



Eat Right Be Active

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A guide for parents
and caregivers of preschoolers
ages 3 - 5



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Introduction

We all want the best for our children. We want them to grow up healthy and feeling great. This booklet can help. It is full of everyday ideas that you as a busy parent or caregiver can put into action so your three-to-five-year-old can eat right and be active.

As you read this, think about what ideas or tips you can start using today. You are an important role model for your child. All the efforts you make, big and small, do add up to a healthier child.

Note: In this booklet, “preschooler” refers to children between three and five years old. Both “him” and “her” are used throughout to describe your preschooler. “Parent” refers to parents, caregivers and anyone else involved in your child’s care.

Is my child growing well?

Children grow and develop at different rates. Your child may be taller or shorter, lighter or heavier than other preschoolers of the same age.

What is most important is her overall growth pattern, not her height or weight at any one time. Ask about her growth pattern when you are visiting the doctor or nurse practitioner.

Help her to feel good about her body by praising her strengths, abilities and unique personality, not her appearance. Also try not to criticize your own body or the way others look.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Growth depends on many factors

- *Family - parents’ size and shape, cultural background*
- *Age - children grow fastest as babies and teenagers*
- *General health - medical conditions, illnesses, medications*
- *Gender - boys and girls have different growth patterns*
- *Eating habits - what and how much your child eats*
- *Activity level - how active your child is, and for how long*

Adapted from: *ABCs of Feeding Preschoolers*. Sudbury & District Health Unit, 2004.

Eat right, be active quiz

What is considered “normal” eating and activity for a preschooler may surprise you. Answer the following questions with a **Yes** or **No**

1. Should preschoolers be active every day? Yes No

Preschool-aged children love to move and be active. Daily physical activity helps strengthen their heart, lungs, bones and muscles. It also gives them confidence and helps them learn social skills, as well as teaching them movement skills they will need for lifelong physical activity. That is why it is important for preschoolers to be active every day.

2. Is it up to my child to decide whether to eat and how much to eat? Yes No

Parents and preschoolers have different jobs when it comes to eating. Your job is to decide what, when and where to offer food. Your child’s job is to decide if and how much to eat from the healthy choices you offer.

3. Is it true that preschoolers are not ready to participate in competitive sports? Yes No

Focus on having fun and practicing skills such as kicking or throwing, rather than competing through racing or keeping score. Preschoolers are not ready for 'win/ lose' type games and sports that may make some children feel bad and lose interest in being physically active. Everyone wins when the focus is on building skills and having fun.

4. Is it normal for preschoolers to eat a lot one day and eat very little the next day? Yes No

It is normal for your preschooler's appetite to vary. Keep serving a variety of healthy foods without pressuring him to eat. Make one family meal, not separate meals, with at least one food he likes even if it is just bread.

5. Should parents and caregivers be active with their children? Yes No

You are an important role model for your child. You can participate in physical activity by playing games, throwing, catching and kicking a ball. Join parent-and-tot programs or dance to music. Make active choices every day. Together you can take the stairs, walk to the mailbox, take a family walk after dinner or plan active weekends.

6. Is it true that it may take a preschooler 10 or more tries before accepting a new food? Yes No

It is easy to feel discouraged after your child has rejected a food for the third or even the thirteenth time. Keep offering it in small amounts with familiar foods when you know she is hungry. She may need 10 tries before liking it. Cooking with you and watching you eat a new food helps too.

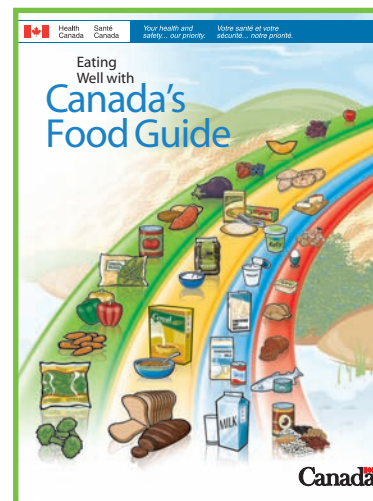
Quiz answers: All Yes

Eat right: The basics

The best way to eat well – for any of us – is to follow *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. Just remember the Food Guide is exactly that - simply a guide, and not what you should expect your child to eat each day. What really counts are his eating habits over time.

Find out more:

- To get a copy of the Food Guide, call your local public health unit or community health centre or go to: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.



GOOD TO KNOW:

Your child eats best when you







- *Eat with him and allow him to eat slowly.*
- *Serve food with child-sized plates, bowls, cups and utensils.*
- *Turn off the TV and put away toys.*
- *Ask her to sit down so she can focus on eating.*
- *Serve some food she can eat with her fingers.*
- *Serve food separately rather than mixed.*
- *Let him serve himself from the healthy food you put on the table.*

GOOD TO KNOW:

Got a nutrition question?

For advice about healthy eating that you can trust, speak to a registered dietitian. Call the EatRight Ontario toll-free telephone information service at 1-877-510-510-2 or visit www.ontario.ca/eatright and email your question to a registered dietitian.

How much should I offer my preschooler?








Age 3	Ages 4 & 5	What is a Food Guide Serving?	It looks like...
Vegetables and Fruit			
4 Food Guide Servings	5 Food Guide Servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 piece of fruit • 125 mL (1/2 cup) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables or tomato sauce, fruit or 100% fruit juice • 250 mL (1 cup) leafy raw vegetables or salad 	 A tennis ball  A fist
Grain Products			
3 Food Guide Servings	4 Food Guide Servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • 1/2 bagel • 1/2 pita or 1/2 large tortilla • 125 mL (1/2 cup) cooked rice, bulgur, quinoa, pasta or couscous • 175 mL (3/4 cup) hot cereal • 30 g cold cereal 	 A hockey puck  A hand  A tennis ball  A cupped hand It varies. Check the label.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Does my child need a vitamin and mineral supplement?

If your child eats according to the Food Guide most of the time, he should not need a vitamin and mineral supplement. However, if he does not eat a well balanced diet, talk to your doctor or a registered dietitian about a supplement.

Note: Supplements can be dangerous if too many are taken at once. Keep them locked away, out of a child's reach.

Age 3	Ages 4 & 5	What is a Food Guide Serving?	It looks like...
Milk and Alternatives			
2 Food Guide Servings	2 Food Guide Servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 mL (1 cup) milk or fortified soy beverage • 175 g (3/4 cup) yogurt • 50 g (1 1/2oz) hard cheese 	 Small measuring cup  Single container  Size of 2 thumbs
Meat and Alternatives			
1 Food Guide Serving	1 Food Guide Serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 eggs • 30 mL (2 tbsp) peanut butter or other nut butters* • 60 mL (4 tbsp) shelled nuts* or seeds • 125 mL (1/2 cup) or 75g (2 1/2oz) cooked fish**, shellfish, poultry, lean meat or game meat • 175 mL (3/4 cup) cooked and canned beans, lentils, chickpeas, hummus, edamame (soybeans) or tofu 	 1 golf ball  2 golf balls  A hockey puck  A cupped hand

Adapted from: *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. Health Canada, 2007.

* Life-threatening allergies to food – especially to peanuts and other nuts - are on the rise. Reduce the risk of allergic reactions. When visiting public places, either avoid bringing peanut butter or foods made with nuts or if you do bring them ask your child to eat in one spot. Find out more at: www.anaphylaxis.ca.

**See page 13 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Split up your servings

One Food Guide Serving can be divided into smaller amounts and served throughout the day. For example, half a serving of Meat and Alternatives can be split up and served at two different meals - your child could have an egg at lunch and a few forkfuls of chicken at dinner.

A sample meal plan

Many parents wonder what a sample one-day meal plan for their preschooler might look like. Remember, the amount she eats will vary from meal to meal, day to day and week to week. This is normal.

Age 3

Breakfast:

1 egg
1/2 slice toast
1/2 banana
125 mL (1/2 cup) milk

Morning snack

60 mL (1/4 cup) berries (fresh or frozen)
125 mL (1/2 cup) yogurt
Water

Noon meal

125 mL (1/2 cup) pasta with tomato and meat sauce
60 mL (1/4 cup) broccoli
125 mL (1/2 cup) milk

Afternoon snack

1/2 small muffin
125 mL (1/2 cup) unsweetened juice

Supper

175 mL (3/4 cup) chicken stirfry
125 mL (1/2 cup) milk
1 oatmeal cookie

After supper snack

175 mL (3/4 cup) cereal
125 mL (1/2 cup) milk
1/2 orange

Ages 4 & 5

Just add a small peach and an extra 125 mL (1/2 cup) pasta with tomato and meat sauce at lunch.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Offer some higher fat nutritious foods

Children need nutritious foods including some higher fat foods like peanut butter and hard cheese to meet their energy needs.

An unfinished plate is not always a bad sign

At mealtimes, talk about your day rather than what your child eats. Trust that he will eat an amount that is right for him. Serve a variety of healthy meals and snacks two to three hours apart, and let his appetite guide what and how much he eats – even if that means leaving an unfinished plate.

Children who are pressured to eat often eat less. Respect his appetite by avoiding comments like these:

- “Just take one more bite.”
- “No dessert until you eat your meat.”
- “Good boy. You ate all your peas.”
- “No more bread until you eat some meat.”
- “Finish your milk. It’s good for you.”
- “How do you know you don’t like it unless you try it?”

Label reading made easy

It is easier to eat right when your kitchen is stocked with healthy choices. If you are wondering what cereals, soups or other packaged foods to buy, compare the Nutrition Facts table on each label.

Step 1. Check the serving sizes on each brand to see if you are comparing similar amounts.

Step 2. Choose the brand with more vitamins, minerals and fibre.

Step 3. Choose the brand with fewer calories and less sodium, saturated fat and trans fat.

Find out more:

- Take a virtual grocery store tour at: www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca.
- Visit Health Canada at: www.hc-sc.gc.ca. Select “Food and Nutrition” then select “Nutrition Labelling”.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Serving size 3 pieces (20 g) Portion 3 morceaux (20 g)	
Amount	%Daily Value
Teneur	%valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 80	
Total Fat / Lipides 0.5 g	1 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+Trans / trans 0 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 260 mg	11 %
Total Carbohydrate / Glucides 15 g	5 %
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	4 %
Sugars / Sucres 1 g	
Protein / Protéines 2 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	0 %
Iron / Fer	8 %

Eat right: Making it happen!

Wondering what foods to serve?

The following charts can guide you on what to serve for meals and snacks. Use them as well as reading food labels and relying on your own good judgment. This way your child will get less fat, salt (sodium) and sugar, and more vitamins, minerals and fibre - a good recipe for healthy, active kids!

Try this.

From the charts listed on the next page, check off the foods you serve your child. Now, do you serve them every day, sometimes, or limit them as suggested? What “Healthy foods to serve every day” could you serve more often?

GOOD TO KNOW:

Make at least half of your Grain Products servings whole grain each day

- *Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.*
- *Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal and whole wheat pasta.*

GOOD TO KNOW:

Cut costs and boost nutrition

The “Healthy foods to serve every day” give you a lot of nutritional goodness for your money. You can also:

- *Buy fresh vegetables and fruit in season, and buy frozen or canned at other times.*
- *Buy meat on sale and freeze any extra.*
- *Substitute beans, lentils, canned fish*, tofu or eggs for meat.*
- *Choose store brands in larger packages and compare to bulk store prices.*
- *Buy less-processed foods. Instead of a small box of flavoured rice, why not choose a large bag of plain rice and flavour it yourself?*

*See page 13 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Healthy foods to serve every day			
Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Fresh, frozen, canned vegetables and fruit <input type="checkbox"/> 100% unsweetened fruit juice <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen fruit juice bar made with 100% fruit juice <input type="checkbox"/> Salsa <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable soups (tomato, carrot, butternut squash)	<input type="checkbox"/> Unsweetened cereals (hot or cold) <input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain: bread, bagels, pita, buns, crackers, English muffins <input type="checkbox"/> Whole or multigrain pancakes <input type="checkbox"/> Muffins made with whole grain <input type="checkbox"/> Whole wheat tortillas <input type="checkbox"/> Whole wheat noodles, pasta, brown rice <input type="checkbox"/> Couscous, bulgur <input type="checkbox"/> Roti, chapati, naan, steamed rolls, bannock	<input type="checkbox"/> Milk: 1% or 2%, white or chocolate <input type="checkbox"/> Fortified soy beverage <input type="checkbox"/> Soup made with milk <input type="checkbox"/> Hot chocolate made with milk <input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> Yogurt drinks, tubes <input type="checkbox"/> Smoothies made with yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> Kefir <input type="checkbox"/> Hard cheese <input type="checkbox"/> Powdered milk <input type="checkbox"/> Canned milk (evaporated)	<input type="checkbox"/> Tofu <input type="checkbox"/> Beans, peas, lentils <input type="checkbox"/> Hummus <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter, nut butters <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts, seeds (plain, unsalted) <input type="checkbox"/> Fish*, seafood <input type="checkbox"/> Canned fish (in water)* <input type="checkbox"/> Eggs <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken, turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Lean beef <input type="checkbox"/> Lean pork, ham <input type="checkbox"/> Game meat

Foods okay to serve sometimes			
Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables with sauces or breading <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit leather, dried fruit bars <input type="checkbox"/> Sweetened fruit juices <input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit: raisins, cranberries, apricots	<input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars (plain) <input type="checkbox"/> Popcorn (unflavoured) <input type="checkbox"/> Pretzels (unsalted) <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit crisps, cobblers <input type="checkbox"/> Cookies: oatmeal, peanut butter, dried fruit-filled, gingersnaps, graham wafers <input type="checkbox"/> Biscuits, scones	<input type="checkbox"/> Pudding made with milk <input type="checkbox"/> Milkshakes <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen yogurt <input type="checkbox"/> Custards <input type="checkbox"/> Processed cheese slices <input type="checkbox"/> Cheese spreads	<input type="checkbox"/> Deli meats: roast beef, turkey, ham <input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat fish sticks* <input type="checkbox"/> Low-fat chicken strips or nuggets <input type="checkbox"/> Canned fish (in oil)* <input type="checkbox"/> Back bacon

Foods, beverages and extras to limit			
<input type="checkbox"/> Pastries, Danishes <input type="checkbox"/> Cakes, pies, sticky buns, donuts, tarts <input type="checkbox"/> Presweetened cereals <input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars with chocolate <input type="checkbox"/> Cookies with icing <input type="checkbox"/> Instant noodle soups <input type="checkbox"/> Soft drinks, pop, diet pop	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit drinks (punch) <input type="checkbox"/> Sports drinks <input type="checkbox"/> Syrups <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen ice treats (popsicles) <input type="checkbox"/> Sherbet, ice cream <input type="checkbox"/> Marshmallows <input type="checkbox"/> Whipped cream, whipped topping	<input type="checkbox"/> Candy, chocolate <input type="checkbox"/> Flavoured jello <input type="checkbox"/> Potato chips, nacho chips <input type="checkbox"/> Cheezies <input type="checkbox"/> French fries <input type="checkbox"/> Hot dogs, sausages <input type="checkbox"/> Sour cream	<input type="checkbox"/> Pepperoni sticks <input type="checkbox"/> Strip bacon <input type="checkbox"/> Gravy <input type="checkbox"/> Ketchup, mustard, relish <input type="checkbox"/> Butter, hard margarine <input type="checkbox"/> Cream cheese

*See page 13 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Adapted from:

- *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*. Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health School Nutrition Workgroup. 2004.
- *Healthy Eating and Active Living for your 6 to 12 year old*. Alberta Health and Wellness. 2006.

I'm thirsty!

Quench your child's thirst with the right drink at the right time.

Serve:

- **Water first for quenching thirst.** Serve tap water when your child is thirsty. You can avoid spoiling his appetite by only serving water between meals and snacks. Remember to offer water breaks often when it is hot outside or whenever he is active.
- **Milk with meals.** Preschoolers need 500 mL (2 cups) of milk, chocolate milk or fortified soy beverage every day.
- **Unsweetened fruit juice with a meal or snack.** 125 mL (1/2 cup) is enough for one day. Too much fruit juice provides extra sugar and very little fibre. Offer him fruit instead of juice most often. You can add water to his juice as well.

Limit:

- **Sweetened and diet drinks such as:** pop, diet pop, sports drinks, fruit cocktails, fruit drinks and punches. They offer little or no nutrition and take the place of nutritious choices that preschoolers need for healthy growth. Offer her water, milk or 100% juice instead.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Juice versus fruit drinks – Don't let the packaging fool you

It is real 100% juice when the package says:

- *unsweetened*
- *pure fruit juice from concentrate*
- *no artificial flavours or colours added*
- *100% juice*

Fruit drinks may look like juice, but are in fact mostly sugar and water with just a little real fruit juice added. Besides that, most fruit drinks have very few, if any, vitamins and minerals.

Choose a juice with no sugar (or glucose) on the ingredient list.

Limit fruit drinks that have these words on the package:

- *drink*
- *punch*
- *cocktail*
- *-ade*
- *beverage*

Breakfast

Whether breakfast happens at home, at school, in child care, or a little of both, try to offer your child foods from at least three food groups. That will help him to grow and give him energy to be active. If you are crunched for time in the morning, start preparing the night before.

Circle any ideas you want to try.

At home

- Dinner leftovers, such as casseroles or fried rice, chocolate milk
- Hard-cooked egg, piece of toast, unsweetened fruit juice
- Heated tortilla with grated cheese and salsa cut into wedges, few sliced grapes, fortified soy beverage
- Whole grain slice of toast with baked beans, small peach, milk

On the go*

- Canned fruit, small homemade muffin, yogurt drink
- Half a sandwich, few melon balls, milk in re-useable drink container
- Frozen berries mixed into yogurt with cereal over top
- Dry cereal, chunk of cheese, small pear, water

*Pack breakfast in an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack just as you would a lunch.
Adapted from: *Blast off with Breakfast*. Northern Healthy Eating Project, 2004.

Five simple snacks

Preschoolers need two or three healthy snacks a day to stay energized. Offer a snack about two hours before the next meal and keep your child active throughout the day so he comes to the table hungry at mealtimes.

Serve simple snacks with foods from two to three food groups. Circle any ideas your preschooler might enjoy.

1. Smoothie (blend fresh, frozen or canned fruit, milk and yogurt)
2. Half a grilled cheese sandwich, small plum, water
3. Chopped veggies, hummus, pita bread, water
4. Yogurt tube, small nectarine, water
5. Small oatmeal muffin, apricot, milk

GOOD TO KNOW:

Sticky snacks

Your child needs to brush her teeth after eating snack foods that are sweet and will stick to her teeth, such as dried fruit (raisins, cranberries, apricots, fruit leathers and bars). If she is not able to brush her teeth, offer her fresh fruit instead. That way she will be less likely to develop cavities.

Loads of lunches

Offer the healthier choices from three or four food groups for a nutrition-packed lunch. Here are some ideas to get you started. Check off ones that your preschooler might enjoy.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole wheat mini pitas stuffed with egg, tuna* or salmon salad, sliced cucumber and tomato salad, milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Chapati or tortilla stuffed with salsa, refried beans and cheese, smoothie made with fruit and yogurt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna* casserole, baby carrots, pear, fig cookie, milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Chickpeas over cold whole wheat couscous, cubes of cooked sweet potato, melon balls, frozen yogurt tube, water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Samosas, canned peaches, mini homemade oatmeal muffin, chocolate milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Homemade chicken noodle and vegetable soup, nectarine, cookie, fortified soy beverage |

*See page 13 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Reduce choking hazards

Any food can cause choking so always supervise preschoolers when they eat. Have your child sit down, and keep laughing or kidding around to a minimum. You should also:

- Cut grapes in half.
- Grate hard vegetables such as carrots or turnip or cut them into narrow strips.
- Remove pits and seeds from fruit and cut into pieces.
- Spread peanut butter thinly. Never serve it right off a spoon.
- Cut hot dogs and sausages into long strips, and then into bite-size pieces.
- Avoid offering popcorn, raisins and hard round candies. These tend to cause choking in children under four years of age.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Food allergies and intolerances

If you think your child has a food allergy or intolerance, ask your doctor to have him tested. If he needs to change his diet, your doctor or a registered dietitian can help. Find out more: www.aboutkidshealth.ca and click on Health A-Z and then "F" for "Food Allergies" or visit the Food Allergy Network at: www.foodallergy.org.

Delicious dinners

Good news! Simple meals that are easy to prepare are a favourite with preschoolers. Check off any of these easy and healthy dinners you would like to try.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian chili, whole wheat roll, garden salad, milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie loaded omelet in a whole wheat pita pocket, steamed green beans, frozen yogurt, water |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pork and veggie kebab, couscous, canned fruit over yogurt, milk | <input type="checkbox"/> Grilled salmon,* steamed broccoli, rice, peach smoothie |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steamed fish fillets,* potatoes, green peas, banana bread, fortified soy beverage | <input type="checkbox"/> Oriental soup with tofu, carrot and red pepper sticks, pear, milk |

*See below for important information on choosing fish wisely.

Find out more:

- Find a menu planning guide complete with a sample weekly menu plan and suggestions to help preschoolers eat well at: www.dietitians.ca/healthystart.
- Search for recipes under the Eat Well Live Well banner on the Dietitians of Canada website at: www.dietitians.ca.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Fabulous Fish

There are many fish and shellfish that are healthy and safe to eat for the entire family. They provide an excellent source of protein as well as a source of vitamins A and D. The healthy fats help in the normal development of the brain and eye in unborn and young children.

Serve at least two Food Guide Servings [one serving = 125 mL (1/2 cup) or 75 grams (2 1/2 oz) of fish or shellfish each week]. Choose from the many fish and shellfish that are low in mercury such as: cod, haddock, tilapia, sardines, salmon (including canned salmon), canned "light" tuna (check the label for skipjack or tongol) pollock (Boston bluefish) and shrimp. It's important to limit mercury because it is harmful to the developing brain in both unborn children and children.

Find out more:

- *Speak with a registered dietitian about choosing fish wisely. Call EatRight Ontario at: 1-877-510-510-2.*
- *Contact your local public health unit.*

Kids in the kitchen

Preschoolers love helping in the kitchen. This is a great chance to interest him in trying new foods. Supervise any activity in the kitchen, taking into account his size, strength and abilities.

Your little helper can:

- Scrub vegetables and fruit, tear lettuce.
- Choose vegetable ingredients.
- Mix batter.
- Pour ingredients.
- Spread toppings with a plastic or child-safe knife.
- Line a muffin tray with paper muffin cups.
- Wipe table with a clean cloth.
- Help set the table.

For recipes that you can make with your child, check out the **BusyBodies** activity card set at: www.ontario.ca/eatright and search “BusyBodies”.



GOOD TO KNOW:

A hand washing sing-along

Get your child in the habit of washing her hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds before and after eating or cooking, and after using the bathroom or touching animals.

Teach her to sing a song while washing her hands. A song like “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” takes just about the right length of time. When the song is finished, her hands should be clean.

Top feeding challenges

1 Challenge: My child wants to eat the same food all the time.

Solution: Let your child have his "favourite food," as long as it belongs to one of the four food groups. For example, plain pasta is a favourite with many preschoolers. Keep offering other healthy choices at each meal. He'll soon move on to another favourite. (Yes, this really is progress.)

2 Challenge: My child eats very little or skips an entire meal.

Solution: A skipped meal every once in a while is not a concern as long as your child is growing normally. He may not be hungry. Serve smaller portions and make sure snacks are served about two hours before mealtimes.

3 Challenge: My child does not want to drink milk.

Solution: Offer a small amount (125 mL or 1/2 cup) of white or chocolate milk but don't force it. Preschoolers need 500 mL (2 cups) of milk or fortified soy beverage each day. You can cook with milk too. Try pancakes, oatmeal or soups. Talk with a registered dietitian, your doctor or nurse practitioner if your child will not drink milk.

4 Challenge: My child drinks a lot of milk.

Solution: Milk can be filling, and too much can spoil your child's appetite for other healthy foods. Serve milk in a cup at set times such as at meals. Limit the milk if your child is drinking more than 750 mL (3 cups) a day.

5 Challenge: My child refuses to eat meat.

Solution: Taste and texture turn some preschoolers away from meat. Try ground meat in meat balls or meat loaf, or cut meat into small pieces and serve it in soups, stews and tomato sauce.

Try other protein-rich foods such as eggs, fish, cheese, peanut butter, soy foods, beans and lentils. Increase iron intake by serving iron-fortified breads and cereals, beans and lentils and raisins. Talk to a registered dietitian or your family doctor if your child will not eat any Meat or Alternatives.

6 Challenge: My child doesn't like eating vegetables.

Solution: Be patient and keep serving a variety of vegetables. Your child may be more likely to eat vegetables if she sees you eating them. Cooking together, serving finger food veggies with dip and pureeing vegetables into soups and sauces may also work.

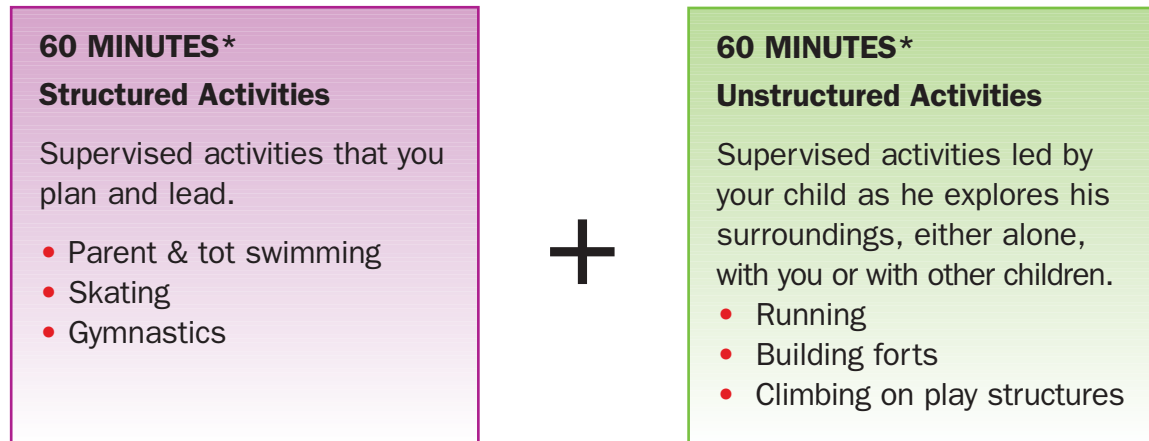
7 Challenge: My child is very picky.

Solution: Refusing to eat is sometimes a way of taking control. It may have little to do with the actual food. Focus on making every bite count – serve foods packed with goodness like peanut butter, milk, chicken, eggs and yogurt.

Be active: The basics

Being active comes naturally to preschoolers. They just love to walk, climb, jump and run. Nurture your child's love of physical activity so she can grow, be healthy and enjoy a lifetime of being physically active.

How much physical activity do preschoolers need?



Daily total = 2 hours

* Remember, she does not have to do this all at once. Each ten minute period of being active counts.

Source: *Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years*. National Association for Sport and Physical Education, 2002.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Be active - Five big benefits

1. *Helps children feel great.*
2. *Builds lifelong enjoyment of activity.*
3. *Strengthens the heart, muscles and bones.*
4. *Builds social skills and confidence.*
5. *Provides family fun.*

Be active: Making it happen!

Five ways to be active

- 1 Boost the fun factor** – Being physically active should be a fun and natural part of your child’s day. Play non-competitive games such as kicking a ball back and forth rather than keeping “score.” Change the rules to suit him.
- 2 Encourage many different activities for both boys and girls** – Provide all types of equipment to boys and girls such as different kinds of balls, skipping ropes, skates, racquets and hockey sticks.
- 3 Be a role model** – When your child sees you being active and enjoying it, she will try to copy that. Build physical activity into your daily routine. Walk to preschool, ride your bikes together or walk to do small errands with your child. Talk with her often about what you do to be active, whether it is a fitness class or taking a walk at lunch.
- 4 Mix it up** – Plan different activities that fit your child’s abilities and interests. Walking, playing, jumping and climbing don’t cost anything and are fun. Aim to have a mix of these three types of activities:
 - Endurance (running, jumping and swimming strengthen the heart and lungs)
 - Flexibility (gymnastics and dancing encourage bending, stretching and reaching)
 - Strength (climbing builds strong muscles and bones)
- 5 Stay active in all kinds of weather** – Enjoy a walk in the rain by jumping over puddles. On a warm day, jump over marks or cracks on the sidewalk. Fall and winter seasons provide piles of leaves and mounds of snow to jump into and over. On very cold or wet days, play inside - hide and seek, dance, build a fort or play parachute games using bed sheets and rolled up socks.

Find out more:

- Check out the fun activities in the BusyBodies activity card set at: www.ontario.ca/eatright and search “BusyBodies”.
- Print off a preschooler activity planning guide at: www.dietitians.ca/healthystart.



Ways to play it safe

Enjoy playing safely with your preschooler. Use this list to start thinking about what you might want to add to your regular safety routine.

- Equipment** - Replace any damaged safety padding, balls or other equipment. Check that the equipment your child wears, such as a helmet, fits properly.
- Balls and bats** - Choose balls that are large, soft and flexible; use lightweight, plastic bats and racquets.
- Helmets** - Your child must wear a safety-approved helmet when riding a tricycle or scooter, skating, tobogganing and playing hockey. Find out more about safety approved helmets, what other activities require a safety-approved helmet or other safety equipment by visiting the website below.
- Shoes** - Buy well fitting shoes with a flexible sole, nylon mesh, good heel support, and wiggle room for toes.
- Sun safety** - Protect your child from the sun with a wide-brimmed hat, long-sleeve, lightweight clothing, and sunscreen.
- Playground** - Make sure the equipment and ground area are free of broken glass, sharp objects or other debris. Children under five should not play on playground equipment over five feet tall.

Find out more:

- Get more safety tips at:
www.safekidscanada.ca.
- Call Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children at:
1-888-SAFE-TIPS (723-3847).
- Contact your local public health unit.

GOOD TO KNOW:

Replace screen time with active time

Physical activity should be a fun and natural part of a child's life.

Unfortunately, as early as two to three years of age, children become less active as they are introduced to television and computers. Encourage more activity by limiting your child's TV viewing to one hour or less a day.

Source: A recommendation of the Canadian Paediatric Society "Pediatrics & Child Health," 2002.

10 activities you can do together

1. Walk to the store, mailbox, library or child care.
2. Visit a pick-your-own farm. Check out: www.ontariofarmfresh.com/consumer/fmsi.html
3. Plant a garden, rake leaves and shovel snow.
4. Create indoor and outdoor play areas where you can roll, climb, jump and tumble together.
5. Explore a beach, pond or woods together.
6. Start a parent & tot active living group.
7. Be active with music: dance or sing songs with actions.
8. “Adopt” a park or part of a trail near your home for your family to look after.
9. Have an outdoor scavenger hunt looking for mail boxes, stop signs and colours. Inside, hide toys, books and stuffed animals for your child to find.
10. Explore a children’s museum.

GOOD TO KNOW:

A little praise goes a long way

Praise your child often, both during and after activities, for things like:

- *Social skills. “That was nice sharing with your skipping rope.”*
- *Effort. “Wow you really ran fast to catch that ball. Good try!”*
- *Improved skill. “That was great! You stopped the soccer ball using your foot. Now can you kick it back to me?”*
- *For just being him. “That was so much fun, exploring the creek with you.”*

GOOD TO KNOW:

Cooperative or competitive?

Choose cooperative rather than competitive games for preschoolers. No child is eliminated from play in a cooperative game. There may be some competition involved, but the emphasis is on participation, challenge and fun. Instead of losing and sitting out, players may switch teams throughout the game so that everyone becomes part of the winning team.

Skill building is important

Being active should be all about having fun. At the same time, you can choose suitable activities to help her to learn, practice and master basic skills such as running, kicking or water play. Building these skills now will help her later to master skills such as hitting a tennis ball over a net.

Activities good for children turning 3 years old:

- Walking and running in one direction, and learning to change direction
- Throwing and retrieving a large ball
- Kicking a large ball
- Water play and swimming with an adult
- Riding a tricycle

Activities good for 3 and 4 year olds:

- Walking, running, skipping and galloping in different directions
- New ball skills: bouncing, catching with two hands, throwing with accuracy
- Kicking a ball to a partner and stopping a ball (likely using hands)
- Swimming with an adult
- Riding a tricycle or bicycle with training wheels

Activities good for 5 year olds:

- Skipping and running games such as tag
- Games with objects of various sizes, shapes and textures such as balls, beanbags, scoops and bats
- Kicking a ball with force, stopping the ball with a foot
- Swimming with adult supervision, swimming lessons
- Riding a bicycle with or without training wheels
- Small group games with few rules, emphasizing cooperation rather than competition

Need more information?

EatRight Ontario

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit EatRight Ontario at: www.ontario.ca/eatright. Ontario residents can speak to a registered dietitian by calling the EatRight Ontario toll-free telephone information service at 1-877-510-510-2.

Books

- *Child of Mine: Feeding with Love and Good Sense*. Ellyn Satter, 2000.
- *Your Child's Weight... Helping Without Harming*. Ellyn Satter, 2005.
- *Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family: Orchestrating and Enjoying the Family Meal*. Ellyn Satter, 2008.
- *Raising Vegetarian Children - A Guide to Good Health and Family Harmony*. J. Stephaniak and V. Melina, 2003.
- *Better Food for Kids: Your Essential Guide to Nutrition for all Children from age 2 to 6*. J. Saab and D. Kalnins, 2002.
- *500 Five Minute Games – Quick and Easy Activities for 3 – 6 year olds*. Jackie Silberg, 1995.
- *Moving and Growing Series: Physical Activities for Twos, Threes and Fours and Physical Activities for Fives and Sixes*. Canadian Child Care Federation, 2004.
- *Purposeful Play: Early Childhood Movement Activities on a Budget*. Renee McCall, Diane Craft, 2004.

Websites

- Food Allergy Network: www.foodallergy.org
- Anaphylaxis Canada: www.anaphylaxis.ca
- Best Start Resource Centre: www.beststart.org
- Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- Canadian Parks and Recreation Association. Everybody Gets to Play: www.cpra.ca
- Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca
- Healthy Start for Life: www.dietitians.ca/healthystart
- Nutrition for Kids: www.nutritionforkids.com
- Understanding the nutrition label: www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca
- Recipes for produce in season and more: www.foodland.gov.on.ca
- Active Healthy Kids Canada: www.activehealthykids.ca
- Canada's Physical Activity Guide for Children: www.paguide.com

Contacts

Consult your public health unit or community health centre for information, referrals, handouts and more about healthy eating, physical activity and safety.

- Find out where your local community health centre is at www.aohc.org. Click on “Find a centre near you”.
- Find out where your local public health unit is at www.alphaweb.org. Click on “Health units” then “Ontario’s health units”.

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