

# Nutrition Nuggets™

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

November 2018

Covington County Schools  
Child Nutrition Program



## BEST BITES

### Brussels sprouts time!

Brussels sprouts are in season, and they're a good source of fiber, B vitamins, and potassium. Your youngster may enjoy these cute little cabbage cousins roasted in the oven. Cut 8 oz. brussels sprouts in half, then let him toss them with 1 tsp. each olive oil and lemon juice. Bake at 400° for 25 minutes, sprinkle with grated Parmesan cheese, and bake 5 minutes more.

### Walk and learn

This idea combines physical activity, learning, and family bonding. Go for walks together, perhaps after dinner or on weekend mornings. While you walk, discuss books you're reading, give each other math problems to solve or words to spell, or have your child explain a science concept she's learning in school.



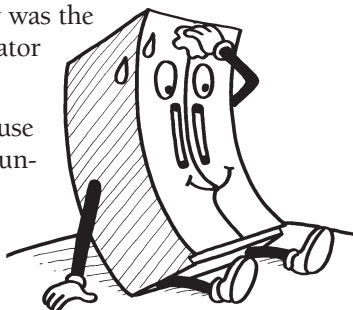
### DID YOU KNOW?

November is the National PTA's Healthy Lifestyles Month. If your youngster's school is participating, make plans to attend the family activities. Or celebrate on your own by squeezing in extra fitness fun—ride bikes, roller-skate, or go bowling, for example.

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why was the refrigerator tired?

**A:** Because it was running all day.



## Handling fast-food temptation

Does life in the fast lane mean your family winds up in the drive-thru more often than you'd like? Try these tips to work around the temptation of fast food—and help your child learn to make healthy choices in a pinch.

### Tame the habit

Consider cutting back on how often you eat fast food. If you normally get it twice a week, you might drop down to once a week. Tell your youngster ahead of time so she doesn't expect it as often. Explain that you want to eat better and that fast food is often high in fat and sodium.

### Plan ahead

Let your child choose healthy snacks to keep in the car, such as nuts, rice cakes, and plain popcorn. You might also plan errands for after mealtimes, or have your youngster eat a nutritious



snack at home before you head out. You'll be less likely to stop for fast food if your family isn't hungry.

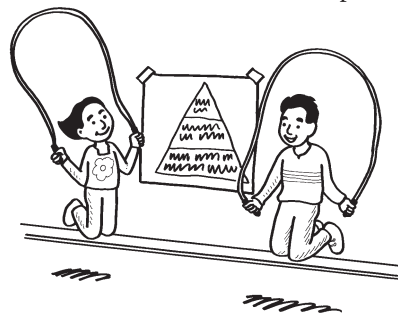
### Order carefully

If you do get fast food, choose grilled chicken rather than fried, a whole-grain bun or tortilla, and fruit or vegetable sides. Suggest that your child request toppings like mustard or extra tomato slices instead of mayonnaise or bacon. *Idea:* Share "sometimes" foods. Get a small order of onion rings for the whole family. Or ask for a milkshake with extra cups, and divide it up for dessert. ♥

### Make an activity pyramid

Creating and hanging up this homemade poster will motivate your youngster to fill his days with fun physical activities.

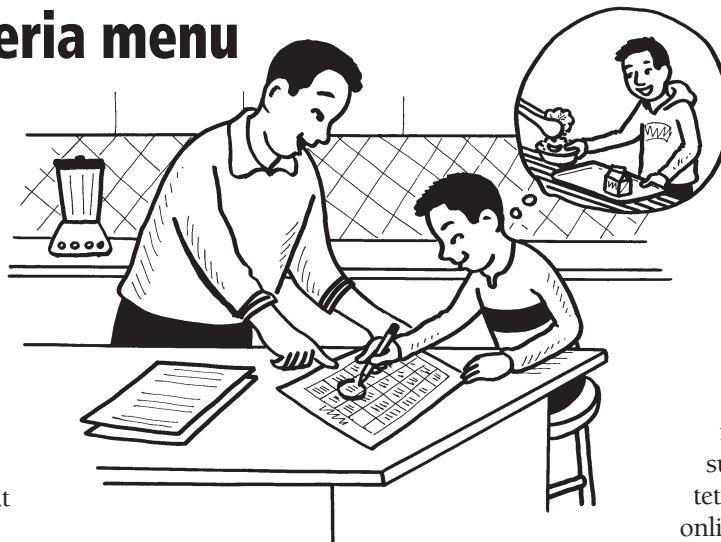
1. Have him draw a large triangle and divide it into three horizontal sections.
2. In the bottom part, he can write activities to keep him moving every day. *Ideas:* Play outside with friends. Jump rope. Shoot baskets.
3. In the middle section, let your child add things that take a little more time. *Ideas:* Organize a kickball game. Go for a hike. Visit a playground.
4. On top, he could list special-occasion or seasonal activities. *Ideas:* Climb a rock wall. Go sledding. Swim.
5. Suggest that he choose at least one activity from the bottom row each day, one from the middle every week, and one from the top once a month. ♥



# Read the cafeteria menu

“That sounds delicious—and nutritious!” Make a routine out of reading the school breakfast and lunch menus together to get your child excited about eating healthy foods in the cafeteria.

**Talk about options.** Encourage your youngster to spot familiar foods with healthier twists like pizza with turkey pepperoni or “zoodles”—spaghetti “noodles” made with zucchini. Discuss what



makes them better for him (turkey has less fat than pepperoni made from pork, zoodles are a green vegetable).

**Try new things.** Which foods sound tastiest to your child? Maybe he’s excited about Monday’s macaroni and cheese or Friday’s fish sticks. What new foods is he excited to try? If items are unfamiliar to him, such as sloppy joes or chicken tetrazzini, help him look them up online so he’ll know what to expect. After he tries them, have him tell you which ones he likes best. Then, consider making them at home. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### A Thanksgiving helper

Growing up, I often joined my parents in the kitchen when they cooked, especially on holidays. I wanted my son, Chase, to be part of our Thanksgiving preparations, so last year I appointed him my kitchen helper.

I gave Chase jobs like washing fruits and vegetables, and I shared a “secret” family recipe with him. He loved hearing how my grandmother worked her magic to create delicious cranberry sauce. Together, we read her recipe, and Chase helped me make it. I even captured the moment with a photo of two smiling cooks.



At dinner, Chase was so proud when his aunt said the cranberry sauce tasted like Grandma’s. This year, he’s already asking if I have more secret recipes to teach him! ♥

## 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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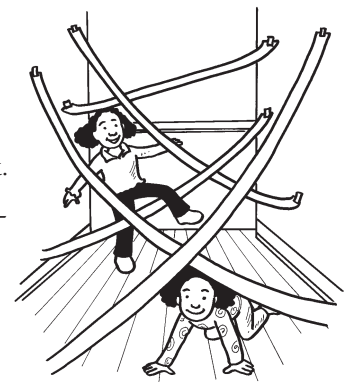
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Let’s build a maze

Put an active spin on your youngster’s play by creating mazes together in different locations. Designate an entrance and an exit, and encourage your child to navigate her way out.

• **Hallway.** Work together to tape crisscrossing streamers or toilet paper to the walls. Your youngster can try to step over the streamers or crawl under them without breaking the “spiderweb” maze.

• **Living room.** Have your child use pillows, blankets, and furniture to make a maze. She might drape a blanket over the space between the coffee table and the couch to crawl under, for example. ♥



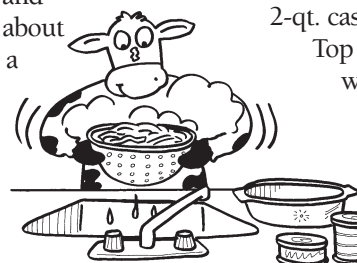
## IN THE KITCHEN

### Lighter casseroles

Casseroles are a go-to staple on many dinner tables. Enjoy these healthier versions of two family favorites.

#### Beef and rice

Cook 2 cups brown rice according to package directions. In a large skillet, brown 1 lb. lean ground beef. Drain the fat, and return to the pan along with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup each chopped onion, carrot, and celery. Saute the veggies until soft, about 5 minutes. Transfer the mixture to a greased 2-qt. casserole dish, and add 1 28-oz. can diced tomatoes (drained) and the rice. Sprinkle with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. pepper,  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. salt, and  $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp. paprika. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes.



#### Tuna noodle

Boil 8 oz. whole-wheat egg noodles for 8–10 minutes. Drain, and set aside. In a bowl, mix a 10.75-oz. can reduced-fat cream of mushroom soup and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup skim milk. Add a 12-oz. can tuna (packed in water, drained), 2 cups frozen peas, 6 oz. sliced fresh mushrooms, and the noodles. Pour into a greased 2-qt. casserole dish.

Top with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup soft whole-wheat bread crumbs, and bake at 350° for 30 minutes, until browned. ♥