



Tiny Tot Preschool
and Kindergarten
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Tiny Tot Preschool and Kindergarten Newsletter

Eating Right

Exercise isn't the only thing that is important for children's physical and mental health. Eating the proper foods and drinking healthy liquids is a must. Eating healthy foods in the proper amounts and regular exercise go hand in hand. It has been publicized that almost 20 percent of children in California who are between two and five years of age are overweight or obese, and that research shows that the conditions is difficult to reverse at adolescence or in adulthood. Research has also demonstrated that taste preferences and lifelong health habits are formed in early childhood years.

Family Meals

Family meals are a comforting ritual for both parents and kids. Children like the predictability of family meals and parents get a chance to catch up with their kids. Kids who take part in regular family meals are also:

- more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and grains
- less likely to snack on unhealthy foods
- less likely to smoke, use marijuana, or drink alcohol

In addition, family meals offer the chance to introduce kids to new foods and to act as a role model for healthy eating.

What counts as a family meal? Any time you and your family eat together — whether it's takeout food or a home-cooked meal with all the trimmings. Strive for nutritious food and a time when everyone can be there. This may mean eating dinner a little later to accommodate a child who's at sports practice. It can also mean setting aside time on the weekends, such as Sunday brunch, when it may be more convenient to gather as a group.

Eating Cont.

Stocking Up on Healthy Foods

Kids, especially younger ones, will eat mostly what's available at home. That's why it's important to control the supply lines — the foods that you serve for meals and have on hand for snacks. Follow these basic guidelines:

- Work fruits and vegetables into the daily routine**, aiming for the goal of at least five servings a day. Be sure you serve fruit or vegetables at every meal.
- Make it easy for kids to choose healthy snacks** by keeping fruits and vegetables on hand and ready to eat. Other good snacks include low-fat yogurt, peanut butter and celery, or whole-grain crackers and cheese.
- Serve lean meats and other good sources of protein**, such as fish, eggs, beans, and nuts.
- Choose whole-grain breads and cereals** so kids get more fiber.
- Limit fat intake** by avoiding deep-fried foods and choosing healthier cooking methods, such as broiling, grilling, roasting, and steaming. Choose low-fat or nonfat dairy products.
- Limit fast food and low-nutrient snacks**, such as chips and candy. But don't completely ban favorite snacks from your home. Instead, make them "once-in-a-while" foods, so kids don't feel deprived.
- Limit sugary drinks**, such as soda and fruit-flavored drinks. Serve water and low-fat milk instead.

Cont. page 2

Eating Cont.

How to Be a Role Model

The best way for you to encourage healthy eating is to eat well yourself. Kids will follow the lead of the adults they see every day. By eating fruits and vegetables and not overindulging in the less nutritious stuff, you'll be sending the right message.

Another way to be a good role model is to serve appropriate portions and not overeat. Talk about your feelings of fullness, especially with younger children. You might say, "This is delicious, but I'm full, so I'm going to stop eating." Similarly, parents who are always dieting or complaining about their bodies may foster these same negative feelings in their kids. Try to keep a positive approach about food.

Don't Battle Over Food

It's easy for food to become a source of conflict. Well-intentioned parents might find themselves bargaining or bribing kids so they eat the healthy food in front of them. A better strategy is to give kids some control, but to also limit the kind of foods available at home.

Kids should decide if they're hungry, what they will eat from the foods served, and when they're full. Ultimately, it is the parent who controls which foods are available for the child at mealtime and between meals. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- ❑ **Establish a predictable schedule of meals and snacks.** It's OK to choose not to eat when both parents and kids know when to expect the next meal or snack.
- ❑ **Don't force kids to clean their plates.** Doing so teaches kids to override feelings of fullness.
- ❑ **Don't bribe or reward kids with food.** Avoid using dessert as the prize for eating the meal.
- ❑ **Don't use food as a way of showing love.** When you want to show love, give kids a hug, some of your time, or praise.

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Eating Cont.

Get Kids Involved

Most kids will enjoy deciding what to make for dinner. Talk to them about making choices and planning a balanced meal. Some might even want to help shop for ingredients and prepare the meal. At the store, teach kids to check out food labels to begin understanding what to look for.

In the kitchen, select age-appropriate tasks so kids can play a part without getting injured or feeling overwhelmed. And at the end of the meal, don't forget to praise the chef.

School lunches can be another learning lesson for kids. More important, if you can get them thinking about what they eat for lunch, you might be able to help them make positive changes. Brainstorm about what kinds of foods they'd like for lunch or go to the grocery store to shop together for healthy, packable foods.

There's another important reason why kids should be involved: It can help prepare them to make good decisions on their own about the foods they want to eat. That's not to say they'll suddenly want a salad instead of French fries, but the mealtime habits you help create now can lead to a lifetime of healthier choices.

LARGEST CRIB RECALL IN U.S. HISTORY

Government safety regulators say more than 2.1 million drop-side cribs by Stork Craft Manufacturing are being recalled, the biggest crib recall in U.S. history. For more detailed information visit the Consumer Product Safety Commission website.

Banana Split Ice Cream

- 1 box frozen strawberries
- 1 cup pecans
- 2 cans sweetened condensed milk
- 3 bananas, sliced or mashed
- 1 cup coconut
- 1 quart (4 cups) half-and-half
- 1 small can crushed pineapple, not drained

Put all ingredients into an ice cream freezer, and then fill remainder of ice cream freezer with whole milk. Make as you would any homemade ice cream following freezer manufacturer's instructions.

Reminders to Parents / Students

All Fridays are school spirit days; please wear clothing with the school logo.

This Month's Assignments

April is the beginning of spring. It is time of the year when flowers and other plants begin to bloom. It is also the time to plant new crops and the month when humans give appreciation to mother earth. Therefore, we will be learning about our planet, our nature, our environment and how plants grow.

Upcoming Events

4-4-09

Easter

4-5-09 to 4-11-09

National Week of the Ocean

4-22-09

Earth Day

4-24-09

National Arbor Day

April is:

National Frog Month

National Kite Month

National Garden Month

School Library Media Month

Winter Books

- **It's Spring!**: by Linda Glaser
- **Dandelion Adventures**: by L. Patricia Kite
- **Spring is Here**: by Lois Lenski
- **The Seasons of Arnold's Apple Tree**: by Gail Gibbons
- **The Spring Equinox**: by Ellen Jackson
- **The Golden Egg Book**: ISBN: 9780307135025

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For updates and other important information please visit our web page at: www.tinytotpreschool.com

Monthly lunch menus are posted on the web page with the Newsletter.