

NUTRITION NEWS



FOOD & FITNESS TIPS FOR A HEALTHY CHILD

PACIFICA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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LORI MILLER M.ED., R.D., CHILD NUTRITION SUPERVISOR



What you say...what they hear

Just saying "Eat your vegetables" or Drink your Milk" may not get your child to eat their veggies or drink their milk. Instead, try strategies like these for encouraging them to have nutritious foods:

1. Discuss the food you're enjoying, not what you're limiting. For example, if you're serving fresh fruit rather than cake for dessert, you might say, "these grapes are so sweet, and I love how they pop when I bite them."
2. Rather than telling your child to eat something because it's healthy, focus on what the food will do for them. You might say, "this breakfast will give you lots of energy so you can run up and down the soccer field the whole time you're in the game."

Q & A



Bedtime Snacks

Q: My child always wants a snack before they go to bed. What should I give them?

A: A bedtime snack can help stave off hunger until morning, especially if your family eats dinner on the early side.

The recommendations for bedtime snacks are the same as those for snacks your child eats any time of day. Stick to small portions, limit sugar, and choose proteins and whole grains.

Good options include oatmeal, whole-wheat toast topped with a sliced banana or whole-grain pita pickets stuffed with hummus and shredded carrots. On the other hand, you'll want your child to stay away from less healthy items like cookies, cupcakes, and chips.

Tip: Avoid giving your child a snack in the hour before bedtime, since digesting food can make it harder for them to fall asleep.



Healthy Fieldtrips

Nothing beats hands-on learning to spark your youngster's interest in nutritious foods and physical activity. A great way to do this? Plan healthy adventures like these.

Explore food stores.

Check out new-to-you health food shops, locally owned markets, or merchants specializing in foods from other countries. Let your child pick out something your regular store doesn't carry, like a loaf of freshly baked bread or an unfamiliar spice blend.

Try a gym.

Many community centers, YMCAs, gyms, and rec centers offer free day passes or trial classes. Call around and find one. You and your youngster could swim, play tennis or perhaps attend a parent-child class like yoga or karate.

Visit a farm.

Search online for nearby farms and farmers markets. Your child can choose fresh local vegetables to sample or to add to a dinnertime salad. A farm tour might also allow them to get exercise by climbing hay bales or rope ladders.



BOUNCE AND SPELL

Put an active twist on your child's next spelling test study session. Get their word list and a tennis ball, then find a space indoors or go outside to play a few rounds of Spelling Bee Bounce.

Stand about 6-12 feet from your youngster, say a word from their list and bounce the ball to them. As they say each letter, they bounce the ball to you and then you bounce it back to them. If they get a letter wrong, say, "oops, try again!" and they start the word over.

Get creative in this game. They could spin around before bouncing the ball or they could pretend to shoot it to you like a basketball free-throw.

Before you know it, they will have mastered their entire spelling list – and gotten exercise along the way!