This time of year we usually start setting our sites on Summer! This year many summer time challenges came early! If you have noticed your family having a casual, graze-all-day approach to eating you are not alone! When kids (and adults) are home and off their normal schedules, it’s important to keep a structured daily routine for both meals and snacks. That keeps them feeling energized and at their best throughout the day. It also helps grub the boredom eating and saves you money at the grocery store.

Keep snacking simple. Parents don’t need to spend more than 10 minutes preparing a wholesome snack that kids will love. If the snack takes more than 10 minutes to prepare, it’s likely too complicated and chances are kids won’t like it!

When choosing nutritious snacks for kids, those that have fewer, simple ingredients are always the better choices. Ideas include colorful veggie kabobs that can be made by threading grape tomatoes, cucumber slices, peas pods, and other veggies onto wooden skewers; serve with hummus or low-fat Ranch dip. Or, make a pinwheel sandwich by spreading nut butter and berries on a slice of whole grain bread and roll up.

Source: http://www.thevillagenews.com/

Drinks lots of water. Summertime often means outdoor activities on hot days, so it’s important to stay hydrated throughout the day. Teach your child to quench thirst with water. Add lemon, lime or orange slices to chilled water to entice kids to drink more water. For a little more pizzazz, serve sparkling water flavored with two tablespoons of cranberry or orange juice. Remember, sodas are high calorie and have no nutritional value and they are not a good choice for staying hydrated.

Adopt the "Easy to See, Easy to Reach" approach. When a child walks into the kitchen, what catches his or her eye? Make sure to keep a bowl of fruit on the kitchen counter. Stock the pantry, fridge and freezer with plenty of tempting wholesome choices strategically placed at eye-level for a child.
### Chore Bingo

**Why is helping important for your child?**
- Helps child know he/she is a part of the family.
- Helps child learn helping skills.
- Puts child’s interest and energy into helpful things.
- Keeps child out of trouble when you are trying to get housework done!
- Reward with time and activities, not things.

Here is a great idea to encourage kids to do their part in taking care of household tasks and responsibilities. Make a Chore Bingo Card!

Each time they complete a task on the card, they get to mark that square.

The first kid or person to complete a chore bingo gets a special prize or gets to make a special choice for the family. For example: They may get to choose an outside activity for the family or a game for everyone to play. Or, they may get to choose the family meal. Making chores into a game may help them complete all the tasks needing to be completed and not just the easy ones!

Teaching kids to complete tasks for the family makes them feel more connected and valued. Even though they may complain, they still are given a sense they matter and are important!

### Balancing Screen Time

Distance Learning for kids and working from home for parents has created a perfect storm of TOO MUCH screen time! With so many great online earning opportunities being provided for free right now it is easy to fall into the trap of spending hours on a computer, tablet, or cell phone. Here are some tips to keep the balance:

- Choose online videos and apps that encourage your child to follow along or follow up with a hands-on activity. Watch a video about building a Lego Car and then build one yourself. Learn about Volcanoes, then build and erupt one!
- Focus on learning apps and websites. Games that help teach or practice reading, math, problem-solving. Avoid passive watching of tik-tok or youtube. Save those screen minutes for productive viewing.

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**Give yourself a screen curfew**

You’re probably used to battling your kids over when to turn off the TV or put the electronics away so they can go to sleep on time. You should follow suit. By setting a curfew of 9 p.m. for all your devices, you’ll be in bed by 10:30, which is when the body is primed for good-quality sleep, which will increase your energy and make you sharper the next day. —Suhas Kshirsagar, MD, author of *Change Your Schedule, Change Your Life*
Sun Glasses—Not just a fashion statement!

Did you ever notice how cute kids are in sunglasses? Well, this cute fashion statement is more important than looking cute! Sunglasses may save their skin and eyes later in life by blocking the sun’s powerful ultraviolet rays (UVR).

Make sure they are playground safe and have UVA/UVB protection. We should teach kids to wear sunglasses just like we teach them to brush their teeth!

Rules that Work

Having rules in print is important. When the child breaks a rule, the parent can point to a printed sheet and ask, “What is the rule?” This takes the heat off the parent as the bad guy and places it on the “rule.” Rules must be clearly stated and reasonable for the child’s age, developmental level and emotional stability.

For example: The rule might read: “Marie’s bed time is 8 p.m.” When Marie tries to negotiate for a later time, the parent asks the child, “What is the rule?” and the answer is clear.

Smart Snacking—Every Calorie Counts

100 Calories
- 1/2 an apple spread with 2 tsp. peanut butter
- 1/2 c. orange juice (Try it frozen!)
- 1/2 c. fat-free, sugar-free instant or packaged pudding
- non-fat yogurt (artificially sweetened)
- single serving of apple sauce
- 1 serving of many varieties of Campbell’s soups
- a Fudgesicle
- half a turkey sandwich using reduced-calorie bread, mustard, and veggies

• mock S’more: reduced-fat Graham cracker, topped with a jumbo marshmallow and drizzled with chocolate.

50 Calories:
- handful of animal crackers
- 1 c. air-popped popcorn with a handful of peanuts
- 1 c. grapes
- 1/2 c. fruit cocktail
- 1/4 c. reduced-fat cottage cheese

25 itty bitty calories:
- 1 small glass of tomato juice
- 12 pretzels
- 1 c. air-popped popcorn
- Sugar-free Jello pack

Schedule Brian Power Into Summer

Set a Time for Reading Every Day

This is something you can do whether your kids spend their days with you or another caregiver. After lunch is a great time to schedule a regular, daily, reading siesta. If your kids are young, read a story out loud to them at this time. Older children can use this time to read on their own. If you can, try to model the importance of reading by picking up a book for yourself at the same time.

Set a Time For Learning

If your kids received home learning packets from their school or if you’ve picked out a particular workbook you’d like them to complete, set a regular block of time aside each day when they can work toward completing this project. In addition, plan to explore various topics your kids have shown an interest in. Summer is a great time to tap into their natural curiosity!

Quick and Easy Pick UP

Feel like you spend all day picking things up and putting them back where they belong? STOP! Give each person a bin, tote, basket, etc. Put it on the stairs or in the hallway. Any kid stuff that ends up lying around the house, from random ball caps to books they’re reading, gets tossed in the basket so they can grab it.
Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and peppers; cook 5 minutes. Add zucchini and garlic; cook 5 minutes, until barely tender. Add tomatoes, sausage, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper; cook until somewhat dry, 5 to 7 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons Parmesan. Spoon half into prepared dish. Top with 1 cup mozzarella. Add remaining tomato mixture. Arrange bread sticks on top in lattice pattern, trimming to fit. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan and mozzarella.

Bake in 350 degree F oven 25 minutes, until bread sticks are browned and filling is bubbly.

Makes 8 servings.
8 Serving: 321 calories; 14 g total fat; 6 g saturated fat; 73 mg cholesterol; 988 mg sodium. 30 g carbohydrates; 4 g fiber; 19 g protein Adapted from: Parents.com

Mother's Day Gift Ideas for Kids
That don’t require a trip to the store!!

Picture Frames
This is a great way to give old picture frames new life! Get an old picture frame and remove the glass and backing. Collect a variety of craft materials (buttons, old jewelry, beads, etc). Have the children decorate the frames by gluing the craft items around the edge. Have them draw a picture to place into the frame and replace the backing and glass.

Spiced Tea Mix
Easy to make tea mix for mom! Combine three parts instant orange breakfast drink to one part instant tea. Have your children fill baby food jars with the drink mix. Screw the lids on tightly. To complete the gift, use scrap fabric cut into circles and place over the top of the jar with a rubber band. Attach a card with the direction: “Mix 1 heaping tablespoon drink mix with 1 cup hot or cold water for a delicious orange beverage”

Fancy Tissue Boxes
A great addition to any bathroom! Give each child an unopened facial tissue box. Have them brush glue over small sections of their box. Let them place a variety of uncooked pasta shapes on the glue to create designs. Have them continue until the box is completely covered with pasta. Spray the boxes with gold spray paint in a well-ventilated area away from the children.

Quick Fix Recipes

**Pizza Casserole**

1 tablespoon olive oil  
1 medium onion, chopped  
2 sweet bell peppers, diced  
2 medium zucchini, cut into rounds  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
3 cans (14 ounce) diced tomatoes, drained  
12 ounces cooked sausage  
1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
¼ cup parmesan cheese  
2 cups mozzarella cheese  
1 tube refrigerator pizza dough

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 13 x 9 x 2-inch baking dish. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and peppers; cook 5 minutes. Add zucchini and garlic; cook 5 minutes, until barely tender.

Add tomatoes, sausage, Italian seasoning, salt and pepper; cook until somewhat dry, 5 to 7 minutes. Add 2 tablespoons Parmesan. Spoon half into prepared dish. Top with 1 cup mozzarella. Add remaining tomato mixture. Arrange bread sticks on top in lattice pattern, trimming to fit. Sprinkle with remaining Parmesan and mozzarella.

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**Pepperoni Roll Ups**

Pepperoni Slices  
Mini Flour Tortillas  
Jar Pizza Sauce  
Mozzarella Cheese Slices

Spread 1/2 Tablespoon on the flour tortilla, add pepperoni slices and one slice of mozzarella cheese. Roll up and cut into bite sized slices. Enjoy!