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Making Connections

PROVEN  
PARENTING  
PRACTICES

Good nutrition helps  
kids learn

Physical activity helps  
kids learn

Sleep helps kids learn

Routines at home help  
kids learn

Learning at home  
helps kids learn at  
school

Setting limits with  
love helps kids learn  
at school

Community programs  
help kids learn at  
school

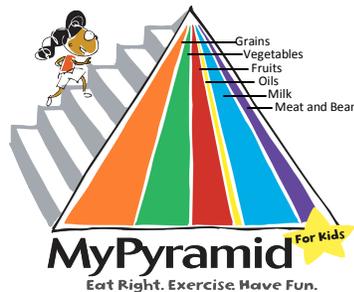
# Dare to Excel: Good Nutrition

OCTOBER 2010

DES MOINES COMMUNITY

## How Nutrition Can Help Kids in School

Did you know that nutrition can have an important role in your child's ability to learn at school? The types of food a child eats such as fruits and vegetables and whether a child is offered many different kinds of foods has been linked to how well kids do in school.



Children who eat three regular meals a day such as breakfast, lunch, and dinner have been able to **improve memory, attendance, and overall school achievement.**

Children who had not been getting regular meals have been known to be irritable and moody and have more problems with being able to pay attention.

*The USDA Food Guide Pyramid for Kids, shown above, can help you know how to give your kids a balanced diet.*



Children need consistent energy levels throughout their day to stay focused. If children do not have good eating habits, this can affect their brain function and their ability to work at higher levels at school.

### What can you do?

- Offer breakfast before they leave for school
- Keep easy to eat snacks at home that are healthy and quick.
- Plan your shopping trips to keep snacks on hand.

If children are able to learn healthy eating habits, they are more likely to have healthy eating habits as adults.

[www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/foodsavings)

## Resources and Information



**DHS (the Department of Human Services)** has a **Food Assistance Program** that provides Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards that can be used to buy groceries at supermarkets, grocery stores and some Farmers Markets. **To apply:** Call your local DHS office to get an application (515) 725-2600 or apply online at [www.oasis.iowa.gov](http://www.oasis.iowa.gov).



**DMARC (Des Moines Area Religious Council)** food pantries provide families with a 5 day supply of food each month for those in need. Please bring a photo ID for the head of your house and another form of ID (report card, etc.) for each member of your house along with proof of address. To find out more information and where the closest pantry is located please call (515) 277-6969.



**Iowa State University Extension EFNEP program** for families offers FREE nutrition education. This program focuses on helping you save money, learn the importance of physical activity, assist with picky eaters and gather some great, healthy recipes. Contact Stacia Sanny at (515) 957-5786 or [ssanny@iastate.edu](mailto:ssanny@iastate.edu).

# Easy Kid-Friendly Fall Recipes



Kids can have fun and enjoy cooking as a family activity.



For some kids, trying new foods is a process.



For More Information:  
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## APPLE & CHEESE SNACK



### Ingredients

- 24 reduced fat crackers
- 6 sliced cheese squares, cut into quarters
- 12 thin apple slices, cut into quarters
- ground cinnamon

### Instructions

- TOP crackers with cheese quarters and apples.
- SPRINKLE with cinnamon.

## MINI-CARAMEL APPLES

### Ingredients

- 4-inch lollipop sticks
- Granny Smith apples (one apple makes about 8 mini apples)
- Butterscotch or peanut butter chips
- Chopped nuts, sprinkles, shredded coconut (optional)
- Small paper candy cups

### Instructions

- CUT the lollipop sticks in half at an angle (the pointy end will go in the apple pieces easier). With a melon baller, scoop balls out of the apple. Each ball should have a section of apple peel.
- PUSH half of a lollipop stick into the peel of each ball and pat the apple pieces dry.
- MELT the chips according to the package directions.
- DIP and SWIRL the mini apples in the melted chips, then roll the apples in nuts, sprinkles, or coconut if desired.

## How to Encourage Your Kids to Try New Foods

- **Be patient!** Parents may need to offer their children new foods 5 to 20 times before their child will begin to eat it.
- **Be an example!** Parents can model healthy eating habits by how they eat every day.
- **Be adventuresome!** Offer different kinds of foods than what your child already likes and is used to.
- **Let your children pick from what is being served and not try to control them.**
- **Be positive!** Reward children for trying something new and praise them.
- **Make time for family meals.** Family meals are a great way to spend time with your kids and let them try new foods.
- **Be sensible.** Limit foods that are high in sugar, but do not get rid of these foods.

[www.ellynsatter.com](http://www.ellynsatter.com)

## How Important is a Good Breakfast?

Very! A good breakfast can improve how well children understand their school work and **improve their overall grade point average.** Breakfast helps

brain activity and adds to a child's total energy level during the day. Children who skip breakfast do not react as quickly and have lower school performance.

Skipping any meal has greater effects on children than adults. This makes it even more important for children not to skip meals.



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