

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

February 2018

Palmyra-Eagle Area School District

BEST BITES

Find the right milk

Milk alternatives, such as soy, almond, rice, and coconut milk, are widely available today. That's good news for youngsters who can't have dairy. When choosing non-dairy milk, look for unsweetened varieties that are fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

DID YOU KNOW?

Jumping rope builds bone density, improves heart health, boosts balance and motor coordination, and burns calories. Help your child find a book of jump rope rhymes or games at the library or online. Then, try some together, or encourage her to teach them to her friends.



Thrifty kitchen supplies

Kitchen tools and appliances can be expensive. Consider taking your youngster with you to thrift shops and garage sales to stock up on cooking gadgets. This shows him the value of budget-friendly shopping. Good bets for used items include loaf pans, measuring cups, pots, and blenders.

Just for fun

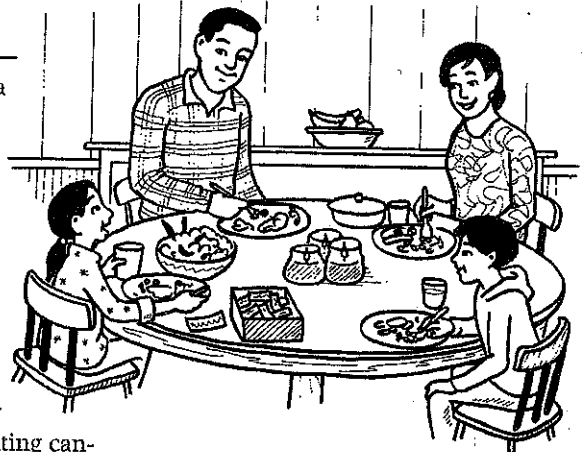
Q: What did one pretzel say to the other pretzel?

A: "Let's twist!"



Connecting over family meals

Gathering for a meal is about more than just eating—it's also about connecting as a family. Research shows that families who share meals tend to eat healthier foods. Here are ways to encourage together time around the kitchen table.



Eat by candlelight

Eating slowly gives your child's brain time to tell her stomach it's full, reducing her chance of overeating. Try lighting candles to create a relaxed atmosphere—this can encourage everyone to slow down and savor the meal. Plus, your child will feel excited that dinnertime seems "fancy."

of paper and put them in an empty box. During a meal, she can pull out a question to spark an interesting discussion.

Create a conversation box

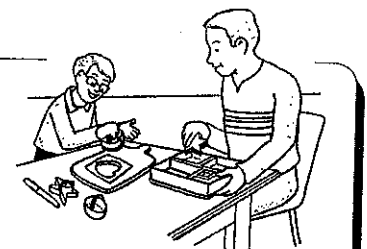
Everyone will look forward to meals with this idea. Together, think of questions like "If you could travel through time, what decade would you visit?" or "What would happen if kids and parents could trade places for a day?" Let your youngster write the conversation starters on slips

Be flexible

Meals can be at different times of day or in different places. The key is to work with your family's schedule—and even add a touch of fun. One evening, you might eat on a picnic blanket on the living room floor. If everyone can't be home for dinner, have a family breakfast. On warmer days, eat on your patio or at a picnic table at the park. ●

Bento box lunches

A *bento box* is a container with different foods in individual compartments. Many Japanese children use them for school lunch. Try the bento box approach for a weekend lunch tradition:



- What youngster wouldn't love cheese "stars," lean turkey "hearts," or melon "basketballs"? Use cookie cutters or other kitchen tools to cut food into fun shapes. Then, place the shapes in ramekins or small food-storage containers arranged on a plate.

- Turn a small ice cube tray into a bento box by putting bite-sized foods into its sections. Your child might fill them with chopped hard-boiled egg, pineapple chunks, and green beans. Or he may like leftover grilled chicken cubes, whole-wheat crackers, grapes, and edamame. ●