

Nutrition

1. Food Pyramid

Find out from your child's school in what grades he/she will learn about the food pyramid. Help children have fun during family meals by talking about where each of the foods they are eating fit into the food pyramid. **Levels: 1 2**

2. Variety For Nutrition

Over dinner, talk with your child about different parts of the meal and why they are important (meat/poultry/beans provide protein, vegetables provide vitamins and minerals, starches provide carbohydrates for energy, dairy foods make our bones strong).

Levels: 1 2

3. Evaluating A Fast-Food Meal

When eating at a fast-food restaurant, ask your youth to guess the nutritional value of the meal and to name the healthiest parts of the meal. If the restaurant provides nutritional information, look up what you're eating and talk about fat, calories, protein, etc.

Levels: 1 2

4. Planting A Garden

Have your youth help you plant and tend a vegetable garden. The youth can learn about healthy vegetables and have the fun of eating them! **Levels: 1 2 3**

5. Healthy Snacks

When grocery shopping with your youth, have them choose a variety of healthy snack foods. Talk about what makes a snack healthy. Also, invite youth to make some healthy snacks (celery sticks with peanut butter, tortillas, popcorn, sliced apples). **Levels: 1 2 3**

Menu Planning

Tip: Remember The Green Things!!

When grocery shopping, encourage children to pick out the "green things" that you will eat with your meal that week.

1. Making A Favorite Recipe Cookbook

Create a "best recipes cookbook." After making a meal, have the youth determine whether or not to include it in their very own "cookbook" (notebook, binder, card file box). **Level: 2**
Older youth can be in charge of their own recipe book, and can write down several weeks of menus for when they move out on their own. **Levels: 3 4**

2. Meal Planning

Make a list of "main dishes" for a week of evening meals (lasagna, enchiladas, barbecued chicken). Have your youth make suggestions for what side dishes (vegetables, fruit, starches) would go well with each one. **Levels: 1 2**

3. Putting It All Together

Let older youth plan the family menu for a week. Encourage them to include a main dish, vegetable and starch for each meal and a dessert for a few of the meals. **Levels: 2 3 4**

Grocery Shopping

1. Keeping A Shopping List

Keep a shopping list on the side of the refrigerator. Ask your child to write down items that they use the last of (like milk) or any other items your family needs. **Level: 1**

2. Developing A Shopping List

Ask an older youth to make out the family shopping list for a whole week. Make sure he/she includes the ingredients for the meals they have planned as well as items like paper goods and cleaning products. **Levels: 2 3 4** To give the youth an idea of the cost of the items, invite them along to help you shop and ask them to keep track of the cost by using a calculator. **Levels: 2 3 4**

3. Meal Planning, To Shopping List, To Buying

Create a shopping list with your child for a special event like his/her birthday or

Thanksgiving. For younger children, ask what they would like to eat at the meal and have

them write that on the list. **Level: 1** For older youth, ask them to identify the ingredients for the meal and add these to the list. **Level: 2** Older youth can be given a set amount of money for the ingredients and allowed to shop on their own. **Levels: 3 4**

4. Grocery Shopping Practice

When you are at the store, have your child be responsible for finding certain items on the shopping list. **Levels: 1 2**

5. Thrifty Shopping

Give your child your weekly shopping list and the coupon section of the newspaper. Ask them to find as many coupons as they can for items on your list. To really motivate them, offer to give them the money saved by using coupons (many stores show this amount at the bottom of the receipt). **Levels: 1 2 3**

6. Comparison Shopping In The Supermarket

When you go to the store, have the youth find the items on your list, compare brands, and determine which is the most economical. Teach your child to read unit pricing labels on products (if the store has these). Talk about the quality vs. cost of a product. The least expensive one is not always the best one to buy. **Levels: 2 3**

7. More Comparison Shopping

When looking for a specific product, review store ads. Show how two stores with the same product have different prices. Discuss the pros and cons of going to multiple stores in an effort to get the best prices on all the products. Do a "supermarket survey" by shopping at two or more stores for the same items to see which store has the lower prices. **Levels: 1 2 3**

8. Choosing Good Produce

When at the grocery store, show your children how you can tell if a fruit or vegetable is fresh. Ask the produce manager for tips, if you're not sure. **Level: 1** Have older youth be responsible for picking out the fruits and vegetables on your list. **Levels: 2 3**

9. Shopping Alone

Pull together everything an older youth has learned about meal planning and shopping by letting them plan a week's worth of meals, develop the shopping list, and then purchase everything with a set amount of money. **Levels: 3 4**

Meal Preparation

1. Hands-On Practice

To get your children involved in cooking, start by having them help prepare one item. For example, younger ones could help prepare the salad or grate cheese. **Level: 1** Older youth can help with more difficult items like rice, pasta, tortillas or browning meat, etc.

Levels: 2 3

2. Practice With Recipes

Although we don't use recipes every time we cook, it is good to know how. When your child would like to fix something special, have them choose a recipe from a cookbook. You can supervise them reading and following the recipe. **Levels: 1 2** Older youth can be unsupervised and all can enjoy their creations. **Level: 3**

3. Cooking Without A Recipe

Have your child join you in the kitchen when you make a traditional family dish that doesn't use a recipe. Explain to them what ingredients you are using and how you are preparing the dish. If they want to learn how to make it, have them write down what you tell them so they can keep it in their Best Recipes Cookbook. **Levels: 1 2 3**

4. Foods From Around the World

Have your youth help you choose and prepare a meal from a different cultural background. Talk about the different elements, spices, eating utensils, etc. **Levels: 2 3**

5. Show What You've Learned

Ask your youth to help you prepare dinner once a week. Let them read recipes (if used) and participate in the actual cooking. Later on, let them prepare a favorite meal by themselves.

Levels: 2 3 When ready, have them prepare family dinners for one week. **Levels: 3 4**

Teachable Moment

Whenever you're in the kitchen cooking and your children come in to see what smells so good, ask them to help you stir, mix, taste, measure, or help in some way. Use their natural interest to build skills!

Dining Etiquette

1. Setting The Table

Have your youth take turns setting the table for dinner. **Level: 1** If you have a formal dinner, show youth how to set the table for this (use china/special dishes if you have them), then let them try setting the table by themselves. **Level: 2**

2. International Etiquette

Plan a potluck meal with friends from a cultural background different than your own. Have

youth ask the guests about the utensils, manners, food, and dining customs that are a part of their culture. **Levels: 1 2 3 4**

Tip

Tell youth that they can always watch what others at their tables are doing if they don't know which fork to use at a fancy dinner!

3. Formal Dining

Have a "dress up" night where youth have the opportunity to practice using all the utensils they would see at a fancy restaurant. Explain the placement of different utensils and how to use them. **Levels: 2 3**

4. Dining Out

When eating at a restaurant, encourage your youth to order for themselves, help you calculate the tip, and check the bill for accuracy. **Levels: 2 3 4**

5. Using Good Manners

Offer a prize to the child who is able to use good manners and talk about appropriate things at the table or in a restaurant. Talk beforehand about what good manners are. **Levels: 1 2**

Kitchen Clean-Up and Food Storage

1. Putting Food Away

After the meal is finished, have each child be responsible for putting away one leftover item. If children take lunch to school, ask if they want to take any leftovers. If they are given lunch money, let them keep the money they don't spend by eating leftovers. **Levels: 1 2**

Teachable Moment

When you clean out the refrigerator, have your children join you. They can "scientifically" examine food in the refrigerator and use their senses to see if food has gone bad. They can read the expiration dates, look at the food, smell the food, and then taste the food (unless it's unsafe).

2. Cleaning Up After Meals

Have your family take turns cleaning up after a meal. Younger children can help to clear the table. **Level: 1** Older youth can wash and dry dishes, fill the dishwasher, and clean the stove/counters, sweep, etc. **Levels: 2 3** Older youth can independently clean the entire kitchen at least once weekly, which could be tied to an increased allowance. **Levels: 3 4**

3. An Experiment In Food Storage

Do an experiment! Place a small amount of raw food and cooked food in the refrigerator. Have youth guess which will spoil first. After about a week, check your experiment. **Levels: 1 2** Talk with youth about how soon food items should be eaten, or if anything can be frozen to make it last longer. **Levels: 1 2 3**

Tip

Put on the youth's favorite music to motivate them during kitchen clean up.

Home Cleaning and Clothing Care

1. Motivation For Cleaning

When encouraging your children in household cleaning, make a game of who can do the task fastest and most accurately. Tell them you will hold an official "inspection" of their work at a certain time (if done incorrectly, they must go back and do it over again). Celebrate when everyone finishes their work! **Levels: 1 2**

2. Chore Charts

Develop a chore chart. Have your child help you think of all the chores that need to be done around the house each week or once a month. After chores are done well and finished, they can be checked off the chart. You may even want to link allowance or special privilege to doing chores. **Levels: 1 2 3**

3. Why Clean?

When developing a list of chores, ask youth about reasons for keeping a house clean (you can find things, it's organized, it takes less time to keep a house clean than to let it get really messy and then have to clean it). **Levels: 1 2**

4. The Right Tool And Supplies For The Job

With supervision, encourage your youth to experiment with using sponges, scrubbers, rags, etc. to clean. Let them try various cleaning supplies to see what product works best. Teach them in steps. First, demonstrate how to use the item, then let the youth try it with your help. Finally, supervise them while they do the work on their own. **Levels: 1 2 3**

5. Cutting Down On Clutter

Use a family "catch-all basket." Keep a basket in a convenient spot. If your child sees something lying around and is not sure where it goes, it should be put in the basket. At the end of the day have everyone help put the basket items away. This helps teach family members where things go and helps the house stay tidy. **Levels: 1 2 3**

6. Cleaning Out Closets

Have youth help you clean out a closet or dresser. Identify which items should be thrown away and which could be given away to charity or taken to a re-sale store. **Levels: 1 2 3**

7. Sorting And Washing

Have youth wash a piece of colored clothing with an old towel or sheet, and then describe what happens. Talk about or show the importance of separating light and dark clothing before washing. **Levels: 1 2**

8. Beginning To Do Laundry

Give your child his/her own laundry basket. Have children help you do laundry by measuring the soap and putting it into the washer. Have them fold small items like dishtowels and wash cloths, and eventually their own clothing. They can have fun matching their socks and throwing them into the basket! **Levels: 1 2**

Tip

One way to motivate kids to help with the laundry is to let them keep any change they find in the washer or dryer.

9. More Practice Doing Laundry

Introduce your youth to the idea of doing laundry by showing them the different settings, and then letting them wash a load of clothing on their own. **Levels: 2 3**

10. Using A Laundromat

Take your youth to a laundromat to do a load of wash. Show them how to use the machines and let them wash a load of clothes on their own. **Levels: 2 3**

Home Safety and Repairs

1. Maintaining Smoke Detectors

To explain the importance of fire prevention, have your children help replace batteries in smoke detectors. **Level: 1** With older youth, have them be responsible for replacing batteries on a regular schedule. **Levels: 2 3**

2. Fire Safety

To teach children about fire safety, hold mock fire drills. Draw a house plan and decide the best way to get out from each room in the house. Decide where to meet once everyone is out

of the house (a neighbor's house, in front of a particular tree). **Levels: 1 2 3**

3. First Aid/CPR

Using the child's dolls, teach basic first aid. **Level: 1** When they are older, youth can go to first aid and CPR classes. **Levels: 2 3**

4. Emergency Kits

Have your children help pack an emergency kit for the car and one for the home. Discuss what to include in each (e.g., flares, flashlight, first aid kit). **Levels: 1 2**

5. Using Tools

Show younger children how to use tools by starting with toy tools. **Level: 1** If a picture needs to be hung, have your children help you decide where to hang the picture, measure to make sure it is even, and hammer a nail into place. Have them watch, then assist with simple home repairs like replacing a light bulb, plunging a toilet, etc. **Levels: 2 3**

6. The Importance Of Insurance

Have your youth help you complete a "home inventory." Use a pen and paper, a camera, or a video camera to record the items in each room of your house. Use the opportunity to talk about the value of homeowner's or renter's insurance to help you replace these things if they are lost, stolen, or destroyed. **Levels: 3 4**