

Cafeteria plan

Why should your child buy school meals? Cafeteria meals are healthier than ever because of updated national nutrition standards. Plus, if he gets lunch at school, you can knock “pack lunch” off your to-do list! Consider these two suggestions.

1. Go over the school menu together. He could circle his favorite items and decide what he will put on his tray the next day. Talk up the menu items. (“The pork burrito sounds really good!”) If you’re excited about the choices, he will share your excitement.



2. Discuss what he ate. What does he like best? What does he throw in the trash? You might suggest that he write to the cafeteria manager to tell her about his favorite meals. He could also make recommendations for new foods to serve.

Note: If your youngster has food allergies, alert the cafeteria manager, as well as his teacher and the school nurse. Give each of them a list of foods he’s allergic to, possible reactions, and what to do if he accidentally eats one of them. ♥



Q&A How much juice?

Q: My children love to drink juice. Should I try to limit how much of it they drink?

A: The short answer is “yes.” While juice has nutrients, it also has a lot of sugar. Believe it or not, a 12-ounce glass of apple juice can contain 10 teaspoons of sugar — the same as in a can of cola — and a glass of grape

juice can have 15 teaspoons of sugar. Encourage your children to eat fruit rather than drink juice. They will consume fiber along with more nutrients.

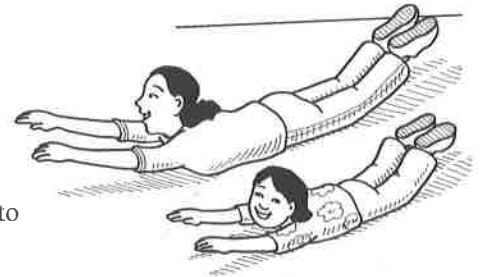
If your kids do have juice, try to limit it to a glass a day. Choose varieties marked 100 percent juice, and stay away from those labeled “fruit drink” or “fruit cocktail.” The best bets are orange or grapefruit juice since they have more natural vitamin C and less sugar. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Exercise = fun

When children are young, exercise isn’t exercise — it’s just plain fun! Here are ideas for putting more physical activity into your youngster’s day.



Superman

Lie on your tummy with your arms straight out in front of you (as if you’re flying). Lift your arms and legs off the ground at the same time, and hold for five seconds. Put your arms and legs back down. “Fly” 10 more times.

Bubble jumping jacks

Have your child do jumping jacks as you blow bubbles toward her. How many bubbles can she pop as she jumps? Switch, and let her blow the bubbles as you do jumping jacks.

Freeze dance

Play music, and dance up a storm. When you stop the music, everyone freezes. Hold your poses for 10 seconds, and start the music back up. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Rice bowls

For a quick and healthy meal, borrow this idea from Asian cuisine. Cook brown rice, divide it into bowls for each person, and add healthy toppings.

Breakfast: Scrambled eggs, chopped tomatoes, diced green bell peppers, and shredded Monterey Jack cheese

Chicken: Cubed, cooked chicken (use last night’s leftovers), microwaved frozen

vegetables like corn, peas, and carrots, and low-sodium teriyaki sauce

Taco: Lean ground beef (browned and drained), canned kidney beans (drained and rinsed), shredded cheddar cheese, and salsa

Note: One-half cup of brown rice provides one serving of whole grains (three servings a day are recommended). Also, rice is gluten-free, so it’s a great choice for children with celiac disease or wheat allergies. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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