



EARLY CHILDHOOD

Smart Parenting

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION ■ JANUARY 2012

Cottage Cheese Snowman

Children really enjoy eating fun foods that they are involved in preparing. A Cottage Cheese Snowman is a great snack idea – lowfat cottage cheese is good source of protein and calcium for growing bodies. The kids will enjoy “decorating” their snowman!

Ingredients include:

- ◆ Low-Fat Cottage Cheese
- ◆ Carrots
- ◆ Raisins
- ◆ Slice of toasted bread
- ◆ Celery stalk

Use an ice cream scoop and melon ball scoopers (for graduated body size).

Place two or three scoops of cottage cheese on a salad plate. Place the raisins to create buttons and eyes.

Cut a small piece of carrot for the nose and a slice of celery for the mouth.

The leafy part of a celery stalk can be added for arms and the hat is cut from the toast.



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Live. And Learn.

Cooking with Preschoolers

Kids Learn by Doing...Take the Time to be a part of that in the Kitchen

Think about some of your favorite memories as a child and many will include food...particularly YOU helping prepare the food. “Preparing food not only reinforces family traditions but also provides an excellent opportunity for learning,” shares Susan Mills-Gray, MU Extension nutrition and health education specialist. It may take a little flexibility and some simple prep work, but with the right expectations, your time in the kitchen with your preschooler can be an adventure you'll both enjoy.

Intellectual Development: A child learns reading, counting and math, sequencing, identification and sorting, cause-and-effect, science, facts, sizes, and cultural skills when preparing food. Food preparation is a fantastic way to learn different flavors, textures, shapes, sounds, smells, colors and consistencies. Kids learn by doing; cooking is an inexpensive opportunity to involve their senses.

Physical Development: Information about health and nutrition can be added casually to the cooking activity. This helps children understand the value healthy food choices has for keeping their bodies in good condition and helps them learn that staying healthy is their responsibility. Mixing, measuring, stirring, and cracking eggs, encourages the use of small muscle development and hand-eye coordination. Kneading, mixing, tossing, and lifting build larger muscles. Again, sensory development is a major benefit of allowing a child to cook and bake.

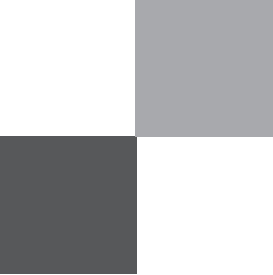
Psychological Development: Young children may think food means love. This comes from their early nursing/bottle experiences when the parent relieved the

child's hunger with milk. When the cooking task is completed, children feel that they have accomplished something.

Social Development: What do we offer people when they visit our homes? Probably food or beverage. Cooking permits children not only to satisfy their own needs, but also to experience the satisfaction of nourishing others. This serving of others and offering food are ways our society helps to teach basic manners and sharing to children. This experience also allows the child to learn about different cultures and food traditions.

Tips for successful cooking with children:

- ◆ Pick a recipe that is not too difficult.
- ◆ Pick a recipe that has a lot of steps for a child to do.
- ◆ Make sure the child understand that clean hands are a MUST.
- ◆ Explain cooking terms as you progress through the recipe.
- ◆ Let children smell, feel and look at ingredients while preparing recipe.
- ◆ Point out the dangers of hot burners or surfaces and heat generated by ovens.
- ◆ Allow plenty time for the cooking experience...make sure both you and your child are rested.
- ◆ Use this time together to talk and share.
- ◆ Read a story that introduces the food you will prepare.
- ◆ Remember cleanup is part of the learning experience; have the child help.



Holiday Cheer... after the fact

*How much did you spend
in 2011?*

*Do you have a spending
plan for 2012?*

It's that time of year. It's the holidays. No matter how much one intends on planning for the holidays, it always seems to sneak up on us. This is also a time where money seems to disappear, you know, just vanishing in thin air! January brings a chance for us to really think about what we spent and what we want to do differently in 2012.

Is this you?

"Washington, October 19, 2010 – Though Americans are still operating with the recession in the back of their minds and many have fundamentally changed their shopping habits, some findings from the National Retail Federation's (NRF's) first holiday survey imply consumers won't only be focusing on low prices and basic necessities this year. According to NRF's 2010 Holiday Consumer Intentions and Actions Survey, conducted by BIG research, U.S. consumers plan to spend an average of \$688.87 on holiday-related shopping, a slight rise from last year's \$681.83.

According to Shatomi Luster, MU Extension family financial education specialist, "As in years past, most holiday gift-givers will spend the largest portion of their budget buying gifts for family (\$393.55) and friends (\$71.45), though they'll still carve out room in their budget for small tokens of appreciation for both co-workers (\$18.26) and others (\$34.82)." Total spending on gifts (\$518.08) is expected to rise 2.1 percent from last year, which is in line with NRF's 2010 holiday forecast. Americans will also spend an average of \$41.51 on decorations, \$26.10 on greeting cards and postage, \$86.32 on candy and food, and \$16.86 on flowers." (*Statistics from the National Retail Federation*)

Don't let the holiday's consume you. It's never too late to plan. Trying to rebound is difficult, you have to "box-out", maintain possession, leap just a little bit higher than your opponent and you have to limit the chances of the opponent (budget/money) putting more points on the board. Did you think I was describing a basketball game? It's kind of like a game when you get behind as you have to work on speed, timing and effort.

Study your 2011 holiday spending and adjust as you ease into 2012.

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Physical Activity is Good for the Brain

There is increasing evidence that staying physically active will keep your brain sharp. Previous studies linking activity to reduced risk of brain function have generally focused on healthy people and relied on self-report of exercise levels. New studies confirmed that similar benefits from physical activity can be achieved by those who are less healthy.

According to Glenda Kinder, MU Extension nutrition & health education specialist, "One study looked at whether exercise benefits the brains of people who already have cardiovascular health problems." This study determined physical activity levels at the study's start and followed participants over a 6-year period. Researchers found that those who walked the

equivalent of a daily brisk 30-minute walk were at lower risk of cognitive impairment. And as activity level increased, the rate of decline decreased.

A second study dealt with the self-report of exercise by measuring metabolic activity via how much water a person loses. That enabled researchers to calculate average energy expenditure (AEE) for each participant at the study's start. Participants with the highest initial AEE scores – those who were more physically active, tended to have lower odds of developing cognitive impairment. As activity scores went up, the incidence of cognitive impairment went down.

These 2 studies add to the growing evidence that habitual physical activity are associated with age-related

changes in cognition and risk of dementia. As parents and caretakers of young children, developing a habit of regular physical activity is one way to protect brain function and remain as healthy as possible. The Centers for Disease Control recommends that children participate in active play at least one hour most days of the week as a healthy lifestyle target. Begin early to encourage healthy active play.

Source: Tufts Nutrition & Health Newsletter

