

As They Grow

*An Early Learning Newsletter for
Families of Preschool Children*

**UW
Extension**
Learning for life

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Dear Families,

How long has it been since you laid on your back in the grass and looked for shapes in the clouds? Have you recently played hopscotch on your driveway after creating a chalk board? Do you go on nature walks in your own backyard? Let's revive these simple, warm-weather pleasures.

Help your child describe the clouds by height, thickness, and color. Does your child see anything in the cloud shapes? Look for animals, storybook characters, and household objects. Can your child spot an airplane, bird, or the moon in the sky? Look for bugs, plants, and rocks in your own backyard or enjoy the gentle breeze of a summer's day. Many outdoor games are very vigorous and active, but any activity that allows family members to share time together is one to be enjoyed! Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

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BUILDING STRONG FAMILY MEALTIMES



Mealtimes should be happy family times. If busy schedules don't allow you to eat all three meals together, try to have at least one meal each day where the whole family sits down together to eat. Make it a time for conversations about everybody's day, friends and relatives, plans for the weekend, etc. Be sure each person has a chance to talk. Turn off the television and let the answering machine take phone messages. Make mealtimes your families special time!

Here are some things to remember about children and eating:

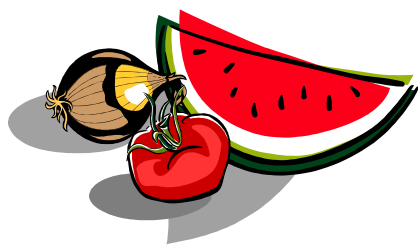
- ◇ It's your job to plan menus, purchase the food, and prepare healthy, nutritious meals.
- ◇ It's up to your child to decide what and how much to eat. Children know when they are hungry or full. A hungry child will eat!
- ◇ It is normal for a child to eat more food one day, and less the next.
- ◇ Children can be messy while learning eating skills. Remember, a spill is not a catastrophe. Calmly have your child help you clean up any messes.
- ◇ Your child will learn good manners from your example.
- ◇ Serve small portions of food so your child will not be overwhelmed.
- ◇ Keep in mind that it often takes a child several tries before deciding to like a new food. Serving a new food along with one your child likes may help.
- ◇ When a child helps prepare a new food he or she may be more willing to try it.
- ◇ Avoid bribing or rewarding children for trying new foods.



TASTE TESTING WITH KIDS

Looking for some ways to get your child to try new foods? Try some of these ideas and see what happens!

- ◇ Have your child compare cheeses by having samples of cheddar, Swiss, Colby, mozzarella, and cottage cheese.
- ◇ Cut up bite-size pieces of fruits and vegetables for your child to try.
- ◇ Show how you can have one type of food different ways. For example, you can serve carrots raw, cooked, mashed, as soup, and even as juice. Find out which ways your child likes carrots. This can be done with other foods such as potatoes, apples, eggs, etc.
- ◇ Choose some vegetables, cut them into bite-size pieces, and give your child a riddle for each such as:
 - ◆ Taste the vegetable that looks like a white flower. (cauliflower)
 - ◆ Find and taste the little green trees. (broccoli)
 - ◆ What looks like a red rock? (radish)
 - ◆ Which one looks like little wheels? (carrots, cucumber, or squash rounds)



FOOD SAFETY WARNING...

Infants and young children can choke easily on some foods, such as nuts, popcorn, fruit seeds or pits, pieces of hot dogs or bacon, and some raw vegetables and fruits such as carrots, celery, apples, and grapes. Using grated or finely chopped foods may reduce the risk of choking. Never leave an infant or young child alone while eating.

TRAFFIC SAFETY

Traffic accidents happen so frequently because young children simply have no idea about the danger of moving vehicles. It is possible to teach preschoolers about the basics of traffic safety.

Preschoolers are at a physical disadvantage. Sit, stoop, or kneel beside a road to get a feel of the difference. You can't see nearly as much, and you can't really tell whether a vehicle is coming, going, or standing still.

From two to three years of age, children can be taught where it is safe to play and to walk, and where to stop.

At four, they can understand the dangers of moving, parked and backing-up vehicles, and how to look for cars in the street.

By five, many children are capable of learning to cross a street safely at crosswalks.

A DRINK OF WATER!

In warm weather, it is very important to offer water to children throughout the day, especially after active play times. As a general guideline, children should be offered drinks of water at least every hour during hot weather and every half hour if they are in a place that is not air conditioned. Encourage children to have a drink of water whenever they are thirsty.



Plain water is best, but milk and fruit juices are also good choices. Under normal conditions, children need about eight four-ounce servings of water per day. But the need increases during extremely hot weather. Set a good example by drinking plenty of water yourself!

TRAVEL TIPS

Traveling with your preschooler can be a pleasant and enjoyable experience. The biggest challenge is keeping your child busy in the car. The key is planning, patience and plenty of rest stops. On a long trip, stop every 1-2 hours and let your child run around outside. This will release energy and exercise large muscles.

Travel can be difficult for children and it is unrealistic to expect a young child to sit in one place for more than two hours.



Here are some tips:

- Bring your child's pillow and a small blanket to add a touch of home to the car and new environments.
- A bottle of bubbles, a Frisbee, jump rope, or a ball are all fun to use to encourage exercise at rest stops.
- Pack fresh fruit, vegetables, and crackers for snacks. Also carry enough water to ward off dehydration.
- A small canvas bag kept for long trips with books, crayons, magic slate boards, or a favorite, small toy can keep a child busy.

Family Smart/ Kid Friendly

Workshops and parenting resources focused on discipline and challenging behaviors are available at locations throughout Racine County by calling:

- 262-939-1984 (eastern Racine County)
- 262-763-0809 (western Racine County)

Racine County UW-Extension provides workshops and resources through Family Smart/Kid Friendly, a collaboration with City of Racine Health Department, Love Inc., Next Generation Now, Racine County Human Services Department, United Way of Racine County, and Western Racine County Health

WISCONSIN'S NEW CHILD PASSENGER SAFETY (BOOSTER SEAT) LAW

The Child Booster Seat Law went into effect on June 1, 2006. To provide education about the new law, written warnings will be issued instead of citations for first violations during a grace period from June 1 until December 31, 2006. On January 1, 2007, law enforcement officers will begin issuing citations for violations.

Generally, children must be properly restrained in a child safety seat until they reach age four and in a booster seat until age eight. The new law includes the following four step progression for effective child safety protection in vehicles.

Rear-facing child safety seat in the back seat* is required when the child:

1. Is less than one year old OR
2. Weighs less than 20 pounds

Forward-facing child safety seat in the back seat* is required when the child:

1. Is at least one year old but less than four years old
2. Weighs at least 20 pounds but less than 40 pounds

Booster seat is required when the child:

1. Is at least four years old but less than eight years old
2. Weighs at least 40 pounds but less than 80 pounds
3. Is not 57 inches (4 feet, 9 inches) or taller

Safety belt is required when the child:

1. Is eight years old or older OR
2. Weighs 80 pounds or more OR
3. Is 57 inches or taller

*Child safety seat must be in the back seat if the vehicle is equipped with a back seat.

For more information, contact the Wisconsin Information Network for Safety at 1-866-511-9467.

HAND WASHING AND YOUR FAMILY'S HEALTH

Hand washing is important for everyone in the family. Even if your hands look clean, there are probably germs (or bacteria) on them. Some germs can make you sick. Colds and flu can spread from one person to the next. Food can become contaminated with germs from dirty hands as well.

Things to Remember...

- ◇ If you wash your hands really well with warm, soapy water, you can get rid of germs.
- ◇ Always wash hands before eating something or handling food.
- ◇ Wash hands after handling food, using the bathroom, changing a diaper, touching a pet, coughing or sneezing into your hands, blowing your nose, and handling garbage.

Teach Your Child Good Hand Washing Habits...

- ◇ Set a good example. Wash your hands often. Your child will watch you and do what you do.
- ◇ The process of hand washing should take 30 seconds. Teach your child to count slowly to 30, or to sing the Alphabet Song to make hand washing fun and long enough.
- ◇ Use a safe step stool for your child to reach the sink.

Try the Hand Washing Test!

Try the activity below to see if you are washing your hands thorough enough. It will show your child why good hand washing takes warm water, soap, and rubbing your hands for 30 seconds.

What you need:

Cinnamon, Vegetable Oil, Small Bowl, and Spoon

What to do:

1. Mix the oil with the cinnamon in the bowl.
2. Have your child rub the "cinnamon oil" on his or her hands.
3. Wash hands four different ways.

First, wash with cold water only.

Second, wash with cold water and soap for ten seconds.

Third, wash with warm water and soap for ten seconds.

Last, wash with warm water and soap, rubbing your hands together for 30 seconds.

Talk with your child about what happened. What did it take to get all the cinnamon off? Cinnamon can't hurt you like germs can, but the activity shows exactly what it takes to get it off your hands. Germs are invisible, but you can get rid of them by washing your hands the right way!

References:

- Bureau of Transportation Safety, Wisconsin Department of Transportation. (March 2006). New Child Passenger Safety (Wisconsin Act 106).
Van Horn, Dr. Jim E. (July 2005). "Building Strong Families: Mealtimes"
Van Horn, Dr. Jim E. (March 2006). "Hand Washing and Good Health."

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