



Healthy Living With Head Start Give the Whole Family a Head Start

Bring Head Start Meals Home

Our classrooms take every opportunity to learn, and meal time is no exception. Classroom meals are designed to encourage healthy choices, facilitate new food experiences, and help develop motor and social skills for the future. Bring these parts of Head Start meals home to encourage your children to continue to learn and grow at the table.

- * **Self Serving** - It may not be a skill many of us think about, but developing the muscles needed to help ourselves to more broccoli, passing a bowl around the table, and using a fork is a big focus during Head Start meals. Set an expectation for everyone to serve themselves at home to help build strong motor skills.
- * **Discovering New Tastes** - New tastes can be intimidating. Having an adult at the table willing to try new foods first and report their findings can take away the fear of trying something new. Working new foods into your menu at home will help children learn to be flexible and adventurous at the table.
- * **Family Mealttime** - Building social skills is a benefit to having family style meals at Head Start. Mealttime is an opportunity to learn about manners, how to be kind, and is also a chance to talk about the excitement of the day. Eating meals as a family at home will help your child build healthy habits and strong social skills.



Building Healthy Habits as a Team

Brushing Together

All of our classrooms take time out of the day to work on tooth brushing skills together. We focus on modeling the motor skills and technique by brushing together at tables. Brushing teeth at the same time as your child will help reinforce these skill and teach children the importance of regular oral hygiene.



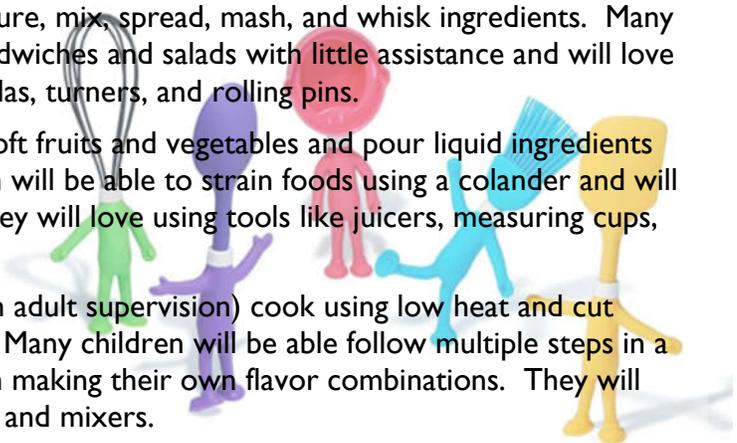
Here are a few ways to make tooth brushing fun at home:

- * Play a song that is about 2 minutes long while brushing to help everyone brush their teeth for at least 2 minutes.
- * Customize tooth brushing tool cups to help organize everyone's individual supplies as they brush together.
- * Make brushing time part of your family's schedule. Setting aside the time to brush together can become a nice break in the day to enjoy some quick time together.

Cooking Together

Planning and preparing for meals as a family can help everyone get excited about meals and snacks served. Giving small children a voice in what is served will help avoid many picky eater behaviors. Allowing children to help prepare the food will help engage them in eating and experiencing food as a family while giving them the foundation of a very important life skill.

- * **At 2-3 years,** a child can help measure, mix, spread, mash, and whisk ingredients. Many children will be able to assemble sandwiches and salads with little assistance and will love using tools like cookie cutters, spatulas, turners, and rolling pins.
- * **At 3-4 years,** a child can help cut soft fruits and vegetables and pour liquid ingredients with some assistance. Many children will be able to strain foods using a colander and will enjoy sorting and counting foods. They will love using tools like juicers, measuring cups, choppers, and rotary beaters.
- * **4-5 year olds,** a child can help (with adult supervision) cook using low heat and cut harder foods with a child-safe knife. Many children will be able follow multiple steps in a recipe and may like to get creative in making their own flavor combinations. They will love using tools like peelers, graters, and mixers.



Family Fitness Date

Staying fit and active can be hard for anyone. Add in taking care of your family, yourself, a job, and countless other responsibilities and you quickly find fitness at the bottom of a very long list. A good way to work a little physical activity into your family's life is to make a fitness date with all of your family members. This can be a couple hours once a week that everyone gets together to make fitness a family game.

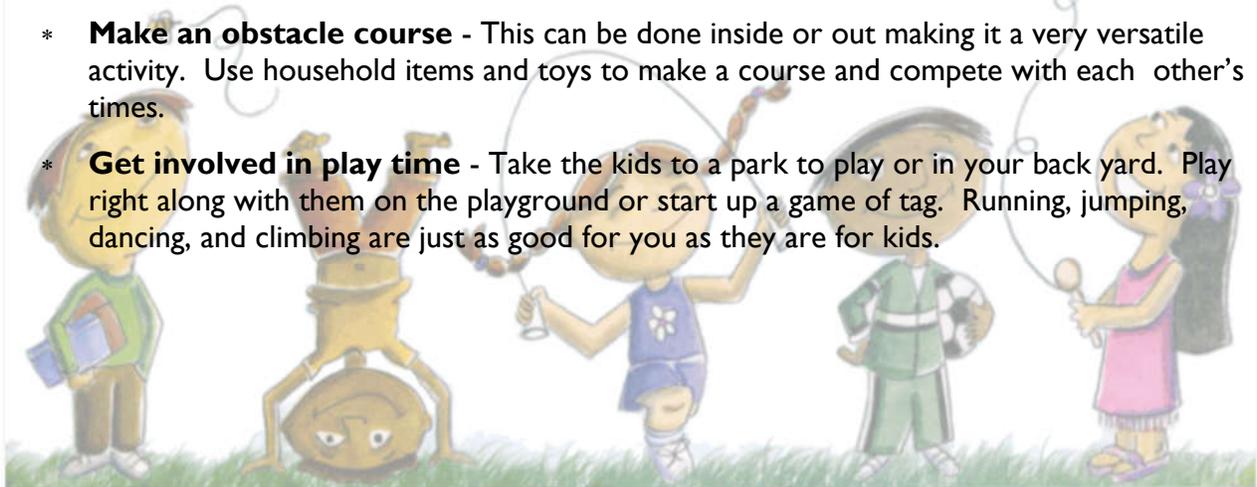
Materials Needed:

- * Plenty of water to keep everyone hydrated
- * Sunscreen, bug repellent, and weather appropriate clothes
- * Consider bringing along a healthy snack to keep everyone moving
- * A little time set aside for some family fun fitness



Activity Suggestions:

- * **Take a family stroll** - This is a low key and low cost way to get a little more movement in your life.
- * **Play a game of ball** - Any type of ball will work, find a sport that your family likes (kickball, soccer, baseball, tennis) and play.
- * **Go for a swim** - Many public pools have a family swim time that may work better with family schedules. This can a great opportunity to get some great exercise while having some family fun in the water.
- * **Make an obstacle course** - This can be done inside or out making it a very versatile activity. Use household items and toys to make a course and compete with each other's times.
- * **Get involved in play time** - Take the kids to a park to play or in your back yard. Play right along with them on the playground or start up a game of tag. Running, jumping, dancing, and climbing are just as good for you as they are for kids.



Making Mealtime Memories

Bubble Pizza

This is a quick meal to throw together on any busy weeknight. Bubble pizza is a fun twist on everybody's favorite, pizza night. Keep an old classic interesting by letting children pick additional toppings. Letting them help build a customized bubble pizza can be a great way to get them interested in trying new foods.

Ingredients

- * Premade biscuit or pizza dough
- * Pizza sauce
- * Shredded mozzarella cheese

Mix it up with different toppings:

Sweet bell peppers, Onion, Pineapple, Mushrooms, Broccoli, Grilled chicken, Fresh diced tomato, Spinach, Feta cheese, Cauliflower, or Black olives.



Directions

- * Preheat oven to 375°F. Lightly grease a baking dish.
- * Arrange biscuit dough into baking dish.
- * Top with pizza sauce, cheese, and other favorite fixings.
- * Bake for 10-15 minutes.
- * Pizza will bubble and break into bite size pieces.

Newsletter created by: Amy Losee

Please contact Amy Losee, Head Start Dental/Nutrition Specialist, with any questions or comments at (607) 433 - 8060

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