

BE ACTIVE KIDS®

For Parents and Families *Volume 9, Winter*



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?

A positive partnership with food and physical activity starts with a positive partnership between YOU and your child!

Did You Know?

Your child was born knowing how much they need to eat to grow and thrive.

Your child was born with a protective instinct to be afraid of new foods.

Early physical activity contributes to early brain development and learning.

Exposure to fruits and vegetables early sets the stage for more variety later.

Follow these tips to help lay the foundation your child needs to enjoy a lifetime of healthy living.

- **Set A Good Example.** If you wrinkle your nose at a food or refuse to eat it, your child may react the same way. However, if you have a positive attitude towards food and physical activity, your child may also react positively. If you're not used to eating your veggies or engaging in physical activity, take the opportunity to try new foods and activities with your child.
- **Don't Apply Pressure.** Any pressure at all – even positive – can slow your child's acceptance of new foods and activities. Eating and physical activity should be a positive experience, so be patient and try not to bribe your child.
- **Don't Use Food as a Reward.** This can set up a negative relationship with food. Instead use praise or hugs to reward behavior.
- **Let Your Child Choose.** It is *your* responsibility to provide healthful food choices. It is your *child's* responsibility to decide which foods to eat and how much to eat. The same principle works with physical activity. Offer a variety of activities for your child to engage in, and respect their choice.
- **Be Careful Using "Good" and "Bad."** It is important that your child is not taught that there are "good" or "bad" foods, but rather that making good choices and eating a variety of different foods is key. Sweets and fats are considered "extras" and you should help teach your child to limit the number of "extras" they eat each day.

Physical Activities for Be Active Kids

Too cold to play outside? Don't let the weather stop your child from getting the recommended 60 minutes of moderate physical activity on most days. Indoor activity can also be a great time to incorporate learning. Here are a few ideas to get started!

- **Set ground rules for an indoor game of Hide and Seek!** *Change it Up:* Try skipping or hopping on two feet to home base instead of running. *Make it Challenging:* Choose a new "safe" word for each round and make a rule that the word must be spelled correctly at home base in order to be safe.
- **Choose one of your child's favorite books and bring it to life!** Assign characters to each family member and act out the story. *Make it Challenging:* Encourage your child to be creative and add their own ideas and physical activities to the story.
- **Follow the Leader!** Have your child follow your lead first, then switch roles. Try to jump, march, hop, skip, bend, twist, and stretch! *Make it Challenging:* Create a sequence like 3 hops, 10 marching steps, 1 bend, and 4 skips, to test your child's memory.

Fun Food Safety



Washing raw meat before cooking it actually *spreads* bacteria! Cooking meat to the correct temperature (160°F for red meat and 170°F for poultry) effectively kills all harmful bacteria. The next time you prepare poultry or red meat, remember *not* to wash it off in your sink or you will need to use a cleanser with bleach to disinfect it!



Healthy Foods for Be Active Kids



- Canned, dried, and frozen fruits and vegetables are great alternatives to fresh ones, especially during winter. Look for fruit without added sugar or syrup and vegetables without added salt, butter, or cream sauces.
(www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org)
- Aim for 2-3 servings of low-fat dairy products *every* day! Make a cup of hot cocoa with low-fat milk instead of water for a tasty winter treat that is full of calcium. Your child will love it!
- Try a new twist on spaghetti! Use 100% whole wheat corkscrew pasta for a fun change. Top it with steamed veggies, tomato sauce, and a sprinkle of parmesan cheese for added nutritional value. You can even add some lean meat, like ground turkey, for a protein boost.
- Need Fast Food? Instead of hitting a drive-through, open a can of low-sodium vegetable soup. Make a grilled cheese sandwich with whole wheat bread, lite mayo, and low-fat cheddar on the side and you have an inexpensive & complete meal in about 10 minutes.

