



Bone Support

Building strong and healthy bones in children's bodies requires nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, vitamin K, potassium and magnesium. Serve foods like leafy greens, yogurt, fortified cereals and milk to support their bone growth.

Build-a-Lunch

Sliced cucumbers
Sliced strawberries
Whole wheat crackers
Sliced Monterey Jack cheese

Serve each child $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cucumbers, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of strawberries, crackers ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq), and cheese (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq). Encourage children to build their lunch by using different food components to make mini cracker sandwiches. For a complete lunch, serve milk.

Stack a Cup

Give each child a stack of unbreakable plastic cups all the same size. Have them each build their own skyscraper while you ask questions to spark their curiosity. Who can make the tallest? Who can make the sturdiest? How do you keep it from falling over?

Number Jump

Place numbered floor tiles evenly apart on the floor. Have the children jump from one number to the next. Can they call them out in order as they jump? To add more challenge, vary the distance between the number tiles.

cacfp.org

INSTRUCTIONS: In the body of each newsletter, there is space for you to customize information you would like to convey to the parents. This is an opportunity to share with parents examples of the healthy food you provide, as well as the fun and educational activities their children are engaged in. To customize, open the PDF and click on the blank field to type your newsletter, like the example below. Then save the file and print your copies, or attach them in an email, to distribute them to parents.

Happy New Year Everyone!

We are excited to share the start of the new year with learning and adventures ahead. This month, we will focus on building and engineering. The children will have activities while they are in our care and you can try any of these at home as well. The Build-a-Lunch is a fun, creative meal that you can participate in, too!

Please note, we will be open on Martin Luther King Day on January 20, 2025. Look for spring field trip and Valentine's Day Celebration information to be coming home soon!

As always, thank you for trusting us with the care of your children. We look forward to a wonderful 2025 together!

Sincerely,
Donna

Parent Provider Connection - January 2025



Bone Support

Building strong and healthy bones in children's bodies requires nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, vitamin K, potassium and magnesium. Serve foods like leafy greens, yogurt, fortified cereals and milk to support their bone growth.

Build-a-Lunch

Sliced cucumbers
Sliced strawberries
Whole wheat crackers
Sliced Monterey Jack cheese

Serve each child $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cucumbers, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of strawberries, crackers ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq), and cheese (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq). Encourage children to build their lunch by using different food components to make mini cracker sandwiches. For a complete lunch, serve milk.

Stack a Cup

Give each child a stack of unbreakable plastic cups all the same size. Have them each build their own skyscraper while you ask questions to spark their curiosity. Who can make the tallest? Who can make the sturdiest? How do you keep it from falling over?

Number Jump

Place numbered floor tiles evenly apart on the floor. Have the children jump from one number to the next. Can they call them out in order as they jump? To add more challenge, vary the distance between the number tiles.

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - February 2025



The Body's Engine

The heart is an engine that never stops! It's what keeps children moving and living every day by pumping blood throughout the body. Focus on reducing salt, added sugars and saturated fats to keep hearts healthy.

Fast Wheels

Turkey pepperoni slices
Whipped cream cheese
Whole wheat tortillas

Help each child spread one to two tablespoons of cream cheese on one side of their tortilla (1 oz eq). After they add pepperoni (½ oz eq) on top, have them roll up their tortilla. Slice each tortilla for the children into four pieces to look like pinwheels.

My Own Track

Using painter's tape, have children create their own race track on the floor, or they can do the same with sidewalk chalk outside. The track can be in any design with as many curves and stops as desired. What will their minds create?

Penny Pick Up

Divide the children into equal groups and designate both a start and finish line. At the start line, place a bowl of pennies. At the finish line, place an empty egg carton. Once you say go, have the children take turns picking up a penny, running to the finish line and dropping it into the egg carton. Which team can place a dozen pennies in their egg carton first?



cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - March 2025



The Nervous Circuit

The nervous system works like an electrical circuit, sending and receiving messages from the brain to the body and back again. Omega-3 fat is important for building nerve cells that are part of this system, helping with brain development and learning new skills. Try including fish rich in omega-3 fat, such as salmon, sardines, mackerel or herring in your next recipe.

Machine Freeze

Once the music starts, encourage the children to come up with their own machine dance moves. When the music stops, everyone must freeze in their position. Keep playing until they are all danced out.

Shape Robot

Using sponges cut into various shapes, have the children dip them into paint. Challenge them to create their own robot by stamping the sponges onto blank paper. Finish with google eyes and markers once the paint is dry.

Power Up! Popcorn

Plain popcorn
Vegetable oil cooking spray
Parmesan garlic seasoning

Scoop 1½ cups of popcorn into individual bags. Lightly spray the popcorn in the bag with vegetable oil and then add 1 teaspoon of seasoning. Help the children fold the bag at the top and allow them to shake the bag to disperse all flavors evenly.

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - April 2025



Brain Fuel

The brain needs an important sugar called glucose to keep it running. Quality foods containing glucose are whole fruits, some vegetables (i.e. sweet potato, green peas and beans), meat alternates (i.e. yogurt) and whole grains.

Math Crunch Snack

Fish-shaped crackers
Cheese square crackers

On each plate, serve $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fish-shaped crackers and 6-8 cheese square crackers. Using the worksheet at cacfp.org, have the children sort the two shapes and count how many they have of each.

April Showers

Print the template at cacfp.org on cardstock and help the children glue the three clouds at the top. Next, have them glue the corresponding number of raindrops below each cloud and complete by adding May flowers.

Noodle Bop

Give each child a pool noodle cut in half to make it shorter and then have them stand in a small circle. Toss a beach ball in the middle and have the children bop the ball with their noodle. Count out loud, together, how many times they can bop the ball to keep it in the air.

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - May 2025



cacfp.org

1, 2, 3 Eyes on You!

Keep little ones' eyes sharp by eating foods rich in vitamins A, C, E, and zinc. Serve foods like citrus, bell peppers, dark leafy greens, tropical fruits, nuts and lean meats throughout the week to maintain healthy eyesight.

Flower Pancakes

Mini pancakes
Pineapple chunks

Serve 4 mini pancakes ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq) and a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pineapples on a plate. Using their spoon or fork, instruct children to place pineapples around each pancake as if they were petals on a flower. Pair with milk for a complete breakfast.

Puzzle Picture

Using the puzzle template on cacfp.org, ask the children to create a picture of anything they want, but it must cover the whole page as one big picture. Assist as needed to cut out the pieces once they are finished. Then they can try to put their puzzle picture back together. Trade with a friend for even more fun.

Find the Piece

Paint five paper plates completely, each with a different color. Cut them into two or three pieces, creating five puzzles. Scatter the pieces around a designated area and have the children find them and work together to make the plate puzzle whole again.

Parent Provider Connection - June 2025



Sing-a-Lung

We need our lungs to sing and breathe! They bring oxygen into the bloodstream so they can be carried throughout the body. Also, lungs expel carbon dioxide from our bodies. Add dark leafy greens, fatty fish, peppers and tomatoes to meals to maintain healthy lungs.

Piano Keys

Nut or seed butter
Graham crackers
Baby carrots

Serve each child 4 rectangular pieces of graham crackers (1 oz eq), 1 tablespoon of nut butter (½ oz eq) and ¼ cup of baby carrots. Have them spread the nut butter onto each cracker, then line up the crackers together and place a baby carrot between each one to make the edible piano keys.

Rainbow Music

Give each child a set of 12" dowel rods. Have them wrap the dowel rods with colored tape or chenille sticks. Help the children tie on bells and voila! They've made their own musical sticks that they can jingle or click together.

Rock and Roll Hula

Turn on the music and let's have hula hoop fun! Teach the children how to use the hoop as a jump rope. Can they roll it and chase it? Can they jump from hoop to hoop in a pattern on the ground?

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - July 2025

Go With Your Gut

How the digestive system looks and works is a true work of art! Help kids maintain a healthy gut by including prebiotic (i.e. whole grains, bananas, soybeans, onions) and probiotic (i.e. yogurt, pickles) foods in your weekly menu.

Go the Disc-tance

Rice cakes
Lemon or berry yogurt
Mixed fruit

Serve each child 2 rice cakes (½ oz eq). Let them scoop and spread yogurt over each rice cake. Place a ½ cup of mixed fruit on each of their plates and have them decorate their “frisbee discs” before munching on them.

Craft Bottle

Have the children select beads, buttons and pom poms from your craft supplies and help them place all the trinkets into a clear plastic bottle. Next, fill the bottle ¾ full of sand and use tape to secure the lid. Challenge the children to find all their missing craft pieces by shaking it up.

Frisbee Toss

Using frisbees or old plastic lids, let each partner group practice tossing the frisbees to one another. Set up challenges by varying the distances or adding obstacles.



cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - August 2025



cacfp.org

Alphabet Pictures

Give each child a piece of cardstock paper with the capital letter of their first name printed on it. Then ask the children what they can turn their letter into with craft supplies. It can be anything of their choice – an animal, an object or even a place.

Letter Hop

On the ground, create a 3 x 3 grid where each of the nine squares has a letter the children recognize. Flip a coin in the air and wherever the coin lands, have them hop to that letter. As they hop, the children can name each letter they hop on.

Tastes So Good

Our mouth and tongue have taste buds that react to the foods you eat. This gives us the ability to detect sweet, salty, bitter, sour and umami flavors in foods, which is then communicated to the brain. Exposing children to a variety of different healthy foods gives our taste buds and brain a workout.

J is for Jellyfish

Whole wheat pita bread, halved
Hummus
Carrots and cucumbers

Place ½ a pita bread (1 oz eq), hummus, and ½ cup mixture of carrots and cucumbers (cut into thin, long slices) onto each plate. Have children place their pita bread at the top of their plate, then line their veggie tentacles under the pita bread to make a jellyfish before dipping these foods into the hummus.

Parent Provider Connection - September 2025



Muscle Power

Lifting, bending and making shapes with your body requires muscles! Protein-rich foods support muscle growth and maintenance. Add plant-based proteins like legumes, seed butters and tofu, and animal-based proteins like lean meats, poultry and fish to keep children's muscles strong.

Apple Nachos

Sliced apples
Lemon juice
Nut or seed butter
Toasted coconut

In a bowl, toss ½ cup of apples with ½ teaspoon of lemon juice. Serve apples on a plate and have children drizzle 1 tablespoon of melted nut butter over top. The children can then sprinkle toasted coconut over their apple nachos.

Shapes-a-Lot

Give each child cardstock paper and glue. Have them choose from an assortment of colorful pre-cut shapes of varying sizes to create any kind of picture they would like. Then they can adorn their artwork with paint, markers and other craft supplies.

Speedy Match

Create two sets of large cut-out shapes for each child: squares, circles and triangles. On a wall or fence, place one set of shapes. At the designated start, have the children race over to match the shape their holding to the posted ones. Trade shapes and repeat.

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - October 2025



Astronomical Protectors

There are more living cells in one human body than stars in a galaxy. The immune system contains cells that detect and protect the body from diseases. Serve a rainbow of fruits and vegetables throughout the week to get nutrients that help keep the immune system working, such as beta-carotene, vitamin C and zinc.

Out-of-This-World Oatmeal

Oatmeal
Fruit, chopped

Have a variety of fruit, each in separate bowls. Serve each child $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of warm oatmeal ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq) and then instruct them to scoop a total of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of their choice of fruits into their bowl.

Galaxy Dough

Create as much galaxy dough as you need for little hands to mush and squeeze. For every $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cornstarch, mix in 1 cup baking soda and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water together. Add shapes and molds for the children to create and play with freely during sensory time.

Space Action

Using a large cube box, create a die and label each side with a Space Action. Spin around the galaxy, pose like a star, walk like an alien, float through space, blast off like a rocket and leap like a shooting star are some fun examples. Have the children take turns rolling the die and blasting into space.

cacfp.org

Parent Provider Connection - November 2025



cacfp.org

Soak Up the Sun

The skin is not only a first line of defense as a barrier to keep harmful bacteria and germs out. It also absorbs sunlight and converts it to vitamin D. This nutrient helps keep bones strong. Encourage outdoor play and serve milk fortified in vitamin D to ensure children get this important nutrient.

Pasta, "Peas"!

Small pasta shells, cooked and chilled
Defrosted peas, cooked and chilled
Salad dressing

In individual bowls, scoop $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pasta and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peas. Have children add one or two tablespoons of the salad dressing and mix it into their pasta salad.

Tie Dye Leaves

Have each child color or create a design on a coffee filter with markers. Then have them drop water from an eye dropper and watch as the colors run together. Once dried, use the templates from cacfp.org to create tie dye leaves.

Color Sort Challenge

Place tubs, each labeled with a different color, in various distances from a large bin holding an assortment of plastic balls. On go, have the children sort the balls into the tubs around the area by color. Ask them how many colors there are.



Filtration Station

Kidneys are like tiny washing machines for your blood! They remove the waste found there, such as excess salt, and expel it through the urine. Using herbs and spices to enhance flavor when cooking rather than lots of salt will help keep children's kidneys healthy.

Friendship Cup

Breakfast cereal
Small crackers
Dried fruit

Ask children to decide together which breakfast cereal, cracker and dried fruit they would like in their friendship cup. Lay out each ingredient in separate bowls. Instruct them to scoop a designated amount of cereal and crackers ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq minimum) and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup dried fruit to make their own friendship cup.

Partner Painting

Have partnered groups each choose five colors of paint to carefully drop onto their plate. Place the plates in a salad spinner one at a time and close tightly. Have the children take turns spinning. Repeat until all groups have created their own artwork.

Bean Bag Catch

Children will each have a partner. One will have a bucket and the other will have three bean bags. The bucket is the catcher and will try to catch all three bean bags the other child tosses. They will take turns being the tosser and the catcher.

cacfp.org