

BE ACTIVE KIDSSM




For Parents and Families *Volume 7, Spring 2007*

Welcome to Be Active Kids, an innovative, interactive nutrition, physical activity, and food safety curriculum for children ages four and five. Find out more information at www.beactivekids.org.

Have You Heard?


RAIN OR SHINE, the spring is a great time to get your family active and eating healthy. See the tips below for fun-filled family springtime activities!

RAINY DAYS




■ **Create an imaginary trip to a farm.** Walk with your child through your home and pretend that you are walking through a farm. Point out different animals and crops you might see. Don't be afraid to use your imagination! End your trip in the kitchen with a healthy snack of fresh fruits or vegetables and talk about where they might have grown in the farm you visited.

■ **Play "What's hiding in your room?"** Name a series of small items for your child to find in his or her room. Items could be toys, coins, pencils, cups, socks, etc. Tell your child to find the items as fast as possible. Record the time, put each of the items away and then try to find different items in less time.




■ **Create healthy paper plate meals.** Gather paper plates, glue, safe scissors, and magazines with pictures of a variety of foods. Help your child cut out food pictures and glue them on the plates to make meals. Encourage choices from all of the food groups, including the grain group, milk group, vegetable group, fruit group, and meat and beans group. More information on healthy choices can be found at www.mypyramid.gov

SUNNY DAYS



■ **Walk to make art!** Take a walk through your neighborhood or around your yard. As you walk, have your child pick up items that remind him/her of spring like leaves, flowers, or blades of grass. If it's not ok to pick up the items, try to remember what you see. When you get home, take out paper and crayons, and have your child either draw what you saw or trace the items that you picked up along the way.



■ **Plant a container garden.** Visit your local farmer's market or home and garden store to pick up a few seed packets or plants that are easy to grow. Herbs or vegetable plants that you can eat are especially fun for preschoolers. Help your child plant the seeds or plants in a container. Your child will learn that the plant needs soil, water, and sun to grow. Talk with your child about how farmers grow the foods we eat.

■ **Bubbles, kites and scarves, oh my!** When you head to the toy store, try to find toys that will encourage your child to be active. Your child would love to run and make bubbles, fly a kite at the park or in your yard, or toss a scarf high into the air and catch it before it hits the ground.

Physical Activities for Be Active Kids

- When you go to the mall, grocery store, video store, or soccer games, park at the end of the parking lot so everyone gets the extra exercise they need from walking.
- Spring is the perfect time to find a new park to explore. If you're not sure of parks near your house, contact your local parks and recreation department for more information.
- When the weather begins to get warmer, play outside with your child. Simple games like freeze tag, hide and go seek, or tossing a ball are great to play. Your child will enjoy the activity more if you are playing together.
- Create an outdoor obstacle course either in your backyard or at a park. Use trees, sticks, stones, or toys as stations, and lead your child through different activities at each station. Hop up and down like a kangaroo, run in place as fast as a cheetah, circle a rock three times, crawl under a tree branch, gallop like a horse around a toy, flap your arms like a bird around the yard, or waddle like a penguin from station to station.

Fun Food Safety



Through at two! Leftover food should never sit at room temperature more than two hours. When you eat a meal at home, or go outside for a picnic lunch, have your child help you keep track of when foods need to go back into the refrigerator or cooler.



Healthy Foods for Be Active Kids

- Next time you visit the grocery store, try a milk makeover. Healthy children age two and above can safely switch to low-fat or fat-free dairy products. If you usually buy whole milk, try buying 2% instead. If you usually buy 2%, try 1% or skim milk. Slowly decreasing the fat content will help your family adjust.
- Local farmer's markets begin to offer a wider variety of foods in spring. Visit them to find affordable deals on fresh fruits, vegetables, and plants for gardening.
- Does your child have a hard time trying new foods? Involve them in the process of choosing the new food and preparing it. Each week when you shop for groceries, choose one new food to try together that week. If your child does not like it, try it again a few weeks later, but prepare it a different way. Preschoolers seem to like raw vegetables with low-fat dips better than cooked vegetables. Experiment to see what your child likes and don't give up!

