



# Fuel Their Minds

## Ideas for Better Eating and Active Play with

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### Cooking with Children to Promote Development

Cooking is not just a fun activity for children, it is also a great teaching tool! Teachers and parents should welcome little ones into the kitchen as much as possible to boost their:

**Social-Emotional Development:** Cooking activities help children gain confidence in their skills. Recipes teach children to problem solve, work as a team, and handle disappointments.

**Physical Development:** Chopping, spreading, and mixing are all cooking skills that help improve a child's small muscle control and eye-hand coordination.

**Cognitive Development:** Cooking inspires children's thinking. It gives students the chance to practice their numbers, counting, and measuring skills while following directions to accomplish a goal.

**Language Development:** Children can ask questions about their new cooking and tasting experiences, follow step-by-step recipes, and learn new words.



#### Cooking abilities of three-year-olds:

They are learning to use their hands, so try activities like:

- pouring liquids and mixing
- spreading butters or spreads
- serving foods
- putting things in the trash
- stirring

#### Four and five-year-olds:

They are learning to control small muscles in their fingers, so try activities like:

- peeling fruits and vegetables
- mashing soft fruits and vegetables
- cutting soft foods with a plastic knife
- measuring dry ingredients
- cracking and beating eggs
- setting and clearing the table

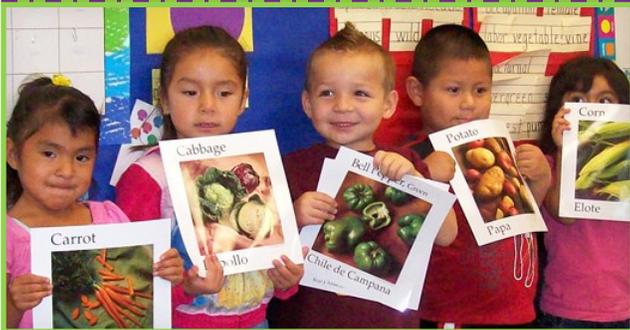


#### Tips for Cooking with Preschool Children:

- Select a healthy recipe that matches children's interests or classroom projects. [www.eatfresh.org](http://www.eatfresh.org) has lots of tasty options!
- Select a recipe with hands-on skills that are age-appropriate.
- Choose recipes that are affordable using common ingredients.
- Discuss rules and kitchen safety before and while you cook.

*Adapted from: [www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks)*

## Farm to Preschool



California's Farm to Preschool program (CA F2P) is a branch of the California Farm to School Network. It was established to build connections between child care centers and local food producers with the objectives of serving locally-grown, healthy foods to young children, improving child nutrition, and providing related educational opportunities.

CA F2P uses Harvest of the Month curricula and offers free trainings through various departments of education, childcare resource and referral agencies and public health department programs throughout the state.

The CA F2P Network connects many successful Farm to Preschool programs throughout California to share experiences and resources to build a stronger Farm to Table movement in the early childhood setting. Farm to Table is a movement that encourages eating foods that are grown locally. Contact the regional representative for this area to get involved with the Farm to School program today, Robyn Krock at Valley Vision, [robyn.krock@valleyvision.org](mailto:robyn.krock@valleyvision.org). Visit their website [www.farmtopreschool.org/states/ca](http://www.farmtopreschool.org/states/ca) to download the free CA Farm to Preschool Training Manual, which is also available in Spanish.

**Farm to Preschool provides the first steps to help you develop a lasting F2P program. They provide tools to help you:**

1. Assess where you are.
2. Form a team of teachers, administrators and parents to collaborate.
3. Establish one or two simple goals to get started.
4. Learn successes and failures from others.
5. Promote farm to preschool efforts in your community.



*Adapted from: [farmtopreschool.org](http://farmtopreschool.org)*

## Parade around! Teach self-space while being physically Active

Have fun engaging your preschoolers in physical activity while teaching them the concept of self-space! Use this activity to transition your class from one activity to the next or to give them a physical activity break. This can be done inside or outside.



*Adapted from [www.catch.org](http://www.catch.org)*

**NAME OF ACTIVITY:** 'Parade Around'

**EQUIPMENT:** 4 cones, tape, or chalk.

**SKILL THEMES:** Walking in a line; moving in self-space; following directions

**ORGANIZATION:** Use 4 cones or tape/chalk to mark an activity area perimeter, at least 10'x10.'

**DESCRIPTION:** 1. Greet children at the door (soft voice) and ask them to follow the line that you have designated as the perimeter of the activity space.

2. Children must stay in line, cannot pass others, and should not run into or touch the child in front of them.
3. While children are parading around the room talk to them about:

- Staying behind the person who is in front of them.
- Not touching the person who is in front of them as they walk.
- Try to keep a "bubble of space" between their stomach and the back of the person in front of them.
- Always look forward at the person ahead of them, so they do not bump into them.
- Talk to the children about how the line is parading around the cones.

**TEACHING SUGGESTIONS:** 1. Walk next to children and show them how big the "bubble" needs to be by using your hands or holding a ball in between each child as he/she passes.  
2. Give positive feedback to children who are following directions.

**\* Need more physical activity ideas and materials? Talk with your nutrition educator to receive activities and equipment for free! \***

## Keep Colds & the Flu out of Your Classroom

This winter, help slow the spread of cold and flu germs in your classroom. Here are some tips to keep you and your class healthy.



- **Add hand washing breaks to the schedule.** Wash hands as a group after activities when students have touched shared supplies. Use soap and warm water while singing two rounds of “Row Your Boat.”



- **Teach children to ‘catch’ their coughs and sneezes in their elbows** to avoid getting germs onto their hands and passing them to other kids. Practice this regularly so that it becomes a habit.
- **Teach children not to touch their eyes, mouths, or noses.** This is how germs enter the body.
- **Fill a small spray bottle with rubbing alcohol and spray common surfaces** like door knobs, tables, and chairs. Also spray tubs of shared supplies. Be sure to keep rubbing alcohol out of students’ reach since it’s toxic if swallowed.

*Adapted from weareteachers.com & teachkidsart.net*

## Hygiene Activity: The Invisible Germs!

### Supplies You Will Need:

- 1 Balloon
- Paper confetti
- Recommended book to pair with activity: ‘Wash Your Hands’ by Tony Ross or ‘Germs on Their Fingers’ by Wendy Wakefield Ferrin

### Preparation:

1. Inflate the balloon slightly; open the mouth valve and insert the paper confetti. (hole punched paper pieces work well!)
2. Continue to inflate the balloon, tie and set aside.

### Instructions:

1. Explain to the children the paper confetti inside the balloon represents germs. In real life, germs are so tiny that our eyes cannot see them. For this activity, they will be pretending that they can see the germs.
2. Ask the children to stand up in a circle around you. Raise the balloon up in front of you and pretend to sneeze as you gently pop the balloon in the air with a pen or pencil. As the paper confetti falls, tell the children these are the germs that we can potentially spread if we are not careful when we sneeze, cough, and blow our nose.
3. Discuss with the children the importance of how to properly sneeze, cough, and blow your nose to prevent the spread of germs.
  - When sneezing or coughing, shield your nose and mouth with the inside your elbow.
  - When blowing your nose, hold tissue with both hands, wipe nose, fold tissue, and discard into the trash can.
6. Tell the children that if we do accidentally touch these tiny germs, we can get rid of them by washing our hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds.



*Created by: www.yolonutrition.ucanr.edu*

## Activity Kits **Free** From the University of California

You can help impact childhood obesity, fitness, and malnutrition. Local, state, and federal initiatives (and funding) urge a coordinated approach to addressing these issues. The University of California has prepared **activity kits** to help you teach nutrition, health, and physical activity concepts to your children, while integrating math, language, and science concepts that address CDE standards.

**These lessons come “ready-made”** with all of the materials to teach a fun and interactive lesson. The curriculum was developed by the University of California.

**We will bring the materials to you, free of charge.** We can provide trainings and additional resources to increase your confidence in these topics. We can also plan class-room food-



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themed cooking clubs, special events, and other fun sessions.



This material was produced by the University of California CalFresh Nutrition Education Program with funding from USDA SNAP, known in California as CalFresh (formerly food stamps). These institutions are equal opportunity providers and employers. CalFresh provides assistance to low-income households and can help buy nutritious foods for better health. For CalFresh information, call 1-877-847-3663.



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## Fuel Their Mind Nutrition Newsletter Enclosed



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Do you have a question about food or nutrition? Ask our Nutrition Educators by emailing [cevolo@ucdavis.edu](mailto:cevolo@ucdavis.edu).



“Our mandate as a land grant institution ties us to the welfare, development, and protection of the state’s land, resources, and people. Our mission is to develop and extend the use of research-based knowledge to improve specific practices and technologies.”

Funded by USDA’s Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and University of California Cooperative Extension, The SNAP program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious food for a better diet. To find out more, call 1-877-847-3663.

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