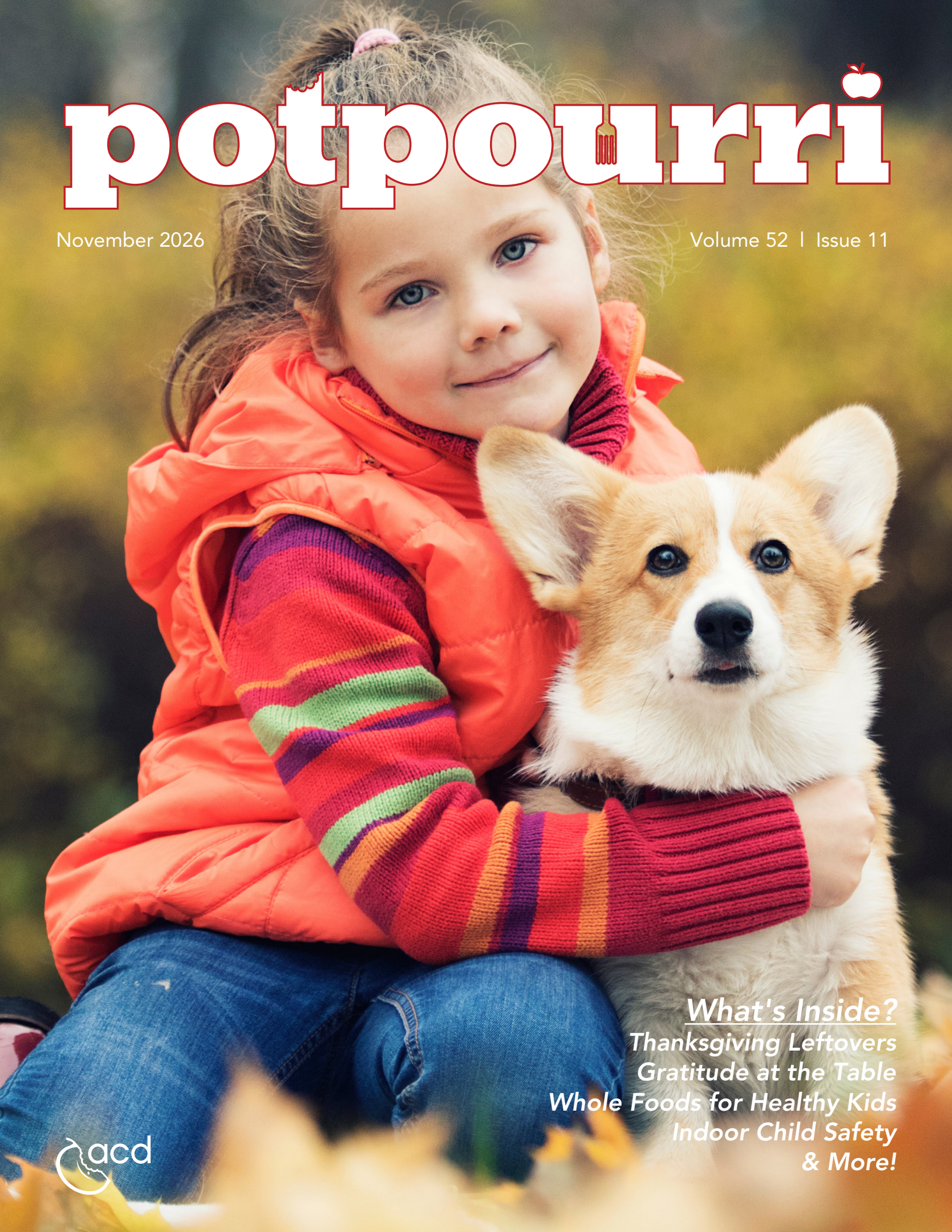
potpourri

November 2026

Volume 52 | Issue 11



What's Inside?

Thanksgiving Leftovers
Gratitude at the Table
Whole Foods for Healthy Kids
Indoor Child Safety
& More!

acd

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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As November arrives, and we enter the season of thanksgiving, my heart is filled with gratitude for each and every one of you. Every day, you open your doors and your hearts to nurture the next generation. Your dedication shapes not only young minds, but also the physical well-being of the children in your care.

When we think about gratitude during this time of year, our minds naturally drift to gathered families, shared moments, and comforting food. In early childhood care, food is so much more than sustenance. It is love, comfort, and the essential fuel that powers early learning and healthy growth.

Through your participation in the CACFP, you do far more than serve snacks and meals. You are instilling lifelong habits of health and nutrition. You ensure that children receive balanced, wholesome, and delicious meals every single day. Balancing CACFP meal pattern guidelines while catering to picky eaters and managing busy daily routines is no small feat, yet you manage it with grace, creativity, and care.

This month, as we give thanks for our communities and families, I want to take a moment to express our deepest appreciation for **you**.

Denise Meyer

Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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Thanksgiving Leftover Recipes!

Healthy recipes to use up that leftover Thanksgiving turkey that kids will love!

Turkey Soup (Instant Pot or Stovetop)

6 servings
cookincanuck.com



Ingredients
2 tsp olive oil
1/2 yellow onion chopped
2 large carrots cut into half-circles
2 large celery stalks chopped
3 garlic cloves minced
1 Tbsp minced fresh sage
1 Tbsp minced fresh rosemary
1 Tbsp minced fresh thyme
1/4 tsp kosher salt
1/4 tsp ground pepper
7 cups turkey or chicken broth
2 cups uncooked WG noodles
1 pound chopped cooked turkey (or chicken) mix of light & dark meat (4 cups)
3 Tbsp minced flat-leaf parsley

Instructions
Instant Pot Instructions:

- Set the Instant Pot to Saute mode. Add the olive oil. Stir in the onions and cook until starting to soften, 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add the carrots and celery, and cook until the vegetables are starting to soften, 2 to 3 minutes.
- Stir in the garlic, sage, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook for 1 minute.
- Add the turkey or chicken broth. Set the Instant Pot to High pressure on Manual mode. Reduce the time to 5 minutes. It will take about 15 minutes to come to pressure.
- Once the time expires, let the pressure release naturally for 10 minutes. Release the pressure manually.
- Press the Saute button. Once the broth is boiling, add the egg noodles and chopped turkey. Cook until the noodles are tender, about 6 minutes.
- Turn off the Instant Pot and stir in the parsley. Serve.

Stovetop Instructions:

- Heat the olive oil in a large nonstick saucepan. Add the onion and cook until starting to soften, 3 to 4 minutes.
- Add the carrots and celery, and cook until the vegetables are starting to soften, 2 to 3 minutes.
- Stir in the garlic, sage, rosemary, thyme, salt and pepper. Cook for 1 minute.
- Add the turkey or chicken broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer. Simmer for 15 minutes.
- Turn up the heat so that the soup is boiling gently. Stir in the egg noodles and chopped turkey. Cook until the noodles are tender, 6 to 7 minutes.
- Remove from the heat and stir in the parsley. Serve.

Vegetable **Meat/Meat Alternate** **Grain**

Leftover Turkey Lasagna Rolls

12 servings
cookincanuck.com



Ingredients
12 whole wheat lasagna noodles
2 tsp olive oil
1 small yellow onion chopped
2 cloves garlic minced
14 oz diced leftover turkey or chicken, mixture of light and dark meat
1 1/2 cups packed roughly chopped fresh spinach
12 oz low-fat cottage cheese
1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese divided
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg (optional)
1/2 tsp kosher salt to taste
1/2 tsp black pepper
2 1/4 cups tomato sauce (your favorite kind)

Instructions

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F.
- Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the lasagna noodles and cook until just tender. Drain the noodles, gently rinse with cold water and lay on a kitchen towels, separated from each other.
- For the filling, heat olive oil

continued on page 9

Meals & Menus
CACFP Requirements



CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST 1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Cinnamon Raisin Toast 2. Mango 3. Milk	1. Scrambled Eggs w/WG Corn Tortilla 2. Pineapple 3. Milk	1. WG Apple Bran Muffin 2. Blueberries*** 3. Milk	1. Yogurt w/WG Toast 2. Papaya 3. Milk	1. Buckwheat Pancakes 2. Watermelon 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER 1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Turkey Meatballs 2. WG Spaghetti 3. Yellow Squash 4. Clementines 5. Milk	1. Chicken/Black Bean Burrito 2. WG Tortilla 3. Shredded Cabbage 4. Mango 5. Milk	1. Salmon Patty 2. WG Roll 3. Roasted Parships 4. Applesauce 5. Milk	1. Beef/Vegetable Stuffed Peppers 2. Brown Rice 3. Green Peppers & Tomatoes 4. Pears 5. Milk	1. Chickpea & Cheese Pasta 2. WG Rotini 3. Roasted Rutabaga 4. Honeydew 5. Milk
SNACKS* 1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Cheese Cubes*** 2. WG Crackers 3. Kiwi 4. Sugar Snap Peas 5. Milk	1. Mashed White Beans 2. WG Pita 3. Strawberries 4. Jicama Sticks 5. Milk	1. Greek Yogurt 2. WG Crackers 3. Raspberries 4. Baby Carrots*** 5. Milk	1. Turkey Slices 2. WG Tortilla Pinwheels 3. Blueberries*** 4. Asparagus 5. Milk	1. Cottage Cheese 2. WG Cereal Squares 3. Apples 4. Radish Slices 5. Milk

(*) Choose two food groups from "Snacks" list.

FT: Fruit **VG:** Vegetable **GN:** Grain **WG:** Whole Grain
MK: Milk **BP:** Bread Prdt. **MT:** Meat/Meat Alternate

(**) MT may be substituted for GN/BP up to 3x a week.

(***) Choking hazard for children under age 4.

REMINDERS:

September 2026 final claim due: **November 23, 2026 (Mon.)**

- **CENTERS:** All claims require supporting documentation before being submitted to the state for reimbursement. No documentation = no reimbursement.
- 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

Gratitude at the Table: Thankfulness & Food Origins

Thanksgiving is a wonderful opportunity to help children explore gratitude at the table. For childcare providers, mealtime conversations can go beyond what is on the plate and encourage children to think about where their food comes from and the many people involved in bringing it to them.

Young children may understand gratitude best through simple, everyday examples. Ask questions such as: Where do you think this apple came from? Who helped bring our milk to the table? What are you thankful for about today's meal? These conversations help children connect food with farms, gardens, animals, workers, families, and communities.

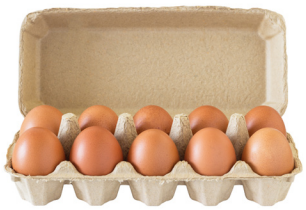
FOLLOW THE FOOD JOURNEY

Follow the Food Journey:
Choose one or two foods from a Thanksgiving meal or seasonal menu and explore their journey.

For example:

- **Pumpkins and squash** begin as plants grown on farms.
- **Apples** grow on trees and are picked before reaching stores or kitchens.
- **Potatoes** grow underground and are harvested from the soil.
- **Milk** comes from dairy farms before it is processed and delivered.
- **Vegetables** may travel from local farms, gardens, or growing regions across the country.

This is also a great time to introduce children to the idea that food does not simply appear on a grocery store shelf. Farmers, growers, truck drivers, grocery workers, and many others play a role in the food journey.





- Sources: superhealthykids.con
- Image: Adobe Stock Images

WAYS TO PRACTICE GRATITUDE

Simple Ways to Practice Gratitude:
Try incorporating these ideas into your Thanksgiving activities:

Create a "Thank You, Food!" conversation. Invite children to name one food they enjoy and one person or group that helped bring it to the table.

Explore seasonal foods. Let children touch, smell, and talk about foods such as apples, sweet potatoes, squash, and cranberries.

Reduce food waste. Teach children to take appropriate portions and appreciate the food they are served.

Share around the table. Give each child an opportunity to express something they appreciate—whether it is a favorite food, a friend, a family member, or a special activity.

Gratitude at the table does not need to be complicated. By helping children understand the origins of their food and recognize the people connected to it, childcare providers can turn Thanksgiving mealtimes into meaningful opportunities for learning, appreciation, and connection.



Whole Foods for Healthy Children

You've likely heard eating whole foods are key to a healthy diet. But what are "whole foods" and why are they important?

A whole food is defined as food that has not had any of its natural features taken away or any artificial substances added.[1] In other words, an unprocessed food. When food is left in its whole, unprocessed form, it retains more of its nutrients. Take the example of brown rice. Since brown rice is a whole food, it contains four times as much fiber as white rice, which is processed to remove the outer husk, where many nutrients are stored.



Eating whole foods such as whole fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, dairy, nuts, seeds and animal proteins can provide a wide variety of nutrients, which are key for children's healthy growth and development. However, this does not mean all processed foods are lacking nutrients. Baby carrots, canned beans and lower added sugar whole grain cereals are all considered processed foods, but are still packed with nutrients! These processed foods are quick, easy and healthy choices to serve growing children.

TIP: Rinse canned beans to remove about 40% of their sodium.



Highly processed foods, on the other hand, are often stripped of many nutrients while also containing high amounts of sodium, unhealthy fats, added sugar and artificial flavorings and colors. A diet of mostly highly processed foods has been linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and more.

If you want to incorporate more whole foods on your menu, consider these easy swaps:

- **Sweetened, Artificially Colored Applesauce Cups > Apple**
- **Highly Salted Potato Chips > Lightly Salted Seeds**
- **Sweetened Yogurt Tubes > Plain Greek Yogurt Blended with Fruit**

For a menu filled with a wide variety of nutrients, focus on serving whole foods in place of highly processed ones when possible.

[1] "Whole Food." Cambridge Dictionary. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/us/dictionary/english/whole-food

Images: Adobe Stock Image | canva.com

3 C's Mac & Cheese

Nothing spells comfort like mac & cheese, and this recipe features the 3 C's: Cheddar Cheese, Cottage Cheese and Cauliflower for more protein and fiber. Bonus: a 1 cup serving provides 2 oz grain eq. & 2 oz m/ma and 1/2 cup vegetables!!

Yield: 4-1cup servings

Ingredients:
8 ounces whole grain macaroni, uncooked
1 cup cottage cheese
2 cups cooked cauliflower
1/2 cup 2% milk
1/4 tsp salt
1/8 tsp pepper
1/8 tsp garlic powder
1/8 tsp onion powder
2 tsp cornstarch
1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded by hand







Instructions:
1. Cook the whole grain macaroni in water until al dente. Drain and set aside for later.
2. To a blender, add the cottage cheese, cauliflower, milk, seasonings and cornstarch until smooth. Leave the shredded cheddar cheese out for now.
3. Add the blended sauce to the cooking pot used to cook the pasta (with pasta removed).
4. Add shredded cheese and heat on medium-low heat until melted, then set to simmer.
5. Add the cooked pasta into the pot with the sauce and stir.

Optional: If the sauce is too thick, add 1-2 tbsp of milk to thin it out.

Nutrition information (serving size 1 cup): 400 calories, 13 grams fat, 50 grams carbohydrate, 7 grams fiber, 25 grams protein

November Budget Hacks



As the days grow shorter and the holiday season approaches, November presents unique opportunities for childcare providers to cut operational costs and preserve their bottom line.

Stock Up During Black Friday & Cyber Monday Sales: November is peak shopping season for major discounts. Take inventory of high-use items—such as arts and crafts supplies, educational toys, cleaning products, and office tech. Many major retailers and wholesale distributors offer deep discounts throughout November. Buying durable supplies in bulk now will save you money well into next year.

Optimize Energy Efficiency Before Winter Hits: Heating costs often surge as temperatures drop. Before cold weather fully sets in, conduct a mini energy audit. Install programmable thermostats to lower temperatures during closed hours, seal drafty doors and windows with weather stripping, and replace HVAC filters to keep systems running efficiently.

Embrace Free, Seasonal Learning: Skip expensive commercial crafts and curriculum kits this month. November's natural landscape offers endless, free educational materials. Organize outdoor leaf-collecting activities, pinecone crafts, and nature walks. You can also partner with local farms or grocery stores for donated pumpkins or gourds for sensory play and science experiments.

■ Source: childcareaware.org

Comfort Foods with a Healthy Twist

When temperatures drop and the holiday season arrives, comfort foods often take center stage. Warm soups, casseroles, baked dishes, and hearty meals can help children feel satisfied and cozy. The good news? Childcare providers can keep familiar favorites on the menu while adding nutritious ingredients.

Think "Add," Not "Take Away"

A healthy twist does not mean eliminating children's favorite foods. Instead, look for ways to add vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and protein-rich foods to familiar meals.

Healthy Twists on Favorite Foods

Try these seasonal ideas:

- **Macaroni and cheese:** Add broccoli, peas, cauliflower, or pureed butternut squash.
- **Mashed potatoes:** Mix in sweet potatoes or cauliflower for extra color and nutrients.
- **Chicken noodle soup:** Load it with carrots, celery, corn, peas, and other vegetables.
- **Chili:** Add extra beans, tomatoes, peppers, corn, or diced sweet potatoes.
- **Spaghetti:** Serve whole-grain pasta and add finely chopped vegetables to the sauce.
- **Meatloaf:** Mix in grated carrots, zucchini, or finely chopped mushrooms.
- **Shepherd's pie:** Layer lean meat and vegetables under mashed potatoes or sweet potatoes.
- **Baked chicken:** Serve with roasted sweet potatoes and cinnamon-spiced apples.
- **Oatmeal:** Top with warm apples, pears, peaches, or berries and add cinnamon for flavor.
- **Grilled cheese and tomato soup:** Use whole-grain bread and serve a vegetable-rich soup alongside it.

Feature Seasonal Produce

November and December are perfect months to feature squash, sweet potatoes, apples, pears, carrots, and winter greens. Roasting vegetables can bring out their natural sweetness, while soups, stews, and casseroles make it easy to introduce a variety of ingredients.

This season, bring healthy comfort foods to the table. With a few simple twists, familiar meals can become colorful, nourishing dishes that help children enjoy the flavors of fall and winter.

Comfort food can be warm, familiar, and nutritious!

Comfort Food Tip

Children may be more willing to try a new ingredient when it is served with a familiar favorite. Start small and continue offering new foods over time.





■ Source: fns.usda.gov ■ Images: Adobe Stock Images

Terra Cotta Turkey Pot Craft



MATERIALS

- Terra cotta pot
- Air dry clay
- Acrylic paint (brown)
- Felt (orange, yellow, green, and brown)
- Ribbon
- Scissors
- Googly eyes
- Hot glue

STEP 1

Roll a small amount of clay into a ball to create the head. Set it aside to dry.

STEP 2

Paint the pot and the clay head with the brown paint.

STEP 3

Trace and cut feathers, feet, and a beak out of the various colors of felt.

STEP 4

Assemble the turkey. Using hot glue, glue the head to the body (pot), the feathers to the back. Also glue on the googly eyes, feet, and the bow.

- Source: alittlecraftinyourday.com
- Images: alittlecraftinyourday.com

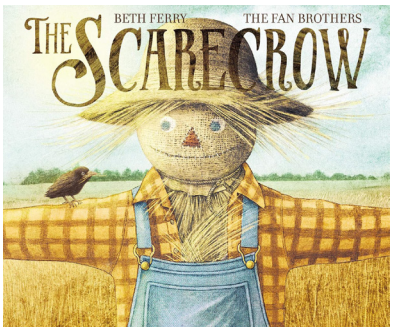
Thanksgiving Leftovers continued from page 5

- In a large frying pan set over medium heat. Add onions and saute until soft, 4 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and saute for additional 30 seconds.
- Add the diced turkey (or chicken) and heat until warm. Transfer to a large bowl and stir in spinach.
- Puree or blend cottage cheese in a food processor or blender.
- Stir the cottage cheese, 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, nutmeg, salt and pepper into the turkey mixture.
- Lay a few lasagna noodles on a cutting board. Spread 3 heaping tablespoons of the turkey mixture along each noodle. Starting at one short end, tightly roll up the lasagna noodle and filling.
- Prepare a 9- by 13-inch baking pan by spreading 1 cup tomato sauce on the bottom. Arrange the lasagna rolls, seam side down. Repeat with the remaining lasagna noodles and filling.
- Spread additional 1½ cups tomato sauce on top, and sprinkle with the remaining Parmesan cheese.
- Cover with foil and bake for 20 minutes. Remove foil and bake for additional 10 minutes, or until cheese is melted. Remove from oven and let cool for 10 minutes before serving.

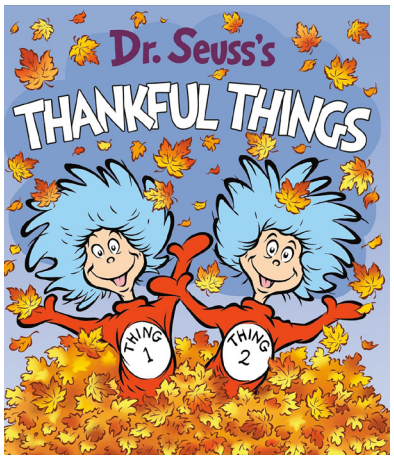
Vegetable **Meat/Meat Alternate** **Grain**

BOOKS

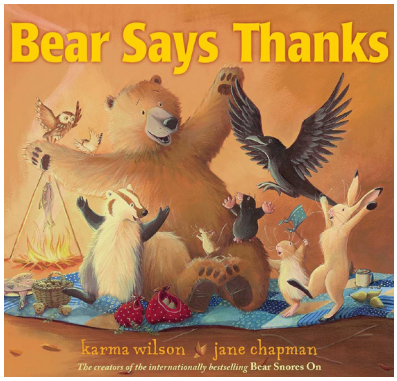
We have so much to be thankful for! From friendships to food, these fall and Thanksgiving books for kids are right on!



The Scarecrow
by Beth Ferry (Author), Eric Fan (Illustrator), Terry Fan (Illustrator)



Dr. Seuss's Thankful Things
by Dr. Seuss (Author, Illustrator)



Bear Says Thanks
by Karma Wilson (Author), Jane Chapman (Illustrator)

- **Books:** amazon.com

SAFE SPACES, HAPPY FACES: Indoor Safety for Children

Children spend a significant amount of time exploring, climbing, crawling, and playing indoors. For home daycare providers, creating a safe environment means looking beyond obvious hazards and checking everyday items that children may interact with in unexpected ways. A quick safety scan of each room can help prevent falls, entanglement, burns, and other injuries.

LOOK AT YOUR SPACE FROM A CHILD'S VIEW

Get down to a child's eye level and look around the room. What can they reach, pull, climb, or put in their mouth? This simple exercise can reveal hazards that adults may overlook.

COMMON INDOOR HAZARDS TO CHECK

AREA	WHAT TO LOOK FOR	SAFETY CHECK
FURNITURE	Dressers, bookcases, TVs, shelving	Anchor furniture that could tip; keep heavier items on lower shelves.
CORDS	Window-blind cords, electrical cords, phone chargers	Keep cords out of reach and secured; use cordless window coverings when possible.
ELECTRICAL	Outlets, power strips, chargers	Use appropriate outlet protection and keep electrical devices and cords away from children.
WINDOWS	Windows, screens, blinds	Keep furniture away from windows; secure window coverings and limit access.
SMALL ITEMS	Coins, batteries, magnets, office supplies	Regularly check floors and low surfaces for choking hazards.
DOORS	Exterior doors, bathrooms, storage areas	Use appropriate childproofing and keep restricted areas secured.
FLOORS	Rugs, clutter, spills	Remove tripping hazards and clean spills promptly

DON'T FORGET FURNITURE

Furniture can become a climbing structure in seconds. Children may pull themselves up on bookshelves, tables, chairs, or dressers. Secure tall or unstable furniture to the wall whenever possible. Keep toys and frequently used items within easy reach so children are less tempted to climb.



KEEP CORDS OUT OF REACH

Cords can create strangulation and pulling hazards. Keep electrical cords, chargers, and window-covering cords secured and inaccessible. Avoid placing cribs, playpens, or furniture near accessible window cords.

SAFETY CHANGES AS CHILDREN GROW

A room that is safe for a baby may not be safe for an active toddler. As children's mobility and abilities change, reassess the environment. Regular safety checks—and viewing your home from a child's perspective—can help make every room a safer place to learn and play.

QUICK SAFETY TIP

Make an indoor safety check part of your daily opening routine. Look at floors, furniture, cords, outlets, windows, and small objects before children begin playing.

■ Source: cpsc.gov ■ Image: esfi.org

November 2026

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

1. Rinsing canned beans can remove __ of their sodium?
a. 10%
b. 25%
c. 40%
d. 65%

2. What can be added to mashed potatoes for color and nutrients?
a. Food coloring
b. Cauliflower
c. Sweet potatoes
d. Both B & C

3. Roasting vegetables can bring out their natural sweetness.
a. True
b. False

4. Potatoes grow on trees.
a. True
b. False

5. Indoor safety checks should happen monthly.
a. True
b. False

6. What food can be added to oatmeal for natural sweetness?
a. Juice
b. Stevia
c. Corn syrup
d. Apples

7. A whole food is a processed food.
a. True
b. False

8. Farmers, truck drivers, and grocery workers can all play a role in bringing food to the table.
a. True
b. False

9. All processed foods are lacking in nutrients.
a. True
b. False

10. What is a way to practice gratitude at mealtime?
a. Taking more food than needed
b. Throwing away leftovers
c. Talking about where food comes from
d. Skipping meals

11. Comfort foods cannot be healthy.
a. True
b. False

12. What is a good way to reduce furniture-related injuries?
a. Place toys on high shelves
b. Anchor tall or unstable furniture
c. Encourage kids to climb furniture
d. Move furniture closer to windows

13. A diet of mostly highly processed foods has been linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, cancer and more.
a. True
b. False

14. Cords are safe as long as they are not plugged into an outlet.
a. True
b. False

15. What is an important part of a daily indoor safety check?
a. Checking only the kitchen
b. Looking for cords, clutter, small objects & other hazards
c. Moving toys to high shelves
d. Checking the room only once a month

Image: Adobe Stock Images

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.