



# Food For Thought

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## Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

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### Kids and Food



Finish your milk! Two more bites of carrots and **then** you will get dessert. If you take it, you eat it.

Sound familiar? These words have been heard at dinner tables for many years. Parents have always wanted kids to develop good eating habits and they thought this was the way to do it.

Unfortunately, as most of us know, the results are not usually what parents want.

Children are born knowing how much food they need. Research has been done with preschool children and their parents. When parents tell the children how much to eat the children lose the ability to regulate their eating and have a higher amount of body fat.

The researchers concluded that the best way for parents to help their children is for the parents to provide healthy food choices, but allow children to decide how much to eat.

Here are some ways you can put this information into practice at home.

Parents should:

- plan the menus
- offer a variety of healthful foods
- oversee the planning and putting meals together
- set the schedule for meals and snacks
- set an example by eating a variety of healthy foods
- trust your child's judgment of how much to eat
- offer small servings and encourage children to ask for more
- avoid bribing, nagging, or rewarding children for eating certain foods or quantities of foods
- remember children are naturally hesitant to try new things, it may take several times of presenting a new food before it is accepted.

Children are the best judge of how much food they need to eat.



### Fun Food Activities

**Introduce new foods** by describing their taste, texture, color, and temperature.

Descriptive words and examples:

Sweet: banana, strawberry

Juicy: watermelon, orange

Sour: lemon, grapefruit

Bitter: cocoa powder

Hot: soup, hot chocolate

Smooth: yogurt, pudding

Liquid: water, fruit juice, milk

Dry: crackers

Crispy: saltines, pretzels

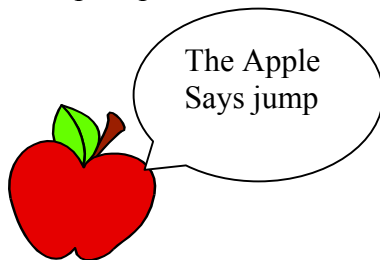
### Explore where foods come from by:

- visiting a garden or orchard when the fruits and vegetables are ready to harvest
- planting a garden of your own, watching the vegetables grow and using them in meals this summer.



## The Apple Says

This game can be played with just two children or all the kids from the neighborhood. For each of the following, do the exercise only if “The Apple Says” to do it. Kids doing an exercise that “The Apple” didn’t say to do must sit down. Tell kids that they will have to pretend to do some of the exercises. Encourage them to be active when doing an exercise – for example run in place, skip, hop.



### Practice:

1. “The Apple Says” run in place. (Kids run in place.)
2. Hop on one foot. (Anyone doing this would have to sit down because it wasn’t preceded by “The Apple Says.”)

### Playing the game:

1. The Apple Says jump up and down.
2. The Apple Says eat an apple for a snack.
3. The Apple Says play basketball.
4. Run in place.

5. Hop from one foot to the other.
6. The Apple Says swim.
7. The Apple Says play tennis.
8. Ride a bike
9. Roller-skate.
10. The Apple Says dance.
11. Do a jumping jack.
12. The Apple Says walk.
13. The Apple Says jog.
14. Turn around.
15. The Apple Says jump rope.
16. Touch your knees.
17. The Apple Says turn around.
18. The Apple Says march.
19. The Apple Says clap your hands behind your back.
20. Wiggle your ears.
21. The Apple Says tap your shoulders.



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## Pocket Sandwiches

A good no-cook summer lunch that the kids can help make.

- 1 large pita bread round (whole wheat or white)
- Mayonnaise or mustard
- 4 slices thin-sliced ham or other lean sandwich meat
- 1/4 cup shredded low-fat cheese, any kind
- Shredded lettuce, onion slices, tomato slices, and/or sprouts, as you like

1. Cut the bread in half; open halves to make pockets.
2. Spread the inside with mayonnaise and/or mustard
3. Fill halves with meat, cheese, and vegetables.

Makes 1 serving.

