



# potpourri

May 2024

Volume 50 | Issue 5

## What's Inside?

Low-Allergen Meals  
Vegetable Gardening with Kids  
Avoid Cross-Contamination When Cooking  
Avoiding Burnout  
Protecting Kids' Vision  
& More!



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#### MICHIGAN

P.O. Box 1491; East Lansing, MI 48826  
3496 E. Lake Lansing Rd., Suite 150  
East Lansing, MI 48823  
Phone: 800-234-3287 or 517-332-7200  
Fax: 517-332-5543  
E-mail: mifrontdesk@acd-kids.org

#### ILLINOIS

P.O. Box 7130; Westchester, IL 60154-7130  
4415 Harrison St., Suite 535  
Hillside, IL 60162  
Phone: 800-284-5273 or 708-236-0863  
Fax: 708-236-0872  
E-mail: Illinois@acd-kids.org

#### POTPOURRI CONTRIBUTORS

Amanda Gerrity  
Val Crafts  
Nicolas Gisholt  
Allison Stock, RD

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Welcome to May! In a world where our collective efforts can change lives, the mission of bringing healthy food to children is so very important. I am constantly moved by the resilience and hope of the people we serve, but am equally reminded of the needs that still exist.

Every meal served is a step toward a brighter future for a child. It's about offering a foundation for health, and with that a chance for opportunities that might otherwise remain out of reach. Our work together empowers not just individuals, but entire communities, setting into motion a cycle of positive change.

Eating healthy meals are just a part of overall well-being. We are also focused on child safety. For this reason, we are including a safety handout, along with our nutritional handouts, each month to continue educating communities about nutrition and safety.

I am deeply grateful for your continued support. Your work is the backbone of our success, and together, we are making a profound difference in the lives of children in our communities. Thank you for being part of this critical journey.

**Denise Meyer**  
Executive Director

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# Low-Allergen Meals

In May, we're talking about food allergies. Here are a few recipes with low allergy risk.

## Gluten-Free Chicken Nuggets

8 servings  
kidswithfoodallergies.org

### Ingredients

1/3 cup white cornmeal  
1/3 cup yellow cornmeal  
1 tsp salt  
1 tsp garlic powder  
1 tsp black pepper  
1 tsp onion powder  
1 pkg boneless skinless chicken  
olive oil, enough to fry

- Cut up your chicken into 1-2 inch pieces (or ask the store you buy it from to do it).
- Combine cornmeal and all seasonings in a bowl (you can change the seasoning to your liking).
- Meanwhile heat olive oil in a frying pan.
- Rinse chicken in water and put wet chicken directly in the cornmeal mix. Coat it well and fry.

✦ Grain/Bread Products

✦ Meat/Meat Alternate

## Annika's Sweet Potato Casserole

6 servings  
kidswithfoodallergies.org

### Ingredients

2 large sweet potatoes  
1-2 lb ground turkey  
1-2 medium apples, cored and chopped finely  
1 tsp cinnamon  
orange juice

- Pierce sweet potatoes with a fork and microwave until soft. Peel and mash. Set aside. Brown ground turkey.
- In large bowl, mix sweet potatoes, ground turkey, and apples. Splash in 1-2 Tbsp orange juice and stir. If mixture is still too dry, add additional juice. You want this to be easy to scoop.
- Spoon into 2 1/2 quart casserole dish and place in 350 °F oven. Cook for 30-45 minutes until heated through.

✦ Vegetable

✦ Meat/Meat Alternate

✦ Fruit

## Tuna Noodle UnCasserole

6 servings  
godairyfree.org

### Ingredients

2 tablespoons dairy-free buttery spread or sticks  
2 tablespoons all-purpose gluten-free flour  
2 cups chicken broth  
1 (6-ounce) can tuna, flaked  
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen green peas  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
6 cups cooked gluten-free pasta, drained but not rinsed

- Melt the buttery spread in a skillet or pot over medium heat.
- Add the flour and whisk until no lumps remain.
- Add 1/4 to 1/2 cup of the chicken broth and whisk until smooth.
- Slowly whisk in the remaining chicken broth.
- Add the flaked tuna, and bring to a boil while continuing to whisk.
- Once boiling, add the frozen peas, reduce the heat to low, and simmer until the sauce reaches your desired thickness, about 3 to 5 minutes.
- Whisk in the black pepper. Add the cooked noodles and gently stir until they are well-coated in the sauce.
- Serve!

✦ Grain/Bread Product

✦ Vegetable

✦ Meat/Meat Alternate

## HEALTHY DRINKS. HEALTHY KIDS.

We are proud to partner with the Sugar Smart Coalition and Healthy Drinks for Healthy Kids, in their mission to encourage healthy beverage consumption in early childhood. Upon award of the Ingham Health Equity Mini Grant, we are helping to get out the message!



# Meals & Menus

## CACFP Requirements



CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG English Muffin 2. Strawberries 3. Milk	1. Oatmeal 2. Blueberries*** 3. Milk	1. WG Cereal 2. Banana 3. Milk	1. Scrambled Egg 2. Hash Brown Patties 3. Milk	1. WG Waffle 2. Orange 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Salmon Bites 2. Brown Rice 3. Carrots 4. Applesauce 5. Milk	1. WG Breaded Chicken 2. WG Pasta 3. Spaghetti Sauce 4. Cauliflower 5. Milk	1. Taco Meat 2. Corn Tortilla 3. Black Beans 4. Avocado 5. Milk	1. WG Cheese Pizza 2. WG Crust (Pizza) 3. Broccoli 4. Pears 5. Milk	1. BBQ Chicken 2. WG Bun 3. Baked Sweet Potato 4. Corn*** 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Hard Boiled Egg 2. WG Crackers 3. Peaches 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Hummus 2. WG Pita 3. Cantaloupe 4. Celery*** 5. Milk	1. String Cheese 2. WG Graham Cracker 3. Raspberries*** 4. Baby Carrots*** 5. Milk	1. Yogurt 2. WG Pita Chips 3. Apple Slices 4. Cucumber 5. Milk	1. Nut/Seed Butter 2. WG Crackers 3. Grapes*** 4. Sugar Snap Peas*** 5. Milk
(*) Choose two food groups from “Snacks” list.				(**) MT may be substituted for GN/BP up to 3x a week.		
FT: Fruit    VG: Vegetable    GN: Grain    WG: Whole Grain MK: Milk    BP: Bread Prdt.    MT: Meat/Meat Alternate				(***) Choking hazard for children under age 4.		



### REMINDERS:

March 2024 final claim due: **May 25 (Mon.)**

- Please remember to submit enrollments/renewals in a timely manner.
- Please remember to mark children out of school and to call in closures.
- Send enrollments to: **Michigan:** mifrontdesk@acdkids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543  
**Illinois:** ilcustomerservice@acdkids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

# Vegetable Gardening with Kids

In today's digital age, vegetable gardening stands out as a great blend of outdoor activity and educational exploration for kids. It's a hands-on way to teach children about nature, patience, responsibility, and healthy eating habits. From sowing seeds to harvesting crops, this activity not only gives them ownership and pride in what they've grown, but introduces them to life's natural cycles. Let's dig into having fun gardening with kids!

## Location

First things first, you need to select the type of garden you want to have, and the best location to put it. No matter the amount of space you have, there are many options to choose from. You can choose the traditional, in-the-ground garden, a raised bed, or a container garden. Have an old sandbox? That can become a garden area. When selecting a location for a garden, there are four key considerations; (1) how much sun or shade a space receives, (2) water drainage, (3) soil quality and (4) proximity to water & home.

Make sure that the chosen site gets the maximum sunlight and an ample supply of water. If a potential garden site is in an older residential area (built pre-1978) there may be pollutants within the soil. In such cases it is prudent to send a soil sample to a local laboratory such as MSU's Soil Testing Lab. Just confirm the laboratory will test for soil contaminants and that they provide clear recommendations. Growing in raised beds is one way of getting around this

concern in many urban areas, since they are effectively large containers of uncontaminated soil. However, don't be afraid to grow in the ground either. Raised beds aren't free, and most soils in urban, residential spaces are still healthy to grow within.

## What to Plant

When selecting plants to grow with children, it is important to incorporate plants that the children will enjoy growing most. Children enjoy plants that have strong smells, grow quickly, and are easily recognizable. In most cases, selecting plants that have larger seeds are easier for small hands to handle.

Sunflower, pea, pumpkin, and squash plants all meet these criteria. Plants that can be snacked on are also fun for children. As the food grows, it can be easily picked, such as snow peas. Lettuce, radishes, and cherry tomatoes grow quickly, which is great for children who tend to have a harder time with patience. Carrots, potatoes, and pumpkins are also fun

plants for children to grow because they are easily recognizable. Children are very sensory, and enjoy unique sensory plants. Planting crops that range in textures from fuzzy, rubbery, prickly, and smooth can be very fun for children to experiment with.

## Activities

Kids can lay out garden borders with rocks or stepping stones. Have them create plant tags, using pictures for non-readers. Break out a few rulers, and let them measure the growing plants and compare heights. Let them personalize their pumpkins by scratching their names on the skin of the young fruits and then watching their names grow as the pumpkins mature. Letting a little one loose with a hose is not a good idea. Instead, give them a smaller-sized watering can or jug, so they can participate by hydrating the plants. If they are responsible for watering and weeding, they will soon learn that a neglected garden doesn't produce much, but if they harvest a bumper crop, they will take great pride in their achievements. Don't worry about perfection; gardening is a learn-as-you-go, trial and error thing, with experience being the best teacher.



■ Sources: [planetnatural.com](https://planetnatural.com) | [gardeningknowhow.com](https://gardeningknowhow.com) | [almanac.com](https://almanac.com) | [greaterlansingfoodbank.org](https://greaterlansingfoodbank.org)  
 ■ Images: Adobe Stock Images

# Preparing Allergen-Free Meals and Snacks Safely

**5.6 million children have food allergies in the United States.** The most commonly diagnosed food allergies for children are eggs, milk and peanuts. Of those three, peanut allergies are most prevalent.

When preparing meals and snacks for children with food allergies, first identify if there are any potential allergens in the food and beverages you serve. The next step is to avoid cross-contact of allergens when preparing meals and snacks. Cross-contact is “when an allergen is inadvertently transferred from a food containing an allergen to a food that does not contain the allergen.” (Food Allergy Research & Education - FARE)

## Identify Allergens

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) requires that all packaged food and drinks indicate if any of the “Big 9” food allergens (eggs, milk, wheat, soy, sesame, peanuts, tree nuts, fish and shellfish) are present in either the ingredient statement or in a separate statement underneath the ingredient statement.



## Avoid Cross-Contact

Cross-contact of allergens occurs in 3 ways:

- Equipment to food
- Food to food
- Person to food

To prevent cross-contact from equipment to food, use separate equipment when possible. If you don't have separate equipment available, wash and sanitize equipment before using it to remove any allergenic proteins that may remain.

To prevent cross-contact from food to food, remember that any contact counts as cross-contact. For example, if you prepare a cheese pizza but are serving a child with a milk allergy, scraping the cheese off the pizza will not safely remove the allergenic proteins. Instead, prepare a separate pizza with no milk-containing ingredients.

To prevent cross-contact from person to food, ensure your hands are properly washed. Allergenic proteins cannot be removed from hands with hand sanitizer or improper hand washing.

By identifying allergens and preventing cross-contact, you can safely serve meals and snacks to children with food allergies.

■ Images: Adobe Stock Images



## Rotini Alfredo with Broccoli

Yield: 8 servings

This quick and easy pasta dish is free of 8 of the top 9 allergens (contains tree nuts). Beans, cauliflower and coconut milk replace traditional alfredo sauce which contains milk, a common allergen for children. This recipe provides 1/2 cup grains and 1/2 cup vegetables.

### Ingredients:

- 15 oz great Northern beans (1.75 cups)
- 1 cup riced cauliflower, steamed
- 1.5 cups unsweetened coconut milk (contains tree nuts)
- 1.5 tbsp nutritional yeast
- 1/2 tbsp lemon juice
- 3/4 tsp garlic powder
- 1/3 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp iodized salt
- Dash black pepper
- 4 cups broccoli florets, steamed
- 6 oz chickpea rotini pasta (6 oz dry= 4.5 cups cooked)

### Instructions:

1. Cook the chickpea rotini pasta in water. Drain and rinse. Set aside for later, keeping warm.
2. To a blender, add beans, cauliflower, milk, nutritional yeast, lemon juice, garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper. Blend until smooth. Set aside and keep warm.
3. Steam the broccoli.
4. Mix the cooked pasta with "alfredo" sauce and serve broccoli on the side or mixed in with the pasta and sauce.
5. Serve 1/3 cup of sauce mixed with 1/2 cup of pasta and 1/2 cup of broccoli.

**Nutrition Information** (serving size: 1/2 cup pasta with 1/3 cup sauce and 1/2 cup broccoli): 150 calories, 1.5 grams fat, 25 grams carbohydrate, 8 grams fiber, 11 grams protein.

*Optional: Swap the coconut milk for rice milk or pea milk to remove the tree nut allergen if needed. Freeze any extra sauce for quicker prep in the future!*

✦ Grain/Bread Product ✦ Vegetable ✦ Meat/Meat Alternate

**Safety Note:** Wash hands properly before preparing to remove any potential cross-contact with other allergens. Be sure your blender can tolerate hot foods before blending or cool the ingredients before blending and reheat in a dish after blending.

■ Images: Allison Stock



## WAREHOUSE CLUBS

Buying in bulk can be a great way to save money on groceries. This month, we're talking pros and cons of warehouse/wholesale clubs.



Warehouse clubs like Sam's Club, Costco and BJ's offer many great deals and options that can really save money - if you can afford to buy in bulk and have storage for the volume of items you buy.

### Pros

- **Lower Prices**  
Wholesale club prices are hard to beat. You can save an average of 20 percent on items you normally buy at the grocery store.
- **Gas Prices**  
Warehouse club gas prices are often 50 cents less than an average gas station.
- **Less Shopping**  
Buying your items in bulk means fewer grocery shopping trips saving you time as well as money.
- **Customer Service**  
Customer service tends to be very good at warehouse clubs. Return policies are classically good and questions are answered satisfactorily.

### Cons

- **Easy To Spend Impulsively**  
Wholesale clubs are great at marketing things you don't need. Watch out for "fun" purchases like grills, TVs, etc.
- **Traffic**  
Warehouse clubs tend to be busy and have long lines with no "off" times to shop.
- **Too Much Bulk**  
Sometimes bulk buys are simply too much. 25 pounds of flour is a lot of product to store.

■ Source: [bethebudget.com](http://bethebudget.com)

# Avoiding Burnout

## What Is Burnout?

The definition of burnout is “a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed” — something to which many caregivers can relate. Some specific causes of professional caregiver burnout may include:

- A sense of personal responsibility.
- Unclear work roles (hours, duties, boundaries, etc.).
- Feeling out of control.
- Long hours.
- Insufficient pay.
- Personal life stressors.

Anyone can feel burnout, but caregivers and child care professionals may experience it more intensely. According to Sheila K.

Collins, author of “Stillpoint: A Self Care Playbook for Caregivers to Find Ease and Time to Breathe, and Reclaim Joy,” caregiver burnout happens “when people who love their work move from one child to the next, one human crisis to the next, without time for themselves and their own renewal. Many [people] in various professions have these issues, but in professional caregivers, they seem more pronounced.”

## Tips for Burnout Relief

- **Know your limits and set boundaries.** Families won't know if they're asking too much without boundaries to guide them.
- **Take time for self care.** Take the time to reset by walking on a treadmill, taking a bath — whatever you need to recharge your batteries. Making this a scheduled event after work can help you ensure that you fit the time in.
- **Change your perspective.** Do something fun and upbeat, something that can always make you smile. This could mean playing a game with the kids, finding a cute craft to make, or having a dance party — just for the sake of fun.
- **Focus on the positive.** To overcome burnout associated with feeling underappreciated, try focusing on the kids and soak up the small, yet fun moments you have with them.
- **Ask for help!** Accept help from assistants or get in to see a mental health professional.

Caregiver burnout does happen, even to the caregivers with the best attitudes and strongest boundaries. If you are experiencing extreme fatigue, ongoing illnesses or the inability to bounce back from an episode of burnout, you should consult your doctor or healthcare professional. Burnout shouldn't be a normal part of your life, so make sure you take time to identify it, care for yourself, and work to prevent it in the future.



## Q: Can I use my home-canned vegetables and fruit as part of the meal plan?

No, you cannot use home-canned goods as part of the meal plan. While canned foods are nutritious and the fruits and vegetables that have been canned are already cooked, they must be store bought.

According to CACFP:

- Home-canned fruit products are not allowed for service in the CACFP due to health and safety reasons.
- For safety reasons, home-canned foods may not be served in meals reimbursed under the CACFP because they may contain harmful bacteria even when there is no evidence of spoilage.

Post CACFP questions on [facebook.com/acdkidsorg](https://www.facebook.com/acdkidsorg). We'll answer questions monthly in “Potpourri.”





## Work Out Those Big Emotions with This Fun & Simple Craft!

### Worry Monsters

#### SUPPLIES:

Pipe Cleaners  
Poof Balls  
Googly Eyes  
Permanent Markers  
Glue  
Optional Cardboard Box

#### STEP 1

Start by wrapping the pipe cleaners together, and then wrapping them around the popsicle stick. These will be the arms.

#### STEP 2

Using glue, attach a poof-ball to the back of the popsicle stick at the top. This will be your monster's hair.

#### STEP 3

Glue on the googly eye.

#### STEP 4

After you attach the hair and googly eye, you are ready for your face. This is a great time to talk to kids about emotions and what happens when they feel sad, angry, mad, or scared.

#### STEP 5

Now that you have your worry monster, you can make a whole set. Try making them with different faces and emotions.

#### OPTIONAL

You can make a simple holder out of a recycled box. Cut slits in the bottom of a box (a shoebox would work well) and slide the monsters into each slot.

**Safety Note:** (\*) Carefully supervise or monitor children when using poof balls and googly eyes so they do not put them in their nose, ears, or mouth.

■ Craft/Images: [lemonlimeadventures.com](http://lemonlimeadventures.com)

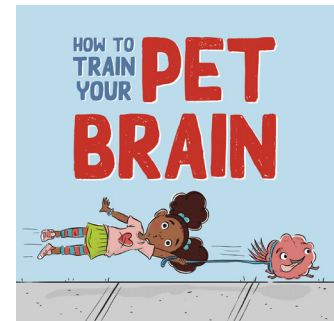


May is Mental Health Awareness Month! Here are a few selections that highlight ways for kids to manage some of those confusing emotions.



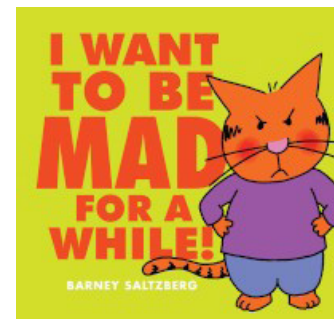
### The Boy with Big, Big Feelings

by Britney Winn Lee (Author)  
Jacob Souva (Illustrator)



### How to Train Your Pet Brain

Nelly Buchet (Author)  
Amy Jindra (Illustrator)



### I Want to Be Mad for a While

by Barney Saltzberg (Author, Illustrator)

■ Books: [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)

# Protecting Kids' Vision

Pediatric eye health doesn't begin and end with annual appointments. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmologists, about 90% of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of proper protective eyewear and similar measures. We highly recommend that parents model safe behavior and take extra safety precautions around the house to ensure the protection of their children's eyes. Parents and caregivers are, in many ways, the first line of defense against eye injuries. We greatly advise developing the following habits to keep your kids' eyes safe:

- Hold sharp objects, such as scissors, screwdrivers, digging implements, etc., away from the face both when in and not in use
- Properly use common home items such as paper clips, rubber bands, safety pins, and other objects in ways that won't put the eyes at risk
- Lock kitchen knives away in their drawers
- Store cleaning chemicals and similar hazards in locked, hard-to-reach cupboards
- Store glassware, ceramics, and other breakables away from small, curious hands
- Store guns—including those for paintballs, pellets, and BBs—in their lockers unloaded and separate from their respective ammo
- Wear protective eyewear when doing yard work, performing repairs around the home, using power tools, woodworking, swimming, or playing sports
- Wear sunglasses outdoors to prevent UV damage
- Wear seatbelts in the car, and properly securing any small children who may not yet have the skills to properly secure themselves
- Wear protective eyewear during science experiments, both in and out of the classroom
- Only pet domestic animals with permission from the owners, who know whether or not their pets may bite or scratch a child
- Purchase age-appropriate toys without sharp edges or accessories
- Pad sharp corners on furniture
- Set up gates at the top and bottom of any staircases
- Take regular breaks when using computer, TV, and smartphone screens for long stretches of time in order to prevent straining
- Check public parks and playgrounds for any potential eye hazards before allowing play



## What to do in the Event of an Eye Injury

Unlike many common injuries such as bumps, bruises, and sprains, those impacting the eye often require medical intervention due to our eyes' highly sensitive nature. Even well-meaning first aid interventions, such as rubbing or applying pressure, can ultimately cause more harm than good. See a medical professional as soon as possible.



# May 2024

Submit quiz answers to your Field Monitor to receive FREE training credit.  
Do not (e)mail quiz to the ACD office.

**1. What percentage of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of eye protection?**

- a. 20%
- b. 65%
- c. 80%
- d. 90%

**2. Soil should be tested for pollutants if the garden is in an older, residential area.**

- a. True
- b. False

**3. Kids should wear sunglasses outdoors.**

- a. True
- b. False

**4. How many children have food allergies in the U.S.**

- a. 5.6 million
- b. 2.3 million
- c. 850,000
- d. 1.2 million

**5. Burnout is a normal part of life.**

- a. True
- b. False

**6. Cross contact of allergens occurs in what ways:**

- a. Equipment to food
- b. Food to food
- c. Person to food
- d. All of the above

**7. Buying in bulk is not a good way to save money on groceries.**

- a. True
- b. False

**8. How many top food allergens are there?**

- a. 15
- b. 12
- c. 5
- d. 9

**9. The most commonly diagnosed allergies for kids are:**

- a. Shellfish, tree nuts, and ketchup
- b. Eggs, milk, and peanuts
- c. Sesame, soy, and milk
- d. Wheat, eggs, and coconut

**10. Cleaning chemicals should be stored in easy-to-reach places.**

- a. True
- b. False

**11. Mental Health Awareness Month is in June:**

- a. True
- b. False

**12. The first line of defense against kids' eye injuries is:**

- a. Safety glasses
- b. Parents and caregivers
- c. Goggles
- d. Other kids

**13. Lettuce, radishes, and cherry tomatoes grow slowly.**

- a. True
- b. False

**14. What average percent can you save by shopping at a warehouse club?**

- a. 20%
- b. 15%
- c. 10%
- d. 25%

**15. The FDA requires that all packaged foods indicate if they contain any of the "Big 9" food allergens:**

- a. True
- b. False





The Association for Child Development educates parents and caregivers about nutrition to promote the development of children and establish healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.



As a nonprofit, ACD has been operating for more than 45 years in Illinois and Michigan. A large part of our work involves serving more than 36,000 children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – a program ensuring children have access to nutritious meals.

Alongside this critical work, ACD looks to make a greater impact by expanding our mission to include a safety component focused on decreasing the risk of harm or injury in homes children are cared for through outreach, education and safety products.

**Support ACD's efforts to prevent child injury.**

**Donate today at [www.acdkids.org](http://www.acdkids.org).**