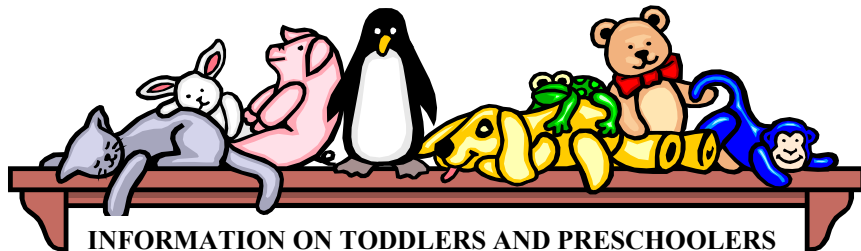




# TODDLER TOPICS: 2005



INFORMATION ON TODDLERS AND PRESCHOOLERS

ISSUE NO. ONE

**Dear Parent:**

*This issue of Toddler Topics will focus on food and nutrition which is a hot topic for any parent. As a parent or caregiver, you play a major role in teaching your child how to develop good eating habits that serve as a sound base for a lifetime of eating. From two to five years old, children begin to assert their likes and dislikes in all arenas but especially in eating.*



*This issue will give you some food for thought.*

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**GROWTH DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD  
-What to Expect-**

Between three and four years:

- Reluctant to try new foods
- Tell you about food preferences
- Eat independently with some help
- Eats mostly with fingers
- Use a spoon and drinks from a cup
- Asks for more food/beverage



Between four and five years:

- Begins to experiment with food
- Initiates new food selections
- Requires less help at the table
- Likes to serve him/herself
- Eat more comfortably with groups
- Use a fork and spoon
- Can pour own beverage from a small pitcher

Sincerely,

Nancy E. Wallace, MS, CFCS  
Extension Educator

Penn State Cooperative Extension in your county provides educational programs of interest to children, youth and families. Contact your county office at: Westmoreland County Cooperative Extension, Donohoe Center, RR 12, Box 202E, Donohoe Road, Greensburg PA 15601, 724-837-1402.

E-mail us at [WestmorelandExt.@psu.edu](mailto:WestmorelandExt.@psu.edu). Visit our web site at: [Westmoreland.extension.psu.edu](http://Westmoreland.extension.psu.edu).



## HELP YOUR CHILD BECOME A GOOD EATER

The preschool years are the time to establish good eating and lifestyle habits that can reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease, cancer and other chronic disease. Here are a few tips that can help children become healthy eaters.

Sometimes not eating is an attempt to gain attention. Give the child attention before mealtime. Including the child in mealtime conversation reinforces that the child is an important part of the family.

Increased physical activity promotes hunger and thirst. It encourages eating. Children may be playing outside before mealtime. When they come in doors, they can be hungry or thirsty. Give them a drink of water not juice.

Offer a variety of foods cooked in a variety of ways. Offer food of many colors, textures, and tastes. This makes food more interesting. Offer one new food at a time. Too many options confuse children. Also offer the new food along with food that the child likes. Tell the child if the food is to be sweet, sour, or salty.

Make food easy for the child to eat. Child sized plates, cups and utensils, or a booster seat help the child reach the food. Child sized portions on a smaller plate seem less daunting to a child. When the child feels safer in the booster seat, he/she will sit and eat rather than squirm around or get up from the table. Don't force a child to eat a food he/she doesn't like.

Parents and older children are great role models for young children. If you want a child to drink milk or eat spinach, make sure they see you eating it.

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## WATER, WATER , EVERYWHERE

All children thrive best on a wide variety of foods. Young children should have six to eight 6 ounce servings of water everyday. The human body is approximately 60% water. Water is the stream which transports oxygen and essential nutrients to every part of the body. Water protects the organs. It lubricates joints and regulates body temperature. A child's body has a higher percentage of water than an adult. So, children can become dehydrated more quickly. Water is the best choice to quench thirst.



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## TRY, TRY AGAIN

Does your child refuse to eat peas, broccoli, or meat? Are you tired of being a short order cook? According to recent research, many young children need to be offered a new food 8 to 10 times before they will try it. It is just part of growing up. Continue to offer the food. Try it in new ways. Eventually children will try it. Also, remember it is okay to not like a food.

## SERVING SIZES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Four to six year olds can eat the following serving sizes. Offer two and three year old children less except for milk. However, do not consider the serving sizes as exact amounts. For example, your three year old may only need a half slice of bread.

### GRAIN GROUP:

- 1 slice bread
- ½ cup cooked rice or pasta
- ½ cup cooked cereal
- 1 ounce ready- to-eat cereal

### VEGETABLE GROUP:

- ½ cup chopped raw or cooked vegetables
- 1 cup raw leafy vegetables

### FRUIT GROUP:

- 1 small size piece of fruit or melon
- ¾ cup of juice
- ½ cup canned fruit
- ¼ cup dried fruit

### MILK GROUP:

- 1 cup of milk or yogurt
- 2 ounces of cheese

### MEAT GROUP:

- 2 to 3 ounces of lean meat, poultry or fish
- ½ cup of cooked dry beans
- 1 egg

### THE ABC'S OF GROWING HEALTHY KIDS: Children 2-6 Years Old

If you would like detailed information on getting you child to eat well and health related information, contact the Extension office.

Ask for the series entitled The ABC's of Growing Healthy Children.

## BUT MY CHILD WON'T EAT BREAKFAST

“Eat your breakfast. It is the most important meal of the day.” Do you remember your mother saying that to you? Breakfast is the meal that breaks the fast from eating the night before. Research finds that children who eat something at breakfast are more alert. Research also shows that parents who eat breakfast generally have children who eat breakfast.

However, some children just don't like breakfast food. Breakfast doesn't always have to be cereal and milk or eggs and toast. You can be creative. Try one of these:

- Peanutbutter and jelly on whole wheat toast
- Toasted cheese sandwich and fruit
- Cottage cheese and fruit
- A low-fat yogurt sundae with granola
- Chicken sandwich with fruit
- Frozen waffles with fruit
- Cornbread with applesauce

All these foods go great with a glass of milk.





## THE KITCHEN IS A CLASSROOM

Picture children cooking in the kitchen, what do you see? Do messy countertops and food stained clothing come to mind? Or, do you see children learning math, science, and problem solving? Do you see children building relationships with mom and/or dad.

Cooking activities introduce children to a variety of learning concepts. Children learn math skills such as counting, measuring, and dividing.

They learn shapes such as round pizza, a square cracker, a triangular piece of pie or pizza. They can guess how many bananas are needed to make a fruit smoothie.

Children can learn to solve problems such as how many pieces of carrot are needed if each family member or friend get two. They learn how to divide when they cut up the pan of brownies.

“I wonder how many cups of water it will take to fill this glass.” Children can learn to measure. Take an empty one cup measure. Show – or better yet – have the child - pour four one-quarter cups of liquid to fill it.

“What would happen if . . .” Children also learn that foods change when they are cooked, baked or frozen. This can be learned by watching cheese melt on pizza as it is baked. Or, make home-made ice cream.

Sure the kitchen will be messy. Sure it will take longer to cook. The trade-off is that children are learning by doing. They are building sound relationships as they stand beside a parent in the cooking laboratory.

## SNACK ATTACK

Children have small stomachs and can't meet their energy and nutrient needs with just three meals a day. Enter the snack. Not just any snack, but a nutritious snack.

Here are some examples.

Milk: try flavored milks, yogurt and cheese cubes

Meat: hard cooked eggs, peanut butter on celery sticks

Fruit: fresh fruit chunks, frozen fruit pops, bananas with peanut butter

Veggies: child sized fresh vegetable pieces along with cottage cheese or bean dip

Grains: mini-bagels, whole wheat toast fingers, tortillas with bean dip



Snacks are mini-meals, so small size portions are the key. A rule of thumb is one- tablespoon portion for each year of age. Also snacks should be scheduled at least 1-1/2 to 2 hours before mealtime.

Try a fruit smoothie

2 cups of any fruit juice

5-6 ice cubes

1 tsp vanilla

2/3 cup nonfat dry milk powder

Crush the ice in a blender. Add juice, vanilla and milk powder. Blend well. Pour into four glasses. If you don't have a blender, crush the ice. Mix ingredients in a jar until frothy.

One serving provides 99 calories, 5 gram of protein and .1 gram fat.

## CHOKING ALERT

Two and three year olds are particularly at risk for choking on food. Here is a list of food that may cause choking.

Hot dogs, frankfurter and other sausages  
Nuts and seeds  
Popcorn  
Raw carrots (try cooking the carrots for two minutes to soften them)  
Chunks of meat  
Raisins  
Marshmallows  
Peanut butter by the spoonful  
Chips  
Whole grapes (just cut them in half)  
Mini-pretzels, pretzel chunks  
Round or hard candy, throat lozenges  
Cherries with pits  
Large pieces of fruit

*This issue of Toddler Topics was written by: Nancy E. Wallace, MS, CFCS—Extension Educator*

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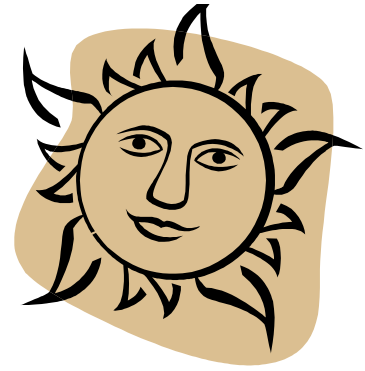
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# RAIN



# OR



### MAKE YOUR OWN PEANUT BUTTER

2 pounds of roasted unsalted peanuts in the shell  
 4 teaspoons softened butter  
 Blender, or food processor

Have the child help with shelling the peanuts. Put the shelled nuts in the blender. Start with a small amount. Blend. Add butter one teaspoon at a time to add in smoothness. Add more peanuts. Continue blending until all nuts are ground. Add a pinch of salt if needed.

### NAME THAT FOOD

Materials needed:

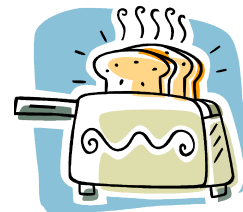
Tray with a small dish of different foods like bananas, kiwi, celery, lemon slice, zucchini, cauliflower, pretzel

Blindfold the child or have the child cover his/her eyes. Have the child select a food and taste it. See if he/she can tell what the food is by feel, smell and taste.

### PAINTED TOAST

Material needed:

1 or 2% milk  
 Food coloring  
 Sliced bread  
 Pastry brushes



For each color of 'paint' desired, measure 1/3 cup milk into a cup. Add two drops of food coloring. With the pastry brush, 'paint the untoasted bread. Toast bread in toaster or toaster oven.