

potpourri

September 2026

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What's Inside?
Apple Recipes
Fruits & Veggies Month
"Play Up" Produce
Emergency Preparedness
& 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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September is a month of new beginnings. As children head back to school and settle into familiar routines, it's also a time to celebrate Fruits & Veggies Month, making it the perfect opportunity to reinforce healthy eating habits both at home and in childcare settings.

Nutritious meals and snacks play an essential role in helping children learn, grow, and stay energized throughout the day. Back-to-school routines provide a wonderful opportunity to introduce a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables, encouraging children to try new foods while enjoying old favorites. Whether it's crisp apples, juicy peaches, sweet peppers, or leafy greens, each bite helps provide the vitamins and minerals growing bodies need.

Childcare providers have a unique opportunity to make healthy foods fun and inviting. Offering colorful produce, involving children in simple food preparation, and talking about where fruits and vegetables come from can help build positive attitudes toward nutritious foods that last a lifetime.

As we begin another busy season, thank you for your continued dedication to the children and families you serve. The healthy meals you prepare, the routines you establish, and the care you provide create an environment where children can thrive both physically and emotionally.

Denise Meyer

Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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It's Apple Season!

September has apples in abundance! Here are some recipes that incorporate apples into sweet and savory dishes.

Apple Crunch Salad

6 servings

health.extension.wiscconsin.edu

Ingredients

- 8 oz apples
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 vanilla yogurt

Instructions

- Wash and core apples, do not peel. Chop into bite size pieces.
- Add raisins and yogurt. Mix well.

✦ Fruit

Apple Banana Peanut Butter Smoothie

6 servings

cacfp.org



Ingredients

- 4 medium bananas (about 2 cups when pureed)
- 2 cups applesauce
- 1 (32 oz) container Greek yogurt, plain or vanilla
- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1 cup ice cubes

Instructions

- Freeze bananas at least one day before service. To freeze, peel bananas and lay on a sheet pan prepared with parchment paper. Do not overlap or pile the bananas; they will stick together. Cover

and place in the freezer overnight. Once frozen, bananas can be stored together.

- Place applesauce in refrigerator one day before making smoothies.
- In this order, place applesauce, yogurt, peanut butter, frozen bananas and ice cubes in the blender. Blend until pureed and smooth. If texture is not smooth, continue to blend.
- Pour 1 cup (8 fl oz) of smoothie in each cup.

✦ Fruit ✦ Meat/Meat Alternate

Sweet Potato & Apple Bake

6 servings

snaped.fns.usda.gov/



Ingredients

- 3 1/2 cups sweet potatoes, drained (2 - 15 ounce cans; save 2 Tablespoons of the liquid)
- 2 cups apples (peeled, cored and cut into bite-sized pieces)
- 6 teaspoons brown sugar (2 Tablespoons, packed)
- 1/3 cup chopped nuts (pecans, walnuts or any other type)
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted (unsalted)

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
- Put sweet potatoes in baking dish.

- Add apples.
- Pour 2 Tablespoons of the sweet potato liquid over the mixture.
- Mix brown sugar, nuts, flour, and melted butter together in a small bowl.
- Sprinkle over the top of the sweet potato/apple mix.
- Bake for 20-30 minutes, until the top is golden brown and bubbly.

✦ Vegetable ✦ Fruit

Fall Apple Pumpkin Oatmeal

8 servings

cacfp.org/



Ingredients

- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1 1/2 cup water
- 2 cups applesauce
- 1 cup pumpkin puree
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 4 bananas

Instructions

- Add oats, water, applesauce, pumpkin, cinnamon and vanilla to a medium saucepan.
- Cook on medium-high heat until liquid is almost nearly absorbed by the oats.
- Serve 2/3 cup warm oatmeal to each participant with 1/2 banana, sliced.

✦ Vegetable ✦ Fruit ✦ Vegetable

Meals & Menus

CACFP Requirements



CACFP		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Pumpkin Muffin 2. Pear Slices 3. Milk	1. Cottage Cheese w/WG Toast 2. Grapes (halved)*** 3. Milk	1. WG Blueberry Waffles 2. Apple Slices 3. Milk	1. Scrambled Eggs w/ WG English Muffin 2. Blackberries 3. Milk	1. WG Cream of Wheat 2. Plums 3. Milk
	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Baked Chicken 2. Wild Rice 3. Acorn Squash 4. Apple Slices 5. Milk	1. Beef Taco Meat 2. Brown Rice 3. Corn 4. Pears 5. Milk	1. Turkey Meatloaf 2. WG Roll 3. Broccoli 4. Blueberries*** 5. Milk	1. Cheese Ravioli 2. WG Ravioli 3. Roasted Zucchini 4. Peaches 5. Milk	1. White Bean & Cheese Bake 2. WG Breadstick 3. Green Beans 4. Cantaloupe 5. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Baked Chicken 2. Wild Rice 3. Acorn Squash 4. Apple Slices 5. Milk	1. Beef Taco Meat 2. Brown Rice 3. Corn 4. Pears 5. Milk	1. Turkey Meatloaf 2. WG Roll 3. Broccoli 4. Blueberries*** 5. Milk	1. Cheese Ravioli 2. WG Ravioli 3. Roasted Zucchini 4. Peaches 5. Milk	1. White Bean & Cheese Bake 2. WG Breadstick 3. Green Beans 4. Cantaloupe 5. Milk
	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Cottage Cheese 2. WG Mini Bagel 3. Peaches 4. Cucumbers 5. Milk	1. Hummus 2. WG Crackers 3. Blueberries*** 4. Carrot Slices*** 5. Milk	1. Cheese Cubes 2. WG Pita 3. Kiwi 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Hard-Boiled Egg 2. WG Breadstick 3. Watermelon 4. Yellow Squash 5. Milk	1. Bean Dip 2. WG Tortilla 3. Pomegranate 4. Snap Peas 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Cottage Cheese 2. WG Mini Bagel 3. Peaches 4. Cucumbers 5. Milk	1. Hummus 2. WG Crackers 3. Blueberries*** 4. Carrot Slices*** 5. Milk	1. Cheese Cubes 2. WG Pita 3. Kiwi 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Hard-Boiled Egg 2. WG Breadstick 3. Watermelon 4. Yellow Squash 5. Milk	1. Bean Dip 2. WG Tortilla 3. Pomegranate 4. 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:

July 2026 final claim due: **September 28, 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@acd kids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543
Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acd kids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

Celebrate Fruits & Veggies Month

Fresh Picks from the Farmers' Market

September is Fruits & Veggies Month, making it the perfect time for childcare providers to introduce children to a variety of colorful, nutritious foods. With many fruits and vegetables at their peak during late summer, local farmers' markets offer an excellent opportunity to bring fresh flavors, learning experiences, and healthy habits into your program.

WHY VISIT A FARMERS' MARKET?

Farmers' markets provide access to produce that is often harvested just days before purchase. This freshness can mean better flavor, texture, and quality. Purchasing locally grown foods also supports area farmers and helps strengthen the local economy.

Benefits of farmers' markets include:

- Fresh, seasonal produce
- Opportunities to introduce children to new foods
- Support for local farms and communities
- Reduced transportation time from farm to table
- Educational opportunities to discuss where food comes from
- Speaking directly to farmers who can provide information on choosing, storing, and preparing produce

Many children are more willing to try fruits and vegetables when they learn about the people who grow them and can see produce in its natural, colorful variety.

WHAT DO FRUITS AND VEGETABLES PROVIDE?

Fruits and vegetables contain important nutrients that help children grow, learn, and stay healthy.

Fruits Provide:

- Vitamin C to support immune health and wound healing
- Potassium for healthy muscles and nerves
- Fiber to support digestion
- Natural carbohydrates that provide energy for active play

Vegetables Provide:

- Vitamin A for healthy vision and immune function
- Vitamin K to support healthy bones
- Folate for growth and development
- Fiber and antioxidants that support overall health

Different colors provide different nutrients, so offering a rainbow of fruits and vegetables helps children receive a variety of benefits.

Fresh, local fruits and vegetables can add variety, nutrition, and excitement to menus while helping children develop healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

IDEAS FOR CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

Try these simple activities:

- Create a "Taste the Rainbow" week featuring a different color each day.
- Let children help wash produce for snacks or meals.
- Read books about gardening and farming.
- Display pictures of local fruits and vegetables that are in season.
- Encourage families to visit a farmers' market together.
- Take advantage of seasonal produce such as peaches, tomatoes, sweet corn, cucumbers, blueberries, and melons.



How to “Play Up” Produce on Your Menu

Children aren’t always keen to eat fruits and vegetables, even when they are fresh. To encourage them to choose produce more often at meal times, use the following strategies to “play up” the produce on your menu.

SERVE WHAT’S IN SEASON

Fresh produce picked during peak harvest has a superior taste. When you feature produce that’s grown locally (or regionally), be sure to highlight it for families! Consider sharing a fun nutrition fact on the menu, to create more excitement for children when it’s served.

EMPLOY CREATIVE NAMES

What snack sounds more interesting: “celery with peanut butter and raisins” or “Ants on a Log”? Just like adults, kids want food to be interesting and fun! Instead of a tossed salad, call it a “Superhero Green Salad” or rename blueberries to “Bluey’s Favorite Berry.” If you need inspiration, think of popular children’s characters or games.

THINK IN COLOR

Ever wonder why children’s toys feature bright, bold colors? Kids are drawn to them! Use this same strategy with produce. If you boil produce, consider blanching it afterwards to preserve the vibrant color. This can be done with most green vegetables and carrots. Pair bland colored foods like pasta noodles, bread or chicken with vibrantly colored produce for a more colorful plate.

SIZE MATTERS

Size can also make a difference. Large pieces of produce that require lots of chewing or peeling are unappealing to some children. Think how popular mandarin oranges are compared to a whole orange with its tough outer peel. If you have the time, slice or cut produce into smaller, easy to chew pieces. If you don’t have the time, look for precut options at the grocery store.

By using these four strategies to “play up” your produce, hopefully you’ll see more children eating fresh, delicious produce soon!



Sweet Potato Waffles with Apple Cinnamon Yogurt Dip

Experience the flavors of fall with this waffle recipe featuring sweet potatoes and apples!

Yield: 12 mini waffles + 1 cup dip

Ingredients:

Waffles:

- 1 cup sweet potatoes, mashed well
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup 2% milk
- 2 Tbsp melted butter, cooled
- 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 cup oat flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp nutmeg

Dip:

- 1/2 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1 tsp cinnamon

Instructions:

1. Mix together the wet and dry ingredients in separate bowls.
2. Pour the dry ingredients into the wet, mix well.
3. Portion 3/4 cup of waffle batter onto a waffle maker and cook.
4. While the waffles cook, mix together the ingredients for the dip.
5. Serve the cooked waffles with dip.

Optional: Swap oat flour for whole wheat or enriched wheat flour if desired.

Nutrition information: (serving size 3 mini waffles + 1/4 cup dip): 400 calories, 13 grams fat, 51 grams carbohydrate, 21 grams protein



September Sales!

September is a goldmine for childcare providers. It sits at the intersection of "back-to-school cleanup" and "end of summer clearance."



Back to School Clearance:

Crayons, markers, glue, construction paper, safety scissors, folders, etc., are often 50-75 percent off standard retail. Watch clearance endcaps as well at stores like Wal-Mart, Meijer, and Target.

Summer Clearance & Outdoor

Play: Plastic stepping stones, water tables, sand toys, sports balls, bubbles, sidewalk chalk, and even sunscreen are 70-80 percent off normal prices. It's also an excellent time to buy kids' summer clothes a size up to keep on hand as "accident replacements."

Labor Day Carryover on Large

Appliances: Refrigerators, dishwashers, washing machines, etc., are generally 25-50 percent off at this time because manufacturers debut their new models in the fall, forcing stores to unload current inventory.

Pro Tip on Hygiene Products:

Watch for sales on basic toiletries. Hand soap, bar soap, and tissues frequently go on sale as part of college dorm and classroom prep clearances. Grab them while they're cheap since they do not expire!

■ Source: joyfullythriving.com

An Apple a Day: A Smart Choice for Growing Kids

Crunchy, colorful, and naturally sweet, apples are one of the healthiest snacks you can offer children. They're also the **No.1 fruit eaten by children and teens in the United States**, making them a familiar favorite that fits easily into meals and snacks. Research shows apples account for nearly 20 percent of the fruit consumed by children, making them an excellent opportunity to build healthy eating habits.

Why Apples Are Nutritious

A medium apple is packed with nutrients that growing bodies need:

- Four grams of fiber to support healthy digestion and help children feel full longer.
- Vitamin C to support the immune system and promote healthy skin and tissue.
- Natural carbohydrates that provide steady energy for active play and learning.
- Potassium to help muscles, nerves, and the heart function properly.
- Antioxidants that help protect the body's cells from damage.

Benefits for Children

Adding apples to a child's diet can help:

- Support healthy digestion through fiber.
- Provide lasting energy without added sugars.
- Encourage healthy snacking instead of highly processed foods.
- Build lifelong fruit-eating habits that may reduce the risk of chronic diseases later in life.

Easy Ways to Serve Apples

Childcare providers can make apples fun and appealing by serving them:

- Sliced with sunflower seed butter (when allowed) or yogurt for dipping.
- Diced into oatmeal or whole-grain cereal.
- Mixed into salads with raisins and carrots.
- Baked with cinnamon as a naturally sweet dessert.
- Added to smoothies or homemade muffins.

Food Safety Tip: For younger children, always serve apples in thin slices or small pieces to reduce choking risk.

The Bottom Line

Apples are affordable, available year-round, and packed with nutrients that support children's growth and development. Whether served fresh, baked, or mixed into recipes, this versatile fruit is an easy way to help children enjoy more whole fruits every day.



Easy Pool Noodle Apple Stamps

MATERIALS

- Pool noodle
- Utility knife
- Red and green tempera paint
- Plates or trays for paint
- Cardstock or white paper
- Paintbrushes (optional)

STEP 1

Cut off a few rings from the pool noodle for the apple. Then cut a piece into the shape of a leaf and a thin sliver of foam to make the stem.

STEP 2

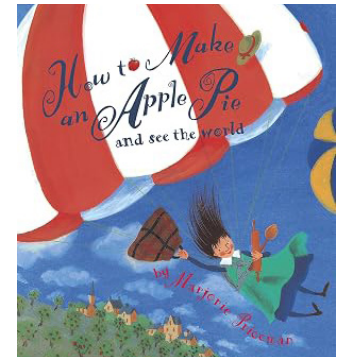
Dip the round pieces into the red or green paint. Stamp onto the paper.

STEP 3

Let dry.

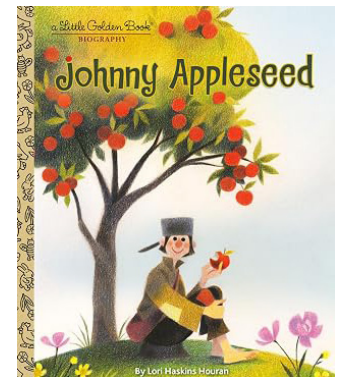


It's apple season! Let's check out a few books that feature our favorite crunchy and nutritious fruit !



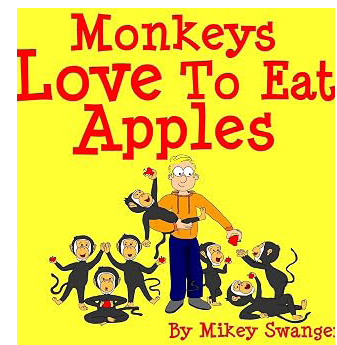
How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World

by Marjorie Priceman
(Author)



Johnny Appleseed: A Little Golden Book Biography

by Lori Haskins Houran
(Author), Genevieve Godbout
(Illustrator)



Monkeys Love To Eat Apples

by Mikey Swanger (Author,
Illustrator)

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

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS:

Why Drills and Written Plans Matter in Child Care

Emergencies can happen without warning. Fires, severe weather, power outages, medical emergencies, and security threats require quick action. In child care settings, children rely entirely on adults to keep them safe. That is why having a written emergency plan—and practicing it regularly through drills—is essential.



WHY PRACTICE MATTERS

Research shows that child care providers feel most prepared for emergencies when they have written plans and regularly practice procedures. One national study found that more than 90% of providers felt prepared for fire emergencies, but preparedness levels were lower for other types of emergencies, highlighting the need for ongoing training and drills.

Regular drills help:

- Reduce panic and confusion during an actual emergency.
- Familiarize staff and children with evacuation or shelter procedures.
- Identify weaknesses in emergency plans.
- Improve communication among staff.
- Ensure all children, including infants and those with special needs, can be safely accounted for.

REMEMBER

A drill is more than a licensing requirement: it is a safety tool. Young children may not understand what is happening during an emergency, but they can learn routines that help them respond calmly and safely. By planning ahead and practicing regularly, child care providers can create a safer environment for children, staff, and families.

KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EMERGENCY PLAN

Your written emergency plan should address:

- Fire evacuation procedures
- Severe weather and tornado sheltering
- Power outages
- Medical emergencies
- Natural disasters
- Lockdowns or intruder situations
- Family reunification procedures
- Emergency contact information

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE DRILLS

- Conduct drills at different times of day.
- Practice during various routines, such as outdoor play or naptime.
- Keep attendance records and account for every child.
- Review drill performance with staff afterward.
- Maintain a written log of all drills.



September 2026

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

1. Which nutrient in apples supports healthy digestion?

- a. Calcium
- b. Fiber
- c. Iron
- d. Vitamin D

2. Which vitamin is commonly found in vegetables?

- a. Vitamin A
- b. Vitamin D
- c. Vitamin B12
- d. Vitamin E

3. Regular emergency drills help reduce panic and keep order in a real emergency.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Whole apples have more fiber than apple juice.

- a. True
- b. False

5. Kids are not drawn to bright, bold colors.

- a. True
- b. False

6. What is a safe way to serve apples to young children?

- a. Whole
- b. In large chunks
- c. Thin slices or small pieces
- d. Frozen whole

7. Eating many colors of fruits and vegetables is healthy.

- a. True
- b. False

8. Farmers' markets do not support local farmers.

- a. True
- b. False

9. Apples are a good source of Vitamin C.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Why should childcare homes and centers practice emergency drills at different times?

- a. To meet licensing rules
- b. To prepare for different situations
- c. To save time
- d. To keep kids entertained

11. What is an advantage of shopping at a farmers' market?

- a. Produce is often fresher.
- b. Food travels farther.
- c. They only sell packaged goods.
- d. They only sell fruit.

12. September is a good time to take advantage of back-to-school clearance sales.

- a. True
- b. False

13. Large pieces of produce that require lots of chewing or peeling are unappealing to some children.

- a. True
- b. False

14. An emergency plan should include:

- a. Fire evacuation
- b. Family reunification
- c. Emergency contacts
- d. All of the above

15. Blanching certain vegetables after boiling can preserve their vibrant color.

- 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.