



## Healthy Eating and Healthy Physical Activities

Today, about one in three American kids and teens is overweight or obese, nearly triple the rate in 1963. Obesity causes a broad range of health problems that previously weren't seen until adulthood. These are alarming facts, but the good news is, parents can help their children stay fit by encouraging healthy food choices and physical activity habits.



### Check Out These Tips

**B**e a good role model. You don't have to be perfect all the time, but if kids see you trying to eat right and getting physically active, they'll take notice of your efforts. You'll send a message that good health is important to your family.

**G**et the whole family moving. Plan times for everyone to get moving together. Take walks, ride bikes, go swimming, garden, or just play hide-and-seek outside. Everyone will benefit from the exercise and the time together.

**B**e realistic. Setting realistic goals and limits are key to adopting any new behavior. Small steps and gradual changes can make a big difference in your health over time, so start small and build up.

**L**imit TV, video game, and computer time. These habits lead to a sedentary lifestyle and excessive snacking, which increase risks for obesity and cardiovascular disease.

**E**ncourage physical activities that kids really enjoy. Every child is unique.

Let yours experiment with different activities until they find something that they really love doing. They'll stick with physical activities longer if they love it.

**P**ick truly rewarding rewards. Don't reward children with TV, video games, candy, or snacks for a job well done. Find other ways to celebrate good behavior.

**M**ake a game of reading food labels. The whole family will learn what's good for their health and be more conscious of what they eat. It's a habit that helps change behavior for a lifetime.

**S**tay involved. Be an advocate for healthier children. Insist on good food choices at school. Make sure your children's health care providers are monitoring cardiovascular indicators like BMI, blood pressure, and cholesterol. Contact public officials on matters of the heart. **Make your voice heard.**

From The American Health Association



### Eating Healthy

#### Never skip breakfast.

Refuel those little bodies every morning. When children start a new day, they need energy — and lots of it. Oatmeal with a sprinkling of raisins or blueberries is fast and nutritious. Or pop a piece of whole wheat bread into the toaster and spread it with almond butter. Bagels with cream cheese are hearty and delicious. Another quick breakfast? A pancake, waffle, or tortilla spread with applesauce. Serve any of these quick breakfasts with a few slices of apples, pears, oranges, or some other fruit.

#### Make dinner a time for families to reunite.

Research shows that it's a good idea to sit down with the family whenever possible. It's also beneficial to involve kids in planning and cooking meals. They can help with setting the table, too.

#### Keep things positive.

This is not the time to talk about unpleasant issues. Instead, ask questions, listen, and learn all about each other's day. When mealtimes are comfortable, children eat better and feel better about themselves.

# PERSONAL PARENTING

## Orange Julius

Whip up this refreshing, nutritious drink in just a few minutes.

- 1 6-oz. can frozen orange juice concentrate
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups water
- 12 ice cubes
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup dry milk

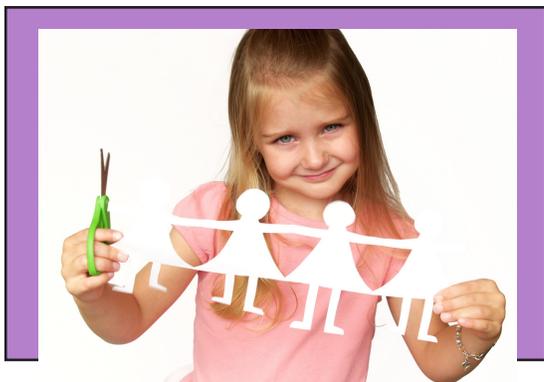
Combine all ingredients in a blender until frothy. You can substitute 1 1/2 cups of fresh fruit (bananas, strawberries, blueberries) for the concentrate.

**BRING ON THE SNACKS**

Spring is one of the best times to talk to children about their five senses.

- Go on a walk and discover what you can see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.

IT'S  
SPRING!



## HANDS-ON LEARNING

Make as many activities as you can experiential for children. You can tell a child that red and blue mixed together make the color purple. But if you let him mix the two colors when fingerpainting or mix food coloring in a cup, it takes on a whole new meaning!

*I hear and I forget.*

*I see and I remember.*

*I do and I understand.*

Chinese Proverb



## TIMELY TIP

Bears and big kids may like it, but honey can be a health risk to babies under a year old. Honey can cause botulism in this age group.

## WORLD OF WORDS

Children acquire language rapidly during their first five years. And parents play a huge role in this most important development.

### Throw In Some “Big” Words

You may have noticed when reading children’s books that every once in a while, the author includes a word such as *preposterous* or *suspicious*. These are big words, but when kids hear or read words like this in context, they begin to understand the meaning. Parents can do the same by introducing new words in everyday conversations.

## BANANA CRUNCH

Bananas just got yummiier and they are packed with nutrition.

- Place a banana on a Popsicle stick.
- Dip it in yogurt and roll it in finely crushed cereal.
- Now place the banana in the freezer until it’s hard. So yummy!

## TAKE A MONTHLY PHOTO

Create a unique picture album and track the growth of your child during her first year by taking a picture of her with a favorite stuffed animal every month for a year. It’s amazing how fast children grow, and this album proves it!



# Rainy Day Play



## Bake Something

Cooking with kids teaches them all sorts of things, from science to math. And the rewards are tremendous. Choose something easy that doesn't take too many ingredients, and get the kids in the kitchen.

### Perfect Popovers

Popovers are light, hollow rolls baked in popover pans or muffin tins. They are delicious served piping hot plain or with a little jam.

#### Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk
- ½ tsp. salt

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Grease and flour the muffin tin. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs slightly. Beat in the flour, milk, and salt until just smooth, being careful not to overbeat. Fill the muffin tins half full. Bake for 20 minutes at 450 degrees, then decrease the oven temperature to 350 degrees and bake for 20 minutes more. Immediately remove them from the muffin tins and serve piping hot.

## Make a Sock Puppet

Everyone has old socks around that are either too big, too small, or mismatched. For a fantastic rainy day activity, recycle them into puppets. Puppets are great for building literacy skills. Through puppets, children can ask questions, answer questions, role-play, and make up original stories.



### What you need

Socks (tube socks are best), yarn, googly eyes, feathers, sequins, old jewelry, and scraps of fabric. Let children decorate the socks for storytelling adventures.



## Create a Chalk Drawing

Let children draw on heavy sheets of paper. Pastel shades of chalk work best on dark paper. When finished, place the drawing outside in a light rain (just for a couple of minutes) and watch what happens. Bring the drawings in, let them dry, and hang them proudly on the refrigerator.

## Float a Boat

Make a paper boat and float it in a puddle. Curious George made boats from newspapers he was supposed to be delivering.

Read *Curious George Rides a Bike*, then make some boats, go outside, and find a nice puddle.



## Walk in the Rain

Your kids have all of the cute rain gear, so you might as well take a walk. Imagine how much fun it is for children to walk in the rain. They get to carry an umbrella and splash in puddles as much as they like. You can help them notice the things that are different in the rain. Are birds hopping about? Do leaves and bark on the trees look different? Can you see your reflection in a puddle? Are there any worms out and about? What do you need to build a dam in a puddle?