

potpourri

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What's Inside?
Nutrition-Packed Pancakes
The Role of Iron in Development
Building Balanced Breakfasts
Safe Kids Month
& More!



Potpourri is published monthly by the Association for Child Development (ACD), a sponsor of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Child care providers sponsored by the ACD for participation with the CACFP receive Potpourri free of charge. No portion of Potpourri may be reprinted without the consent of ACD.

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May is a meaningful month as we recognize both Safe Kids Month and Allergy Awareness Month - two important reminders of the role childcare providers play in protecting children's health and well-being. Every day, you help create environments where children can learn, grow, and thrive safely.

Food allergy awareness is especially important in daycare settings, where careful attention to ingredients, labels, and individual needs can make all the difference. Your diligence in preventing exposure, following care plans, and creating inclusive mealtime environments ensures that every child can participate safely and confidently. These thoughtful practices not only protect children with allergies but also help foster understanding and compassion among their peers.

Safe Kids Month also highlights the many ways providers support children beyond nutrition. From supervising active play to maintaining safe meal environments, your efforts help reduce risks and promote healthy development. Mealtime routines, proper food handling, and attentive supervision are all part of creating a safe and supportive space.

Thank you for your continued commitment to both safety and nutrition. The care and attention you provide each day give families peace of mind and help children build strong foundations for lifelong health.

Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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Pancakes Packed with Nutrition!

Here are some ways to include more nutrients in these classic breakfast staples.

Fluffy Whole Wheat Zucchini Bread Pancakes

8 pancakes
ambitiouskitchen.com

Ingredients

Dry ingredients:

1 cup (113g) whole wheat pastry flour or white whole wheat flour*
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 1/4 teaspoons cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon salt

Wet ingredients:

1 heaping cup shredded zucchini, squeezed of excess moisture with a paper towel (from 1 medium zucchini)
1 egg
2 tablespoons pure maple syrup (or honey)
1 tablespoon melted and cooled coconut oil (or sub melted butter)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup milk

Instructions

- In a large bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt.
- In a separate large bowl, combine shredded zucchini, egg, maple syrup, coconut oil, vanilla and almond milk until smooth and well combined..
- Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients and mix until just combined. If the batter looks too thick add just a splash more milk. If it's too wet, add another tablespoon of flour.
- Lightly coat a large nonstick skillet or griddle with coconut oil or butter and place over medium heat. Drop batter by 1/3 cup onto skillet and spread out a bit with a spoon if necessary. Cook until bubbles appear on top, about 2

minutes.

- Flip cakes and cook until golden brown on underside, 2 minutes. Wipe skillet clean and repeat with more coconut oil (or butter) and remaining batter. You may need to reduce the heat after the second batch to prevent burning.

◉ Grain ◉ Vegetable

Healthy Pumpkin Oatmeal Pancakes

6 pancakes
ambitiouskitchen.com

Ingredients

3/4 cup pumpkin puree
2 large eggs
2/3 cup milk
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
1 1/2 cups old fashioned rolled oats, gluten free if desired
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon allspice
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon salt
Olive oil, for cooking

Instructions

- Add all of the ingredients to a blender and blend on high until completely smooth, about 30 seconds to 1 minute.
- Lightly coat a griddle with oil and place over a medium heat. Once the pan is hot, add about 1/3 cup of the batter to the griddle for each pancake; the batter may be thick so you'll need to use a spoon to spread out the batter a bit. It will get thicker as it sits so be sure to cook these pancakes immediately after blending. Cook for 2-4 minutes until pancakes slightly puff up and

you see a few bubbles along the edges.

- Flip cakes and cook until golden brown on underside. If you find that pancakes are browning too quickly, then you need to lower the heat. I normally start on medium heat, then reduce to medium low later so that my pancakes don't burn. If at any point your griddle starts smoking, it means your pan is way too hot. Wipe skillet clean and repeat with more oil and remaining batter.

◉ Grain ◉ Vegetable

Cottage Cheese Banana Oatmeal Protein Pancakes

8 pancakes
ambitiouskitchen.com

Ingredients

1 cup old-fashioned rolled oats, gluten free if desired
1 medium banana
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon cinnamon
2 egg
1/2 cup low fat cottage cheese

Instructions

- Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until completely smooth, about 30 seconds.
- Lightly coat a skillet or griddle with nonstick cooking spray and heat over medium low heat. Drop batter by 1/4 cup onto skillet.
- Cook until bubbles appear on top. Flip cakes and cook until golden brown on underside.

◉ Meat/Meat Alternate ◉ Grain

Meals & Menus

CACFP Requirements



CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Blueberry Pancakes 2. Cantaloupe 3. Milk	1. Scrambled Eggs w/WG Toast 2. Raspberries*** 3. Milk	1. Lowfat Yogurt w/WG Granola 2. Banana Slices 3. Milk	1. WG Half Bagel w/Cream Cheese 2. Mango 3. Milk	1. Oatmeal 2. Pineapple Tidbits 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Baked Chicken Tenders 2. WG Rotini 3. Green Beans 4. Watermelon 5. Milk	1. Ground Turkey Taco Meat 2. WG Tortilla 3. Shredded Lettuce 4. Peach Slices 5. Milk	1. Cheese & Spinach Frittata 2. WG Roll 3. Sweet Potatoes 4. Blueberries*** 5. Milk	1. Baked Pollock 2. Brown Rice 3. Steamed Mixed Vegetables 4. Orange Wedges 5. Milk	1. Lean Beef Meatballs 2. WG Spaghetti w/ Marinara 3. Zucchini 4. Apple Slices 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Cheddar Cubes 2. WG Wheat Thins 3. Kiwi Slices 4. Snap Pea Pods 5. Milk	1. Greek Yogurt 2. WG Oat Squares Cereal 3. Strawberries 4. Cucumber 5. Milk	1. Seed Butter 2. WG Mini Bagel 3. Pear Slices 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Hard-Boiled Egg 2. WG Tortilla 3. Cantaloupe 4. Steamed Broccoli 5. Milk	1. Hummus 2. WG Pita 3. Mango 4. Carrot Sticks*** 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 2026 final claim due: **May 25, 2026 (Mon.)**

- Please remember to submit enrollments/renewals in a timely manner.
- Please open any mail that comes from ACD. Also, please check your email and spam folders for news and information from us.
- Please remember to record any children out of school or daycare closures in My Food Program.
- Send enrollments to: **Michigan:** mifrontdesk@acdkids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543
Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acdkids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

Allergy Awareness at Mealtime

Recognizing and Treating Reaction Symptoms

May is Food Allergy/Awareness Month, making it an ideal time for childcare providers to strengthen safe and inclusive mealtime practices. With food allergies affecting many young children, providers play a critical role in preventing exposure, recognizing symptoms, and creating an environment where every child can eat safely. Careful menu planning, clear communication with families, and consistent supervision help reduce risks while ensuring children with allergies feel included. By building awareness and reinforcing safe routines, childcare providers can help protect children's health and give families confidence that their child is cared for with attention and understanding.

9 MAJOR FOOD ALLERGENS

The nine leading causes of food allergies identified in the US are:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Tree nuts
- Peanuts
- Wheat, Soybeans
- Sesame



ALLERGY SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

MILD SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:	SEVERE SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:
<p>Nose: itchy or runny nose, sneezing</p> <p>Mouth: itchy mouth</p> <p>Skin: a few hives, mild itch</p> <p>Gut: mild nausea or discomfort</p>	<p>Lung: shortness of breath, wheezing, repetitive cough</p> <p>Heart: pale, blue, faint, weak pulse, dizzy</p> <p>Throat: tight, hoarse, trouble breathing/swallowing</p> <p>Mouth: significant swelling of the tongue or lips</p> <p>Skin: many hives over body, widespread redness</p> <p>Gut: repetitive vomiting or severe diarrhea</p> <p>Psychological: feeling something bad is about to happen, anxiety, confusion</p>

MILD & SEVERE REACTIONS

- Symptoms can involve just one area of the body, or more than one area.
- A **mild reaction** involves a **mild symptom** that affects only one area of the body.
- A reaction that involves any **severe symptom** is a **severe reaction**.
- A reaction that involves **mild symptoms in more than one body area** is also a **severe reaction**.
- Severe reactions can quickly progress to anaphylaxis, a condition that can be life-threatening. For this reason, severe reactions must be treated with epinephrine.



Building Balanced Breakfasts

Serving a balanced breakfast can give children the energy, focus and strength they need to tackle the day. But what exactly is a “balanced” breakfast?

Balanced meals provide a mix of carbohydrates, protein and fat, known as macronutrients.

CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates provide energy to run, jump and play, and should make up 45-65% of a child’s daily calories. Fiber is an important nutrient found in certain carbohydrate foods, such as whole grains, fruits, vegetables and legumes. By including fiber at breakfast, children can feel full for longer periods of time and maintain steady blood sugar levels. Avoid carbohydrate foods high in added sugar, found in certain breakfast cereals, yogurts and pastries.

PROTEIN

Protein is a nutrient children need for growing and repairing muscle, and most children should have 10-30% of their daily calories from protein foods. While most people think of animal foods like red meat and poultry for protein, some plants also contain protein, such as legumes, nuts and seeds. Avoid protein from bacon and sausage, since these breakfast meats are typically high in saturated fat and sodium.

FAT

Fat is a key nutrient for children’s growing brains, and most children need about 30-35% of their daily calories from fat. Include mostly foods with unsaturated fat (vs. saturated fat), such as avocado, nuts, nut butters, seeds and seed butters, vegetable oils and fatty fish like salmon, sardines, trout and tuna.

If you need some breakfast inspiration, check out these sample balanced breakfast ideas:

- Avocado on toast with fruit with milk
- Fruit and Greek yogurt parfait with milk
- Peanut butter and sliced bananas on waffles with milk
- Scrambled eggs and breakfast potatoes with milk
- Blueberry and chia seed oatmeal with milk

Thankfully the CACFP meal pattern guidelines already require you to serve a balanced breakfast, so keep serving up meals that give children a healthy start to their day!



Easy Egg Bites

Serving eggs for breakfast is easier than ever with this recipe for Egg Bites. With a nice balance of protein, fat and carbohydrates, this recipe can be prepped ahead of time and stored in the freezer for a simple and satisfying start to the day.

Yield: 12 servings

Ingredients:

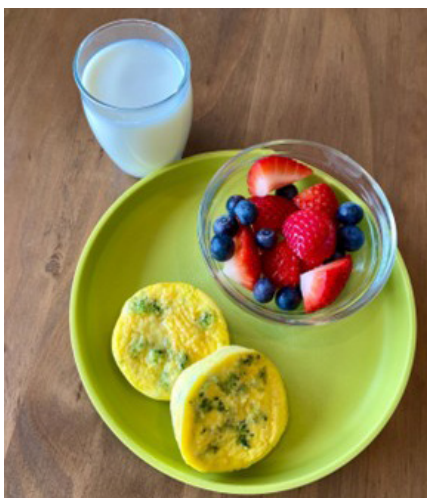
8 eggs
 1/2 cup low-fat milk
 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
 3/4 cup low-fat cottage cheese
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/8 tsp pepper
 1 cup cooked broccoli, finely chopped

Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. To a blender, add all of the ingredients except the broccoli. Blend until smooth.
3. Spray a 12 cup muffin tin with cooking spray. Add 1 1/3 tbsp of the broccoli to each well of the muffin tin.
4. Pour the egg mixture into the muffin tin, evenly distributing the contents.
5. Bake for 18-20 minutes until the egg bites are set. Allow to cool before serving.

Optional: Use any veggie you like instead of broccoli, such as diced bell peppers or spinach.

Nutrition information (serving size 1 egg bite): 85 calories, 5 grams fat, 3 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams protein
 + Vegetable + Meat/Meat Alternate



Tips from Frugal Kitchens

This month, we are going to share tips from cooks around the country as reported to Food52.com.



- "I just soak all my dried beans at once, rinse, and portion them out into sandwich bags to freeze uncooked. Then, I put them into my rice cooker still frozen with raw rice to make rice and beans for my kids. Something about freezing the soaked raw beans makes them cook pretty fast."
- "Costco recently started selling frozen avocado chunks! I always end up wasting avocados because they go from not-ripe to overripe so quickly. Great for small-batch guacamole or avocado toast."
- "Oftentimes the 'store brand' is made by the name-brand company and is the same quality, but often much cheaper."
- "I make sure my veg and fruit drawers are empty every week before I shop for more. Personally, I think produce can really eat up a food budget, so I like to make sure it isn't wasted. Soup happens at least twice a week in the winter; it's easy and inexpensive, and uses up the produce."
- "I freeze all veggie scraps and meat bones to make stock. I haven't bought stock/broth from a store in over 6 months. I'll also precook a bunch of chicken breasts or thighs, shred, and freeze so later I can do last-minute things like enchiladas, soups, etc."

■ Source: food52.com

The Role of Iron & Key Nutrients in Early Development

Iron is a mineral that the body needs for growth and development. It helps in the production of muscle cells and red blood cells that carry oxygen through the body. It supports brain development and immune function. Overall, iron supports a child's ability to grow, pay attention, and learn.

All children need iron. It is important at all stages of a child's development. Our focus today is on children eating solid foods.

Iron in solid foods

When your child is about 6 months old, you can start giving them solid foods. Make sure to choose foods that contain iron. **Iron found in foods comes in two forms: heme and non-heme iron.**

HEME IRON	NON-HEME IRON
Heme iron is commonly found in animal products. The body absorbs it more easily than non-heme iron.	Non-heme iron is in plants and iron-fortified products. This type of iron is less easily absorbed by the body.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red meat, such as beef, pork, lamb, goat, or venison • Seafood and fatty fish • Poultry, such as chicken or turkey • Eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iron-fortified infant cereals • Tofu • Beans and lentils • Dark green leafy vegetables

Our bodies absorb iron from plant sources better when eaten with meat, poultry, seafood, and foods that contain vitamin C, such as citrus fruits, strawberries, sweet peppers, tomatoes, and broccoli.

Vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables include:

- Citrus fruits such as oranges
- Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli or cabbage
- Berries
- Papaya
- Tomatoes
- Sweet potatoes

What happens if we don't get enough iron?

- In the short term, getting too little iron does not cause obvious symptoms. The body uses its stored iron in the muscles, liver, spleen, and bone marrow. However, when levels of iron stored in the body become low, iron deficiency anemia sets in. Red blood cells become smaller and contain less hemoglobin. As a result, blood carries less oxygen from the lungs throughout the body.
- Symptoms of iron deficiency anemia include GI upset, weakness, tiredness, lack of energy, and problems with concentration and memory. In addition, people with iron deficiency anemia are less able to fight off germs and infections, to work and exercise, and to control their body temperature. Infants and children with iron deficiency anemia might develop learning difficulties.

CD Wind Spinners

MATERIALS

- old cds or dvds
- school glue
- craft gems, jewels and sequins, buttons, etc.
- paint brushes
- fishing line

STEP 1

Tap the glue onto the cds with paintbrushes, and then place the gems in the glue spots.

STEP 2

Cover the surface of your cd or dvd with assorted, colorful craft gems and jewels.

- Younger children will likely place their decorative gems randomly all over the cd, while older kids may want to use create defined patterns and/or designs.

STEP 3

Use fishing line to hang.



Water Bottle Wind Spirals

MATERIALS

- empty water bottles
- Sharpie markers

STEP 1

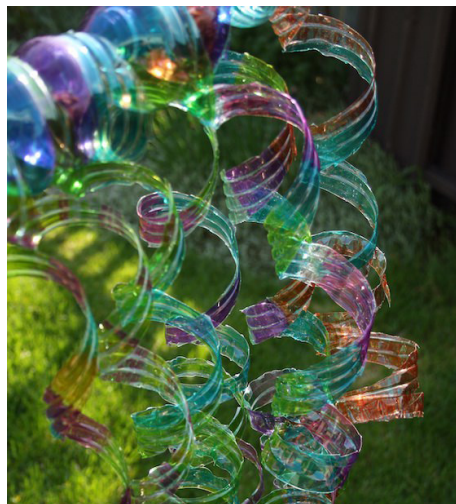
Color your water bottles entirely with the markers.

STEP 2

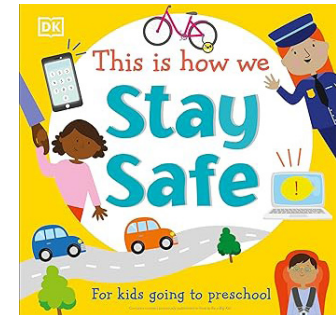
Cut off the bottom of the bottle, and then cut the rest of the bottle into a spiral, leaving the shoulders and neck of the bottle intact.

STEP 3

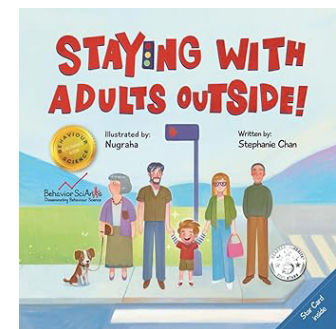
Slide the neck of the bottle over the branch of a tree, and watch them bounce and dance in the wind!



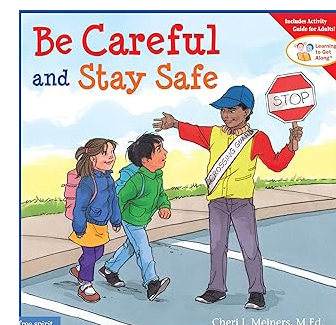
May is Safe Kids Month, so we have picked some books that focus on kids' safety and making smart choices!



This Is How We Stay Safe: For Kids Going to Preschool
by DK (Author)



Staying with Adults Outside: A Children's Book about Safety
by Stephanie C. Chan (Author), Behavior SciAnts (Author)



Be Careful and Stay Safe (Learning to Get Along®)
by Cheri J. Meiners (Author), Meredith Johnson (Illustrator)

■ Books: [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

National Safe Kids Month: A Call to Action

May is National Safe Kids Month, a national effort to reduce childhood injuries and deaths by raising awareness of preventable hazards and promoting safety practices before the busy summer “trauma season.” Managed by Safe Kids Worldwide, this campaign mobilizes caregivers, communities, and child health advocates to focus on actionable ways to keep children safe both in and out of childcare settings.

Unintentional injuries remain a leading threat to children’s health in the United States. During the four months between May and August, often referred to as “trauma season” or the “100 deadliest days of summer,” about 41% of all preventable injury deaths among children occur. This spike includes incidents at home, playgrounds, pools, and in vehicles — environments that caregivers regularly navigate.

For childcare professionals, understanding these patterns is essential. Studies show that **unintentional injuries claim the lives of thousands of children each year**, with millions more treated in emergency departments nationwide. While comprehensive national figures vary, Safe Kids data indicate that **drownings, falls, and motor vehicle crashes are among the top causes of injury for young children**, and **drowning alone is the leading cause of injury death for kids ages 1–4**.

Childcare providers play a pivotal role in injury prevention. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), early care and education professionals help protect children by ensuring safe play spaces, supervising water and outdoor activities, and teaching safety habits that children carry home. They also act as crucial partners in identifying risks and communicating safety priorities with families.

As providers, using Safe Kids Month as a springboard for education can make a real difference. Simple strategies include checking playground equipment for hazards, reinforcing helmet use for bike or scooter activities, practicing water safety drills, and discussing safety with parents during drop-off and pick-up.

Together, childcare professionals can help reduce the toll of unintentional injuries and ensure that every child has a safe and joyful summer.

**41% of All
Preventable Injury
Deaths
Among Children
Occur Between
May & August**



May 2026

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

1. Most children should have 10-30% of their daily calories from _____ foods.

- a. Fatty
- b. Protein
- c. Vegetable
- d. Fruit

2. What claims the lives of thousands of children each year?

- a. Electricity
- b. Toys
- c. Unintentional injuries
- d. Cats

3. Heme and unHEME are the two types of iron.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Balanced meals provide a mix of carbohydrates, protein and fat, known as macronutrients.

- a. True
- b. False

5. An allergic reaction that involves any severe symptom is a severe reaction.

- a. True
- b. False

6. A few of the most common food allergens include:

- a. Sesame
- b. Milk
- c. Peanuts
- d. All of the above

7. The body absorbs heme iron more easily than non-heme iron.

- a. True
- b. False

8. Severe allergic reactions can quickly progress to _____?

- a. Nothing
- b. Tantrums
- c. Anaphylaxis
- d. None of the above

9. By including fiber at breakfast, children can feel full for longer periods of time and maintain steady blood sugar levels.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Weakness, tiredness, lack of energy, and problems with concentration can be signs of _____.

- a. Flu
- b. Anemia
- c. ADD
- d. Picky eating

11. Most children need about _____ of their daily calories from fat.

- a. 10-20%
- b. 20-25%
- c. 30-35%
- d. 40-45%

12. Hives and sneezing are considered severe allergy symptoms.

- a. True
- b. False

13. 41% of preventable injury deaths among children occur between May & August.

- a. True
- b. False

14. Fiber can be found in what types of food?

- a. Fruit
- b. Grains
- c. Vegetables
- d. All of the above

15. Heme iron is found in plant products.

- 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 50 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.