obese. Since September is National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month, consider making a family pledge that will help everyone maintain a healthy weight. For instance, maybe you’ll agree to take walks after dinner and drink only water and fat-free milk.

Just for fun

Q: What food has no beginning and no end?

A: A bagel.



Magnolia Independent School District
Kimberly Ohlendorf, MS, RD, Child Nutrition Director

Table time

Eating together can build family bonds and inspire your youngster to eat healthier foods. Use these ideas to plan regular meals that he will look forward to.

Make it a habit

Sharing meals as often as possible will get everyone in the routine. Set times that work for your family. That may mean you have a late dinner after soccer practice one evening and an early breakfast before work and school on another morning.

Involve your child

Your youngster will be more interested in eating the meal if he helps to prepare it. He might make a healthy dish like fruit salad. He could also set the table and fill water glasses. *Idea:* Let him create place mats by cutting pictures of



nutritious foods from old magazines and gluing them on construction paper.

Add excitement

Turn the table into a playful place with special-event meals. You might have a “silly hat dinner” (everyone wears a hat that they made or decorated). Use the hats to spark conversation. (“What a great hat. How did you think of it?”) Or have each person pick a storybook character and pretend to be that character throughout the meal. ♥

Turn off the screens, turn on the fun

Boost your child’s physical activity by setting limits on screen time and encouraging her to play outside instead. Try these strategies.

● **Establish rules.** Tell her when she can and can’t have screen time. For example, on school days, you might allow it only after outdoor play, homework, and dinner.

● **Provide inspiration.** Have your youngster fill a basket with active toys like a jump rope, balls, a bat, and a Frisbee. Then, place the basket near the door so it’s easy to grab equipment on her way outside.

● **Plan ahead.** Let her make outdoor plans with friends. She could organize a weekly game of kickball or hide-and-seek, for instance. ♥

