

# Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers  
 packed with food, facts & fun  
 from your local county extension office

Cooperative Extension Service

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## Play Time

### Paper Bag Pumpkin



#### Materials:

White paper bag  
 Washable markers or crayons  
 Green construction paper  
 Masking tape  
 Children's scissors  
 Stuffing

#### Instructions:

Draw and cut a leaf from green construction paper. Write name on leaf. Color the paper bag orange. Fill paper bag three-quarters full with stuffing. Twist top of bag and wrap with masking tape making a stem.

## Kids Care

### Family Habits for Raising Healthy Children

Health behaviors and habits begin in childhood and often follow us into adulthood. Small changes that will provide children with daily opportunities to move their bodies, try a variety of healthy foods, and manage stress can make a big difference over time. Try one or more of these tips and together you can develop lifelong healthy habits.

**Move together.** Movement is an important part of each day. Children aged 3 to 5 years need physically active play throughout the day. Children aged 6 to 17 years need at least one hour of physical activity. Playing together is a great way to encourage everyone to get active. Try taking a walk, playing games in the backyard, visiting a local park, or turning on some music for a dance party. These are all fun ways to make physical activity a routine highlight of your child's day. Some activity is better than no activity and every little bit counts.

**Set limits around screen time.** The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends children aged 2 to 5 years have less than one hour of high-quality screen time each day. For older children, we want to set consistent limits that allow for adequate sleep, activity, and family time. Try interacting with children when they use screens. This can help them better understand what they see and introduce boundaries.

**Healthy food swaps for the whole family.** There are many ways to improve your family's nutrition. Think about your drinks, snacks, side dishes, and cooking methods. For drinks, choose water or unflavored, low-fat milk in place of sugary drinks like soda, sweet tea, or fruit drinks. For snacks, try nuts, seeds, or olives instead of chips or crackers. For side dishes, add colorful vegetables or fruits. You can also swap whole grains like brown rice or whole-wheat pasta in place of white rice or pasta. Finally, when cooking, take advantage of the microwave or oven to bake, steam, or roast foods instead of frying.

**Create bedtime routines.** Getting enough sleep improves academic performance, concentration in school,



and is linked to maintaining a healthy weight. School-age children need 9 to 11 hours of sleep each night, and younger children need even more – 10 to 13 hours for preschoolers, 11 to 14 hours for toddlers, and 12 to 15 hours for infants. Having consistent pre-bedtime routines can make it easier for everyone to fall asleep.

**Encourage healthy stress management.** Stress hormones can take a toll on our bodies, making us more vulnerable to illness, weight gain, and changing our behavior. Finding positive ways to reduce or relieve stress can provide lifelong skills for stress management. Some ideas for practicing healthy stress relief with your child include having a daily movement session, getting creative with drawing or crafts, and simply allowing your child to express how they are feeling and reassuring them that their feelings are valid.

**Stay on track with well-child checks.** During the COVID-19 pandemic, many children are falling behind on well checks. In this difficult time, it is important to keep up with annual checkups. They are an important opportunity for health-care providers to track growth and development. These checkups are also a chance for you to ask questions and get connected with resources.

Healthy family habits like the ones listed above are shown to improve academics, mental health, raise confidence levels, and decrease the risk of disease. Doing them together offers a bonus of quality time that can strengthen family bonds.

#### References

Gordon, B. (2020 July). *5 Ways to Help Kids Develop Healthy Habits*. Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. <https://www.eatright.org/health/weight-loss/overweight-and-obesity/5-ways-to-help-kids-develop-healthy-habits>

Gavin, M. (2018 June). *Overweight and Obesity*. KidsHealth from Nemours. <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/overweight-obesity.html>

**Source:** Haley Adams, Dietetics and Human Nutrition student, and Courtney Luecking, Extension Specialist for Nutrition and Health

## Let's Eat

### Chocolate Pumpkin Snack Cake



#### **Ingredients:**

1 box Devil's Food cake mix  
1 (15 oz) can pumpkin or 2 cups fresh pumpkin (cooked and mashed)

#### **Directions:**

Mix cake mix and pumpkin in a large bowl. Batter will be thick. Spread batter into a greased 13 x 9 inch cake pan. Bake according to cake mix package directions. Cool and cut into 15 pieces. Options: Try using other flavors of cake mix, such as spice or butter pecan. Cupcakes can also be made with this recipe.

Source: Brenda Harris, Nutrition Education Program Assistant, University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension

Nutrition Facts (per serving): 140 calories, 2.5 g total fat; 1 g saturated fat; 0 g trans fat; 0 mg cholesterol; 260 mg sodium; 29 g carbohydrate; 2 g fiber; 2 g protein; 30% Daily Value of vitamin A; 2 % Daily Value of vitamin C; 4% Daily Value of calcium; 8% Daily Value of iron

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Sincerely,

*Ashley Board*

County Extension Agent for  
Family & Consumer Sciences Education