

A top-down photograph of a young child with brown hair in a ponytail, wearing a pink fuzzy sweater, sitting at a wooden table and painting. The child's hands are on a piece of paper with abstract pink and purple paint. Surrounding the child are various art supplies: a watercolor palette with colors like black, yellow, green, red, blue, and purple; several colored pencils; and other pieces of paper with colorful drawings, including one with a green tree and another with a yellow sun. The title 'potpourri' is overlaid in a large, white, outlined font.

potpourri

September 2025

Volume 51 | Issue 9



What's Inside?
National Mushroom Month
How to Store Your Harvest
Great Lakes Apple Crunch
Culture of Safety
& 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 time of fresh starts: new school routines, cooler days, and renewed energy for our mission. As we focus on child nutrition this fall, we are kicking off an important season of fundraising to sustain and grow our programs.

Let me share a few easy and impactful ways you can help us continue this mission.

Kroger Rewards: Did you know you can support us just by shopping for groceries? By enrolling in Kroger Community Rewards and selecting our organization, a portion of every purchase goes directly to help feed children in our communities. It's an effortless way to make a big impact over time. (In Illinois, Mariano's and Food 4 Less are owned by Kroger.)

Upcoming Silent Auction: We're thrilled to announce that our annual silent auction is right around the corner! This event is always a fun one offering a variety of items to bid on for a great cause. Keep an eye out for details on how you can participate and bid to support child nutrition.

Direct Donations: One of the simplest and most effective ways to help is by donating directly through our website. Every dollar you give goes straight to our programs, ensuring kids receive healthy food as well as thrive in safe environments.

This September, I invite you to join us in making a lasting difference. By supporting our fundraising efforts, you're not only helping to fill plates today; you're investing in healthier, brighter futures for children in our communities. Thank you for standing with us in this work.

Denise Meyer

Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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It's National Mushroom Month!

Here are some recipes from the Mushroom Council to try and enjoy!

Mushroom Egg Bites

12 bites
mushroomcouncil.com

Ingredients

Nonstick cooking spray
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
8 ounces crimini mushrooms, sliced
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
3/4 cup diced ham
3/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
2 tablespoons minced chives
9 large eggs
1/3 cup whole milk

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 12-cup muffin tin with nonstick cooking spray.
- Melt butter in a 10-inch skillet over medium-high. Add mushrooms; cook until lightly browned, about 5 minutes. Season with pepper and 1/4 teaspoon salt, remove pan from heat. Transfer to plate to cool slightly. Set aside 12 mushroom slices to top each egg bite.
- Combine remaining cooked mushrooms, ham, cheese and chives between muffin cups, dividing evenly.
- In a large bowl, whisk eggs, milk and remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt until frothy. Ladle egg mixture into muffin cups. Top each with one of the reserved mushroom slices.
- Bake in the center of the oven until the eggs are just set, about 25 minutes. Let cool for 5 minutes, then run a knife

around edges of each muffin cup and tip the pan to release the bites.

- Serve warm or cool to room temperature. Egg bites will keep in refrigerator for up to 3 days; reheat before serving.

✦ **Vegetable** ✦ **Meat/Meat Alternate**

Blended Meatballs

20 meatballs
mushroomcouncil.com

Ingredients

1/2 pound mushrooms, finely chopped
1 pound ground beef
1 teaspoon Italian seasoning
1 small onion, finely diced
1 clove minced garlic
1/2 cup whole-grain bread crumbs
1 egg

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400°F. Line baking tray with foil and spray with cooking spray.
- Place the mushrooms in a food processor fitted with a metal blade. Pulse until finely chopped.
- In a skillet over medium heat cook chopped mushrooms until brown and most moisture has been released, about 3-5 minutes. Set aside to let cool.
- In a large bowl combine cooled mushrooms, beef, seasoning, onion, garlic breadcrumbs and egg; mix all ingredients until incorporated. Shape mixture into 1½ inch meatballs. Place 1 inch apart on pan.
- Bake 20-25 minutes or until meatballs reach 160°F, are cooked through and center is no longer pink.

✦ **Meat/Meat Alternate** ✦ **Vegetable**

Mushroom Breakfast Burritos

8 servings
mushroomcouncil.com

Ingredients

20 medium crimini mushrooms, cleaned and stems removed
1 tablespoon olive oil
3 tablespoons minced yellow onion
2 teaspoons taco seasoning
3 ounces spinach
5 eggs
1 tablespoon butter
queso fresco
4 burrito sized whole-grain tortillas
Favorite salsa

Instructions

- Place the mushrooms into a food processor and finely chop.
- Heat the olive oil in a medium sized frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion, stir and cook until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the mushrooms, and cook for 5 minutes over medium low heat. Stir in the taco seasoning, then add the spinach. Cook until lightly wilted, about 1 minute. Place the mixture into a bowl and set aside.
- Wipe out the frying pan.
- Whisk the eggs in a small bowl. Heat 1 tablespoon of butter in the frying pan that you used for cooking the mushrooms. Add the eggs, and cook until soft set.
- Heat the tortillas. Place a tortilla on a plate, add some of the mushroom mixture, the eggs and a sprinkle of queso fresco. Wrap up burrito style. Cut in half.

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

Meals & Menus

CACFP Requirements



CACFP		MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT**	1. WG Raisin Toast	1. Cottage Cheese	1. Oatmeal	1. Scrambled Egg/WG Toast	1. WG Muffin
	2. FT OR VG	2. Orange Wedges	2. Pineapple Tidbits	2. Melon Cubes	2. Banana	2. Applesauce
	3. MK	3. Milk	3. Milk	3. Milk	3. Milk	3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT	1. Turkey Chili	1. Baked Chicken Thigh	1. Lentil & Vegetable Stew	1. Tuna/Corn Salad	1. Baked Meatballs
	2. GN/BP	2. Corn Muffin	2. Couscous	2. WG Roll	2. WG Bread	2. WG Spaghetti
	3. VG	3. Tomatoes, Peppers in Chili	3. Roasted Carrots	3. Stew Vegetables	3. Sliced Cucumbers	3. Steamed Green Beans
	4. FT OR VG	4. Sliced Kiwi	4. Diced Peaches	4. Apple Slices	4. Watermelon	4. Strawberries
	5. MK	5. Milk	5. Milk	5. Milk	5. Milk	5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT	1. String Cheese***	1. Hummus	1. Nut/Seed Butter	1. Black Bean Dip	1. Yogurt
	2. GN/BP	2. WG Pita	2. WG Toast	2. Brown Rice Cakes	2. Corn Tortilla Chips	2. WG Bagel Half
	3. FT	3. Pears	3. Blackberries***	3. Orange Segments	3. Mixed Berries***	3. Blueberries***
	4. VG	4. Bell Pepper Sticks***	4. Baby Carrots***	4. Steamed Snap Peas	4. Red Bell Pepper***	4. Cucumber
	5. MK	5. Milk	5. Milk	5. Milk	5. Milk	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 2025 final claim due: **September 22, 2025 (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 mark children out of school and to call in daycare closures.
- Send enrollments to: **Michigan:** mifrontdesk@acd kids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543
Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acd kids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

September is Mushroom Month!

A Sustainable Nutritional Powerhouse!

If you're new to mushrooms, they can seem slightly mysterious at the start. Unlike other residents of the produce aisle, they're not peeled, shucked or cored so what exactly do you do with them? How do you pick the right ones? How do you cook them? Read on to get started with this nutritional wonder.

Choosing Your Mushrooms

- Select mushrooms that are firm with a fresh, smooth appearance.
- The surfaces of the mushroom should be dry, but not dried out, and appear plump.
- A closed veil under the mushroom cap indicates a delicate flavor, while an open veil and exposed gills mean a richer flavor.



Preparing and Storing Mushrooms

- Mushrooms are a pretty low-maintenance food. Once you get them home from the grocery store, it's best to store them in their original packaging or a porous paper bag in the refrigerator for up to a week.
- When you're ready to cook them, just brush off the debris with a damp paper towel or rinse them briefly with water and pat dry with a paper towel.

Key Nutrients

Mushrooms have important nutrients that support the healthy function of your body, such as:

- **Selenium:** An important nutrient for healthy immune function, selenium works as an antioxidant to protect body cells from damage that might lead to heart disease, some cancers and other diseases of aging. Mushrooms are the leading source of the antioxidant selenium in your produce aisle, and they also provide ergothioneine, another naturally occurring antioxidant.
- **B Vitamins:** Mushrooms provide the B vitamins riboflavin and niacin, which help to provide energy by breaking down proteins, fats and carbohydrates, and also support healthy function of the nervous and immune systems.
- **Vitamin D:** Many people fall short on their vitamin D intake, but mushrooms that have been exposed to UV light can support by converting ergosterol to vitamin D, just like our skin makes vitamin D from sunlight. No other item in the produce aisle can do that!
- **Copper:** Helps make red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body. Copper also aids in keeping bones and nerves healthy.
- **Potassium:** Assists in controlling blood pressure and plays a role in making sure nerves and muscles, including the heart, function properly.

Small Footprint, Big Impact

Mushrooms are grown using minimal resources, so growers are able to produce millions of pounds of mushrooms on just a few acres of land. Soil used to produce mushrooms is made of pasteurized composted materials transforming what would be waste into nutrient-rich food. Producing one pound of mushrooms:

- Requires only 1.8 gallons of water
- Generates only 0.7 lbs of CO2 equivalents
- Requires only 1.0 KWH of electricity

Once mushrooms are harvested, this soil can be repurposed in multiple ways, e.g., potting soil. This full-circle approach minimizes waste, enhances soil health and contributes to a more sustainable food system.

You can find loads of information at mushroomcouncil.com from mushroom types to hundreds of recipes! Welcome to mushrooms, the powerful food that can be incorporated into just about any meal!

■ Source: mushroomcouncil.com ■ Image: Adobe Stock Image

Harvest Time!

What to Do with All That Food?

Whether you have a garden or just take advantage of the abundance of fruit and vegetables in late summer/early fall, storing your harvest properly is essential! With the right techniques, you can extend the life of your produce, reduce food waste, and enjoy garden fresh flavors long after the growing season ends!

Store these fruits in the refrigerator:

Apples (to keep them more than 7 days), Blackberries, Blueberries, Grapes, Strawberries

Store these vegetables in the refrigerator:

Green Beans, Broccoli, Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Greens (collards, mustard, turnip), Summer Squash, Sweet Corn, Cucumbers, Lemons, Peppers

Keep these fruits on the counter until they're ripe, then store in the refrigerator:

Peaches (until soft to touch and fragrant), Pears (until soft to touch), Plums (until soft to touch and fragrant), Persimmons, Melons (until ripe)

Keep these on the kitchen counter:

Apples (no longer than 7 days), Bananas, Eggplant, Oranges, Melons, Tomatoes, Winter Squashes

Keep the following in the pantry, a cabinet or box, away from light where air can get to them:

Garlic, Onions, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes

How to Freeze Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Freezing Vegetables:

To freeze many vegetables, you have to blanch them first.

1. Use one gallon of water for every pound of vegetables.
2. Pour vegetables in a pot of boiling water.
3. Cover with a lid.
4. Bring to boil again.
5. Let vegetables cook for a few minutes.
 - Corn, small ears—7 minutes
 - Whole kernel corn—4 minutes
 - Okra—3-4 minutes
 - Green Beans—3 minutes
 - Summer squash—3 minutes
6. Remove pot from heat.
7. Quickly place vegetables into large bowl filled with ice water.
8. Allow vegetables to drain and store in heavy weight, air tight containers or freezer bags.
9. Fill containers to top and remove as much air as possible from freezer bags.

Freezing Fruit:

Always rinse fruit and allow time to dry before freezing.

Apples and Pears

- Core, peel and cut in quarters or slices.
- Toss in lemon juice diluted with water (1 tbsp lemon juice in 1 cup water) so they don't brown.

Blueberries and Blackberries

- Leave whole for freezing.

Melons

- Cut in cubes or slices.

Peaches

- Peel, take out pits, and slice.

Strawberries

- Cut off green caps, cut in halves or quarters.

Bananas

- Cover baking sheet with wax paper or foil.
- Spread fruit slices in single layer on baking sheet.
- Place flat in freezer for several hours.
- Place frozen slices in freezer bags with label and date. Press out as much air as possible to seal.



■ **Source:** happyhealthy.extension.msstate.edu

■ **Images:** Adobe Stock Images

Three-Ingredient Cinnamon Apples

Made with just apples, water, and cinnamon for a delicious and healthy side or snack!

Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients:

2 apples

2-3 tbsp water

1/2 tsp cinnamon (can add more or less depending on your preference)

OPTIONAL: superseed boosters like milled chia or milled flax!

Instructions:

1. Peel & dice apple (you'll cut differently based on your little one's age here - you can also try longer strips so they're easier to grip)
2. Boil water in pot/pan, toss apples with cinnamon in a separate bowl, then add to steamer basket in the pot/pan over the boiling water (see notes on how to make these if you don't have a steamer basket).
3. Cover pot or pan until water is boiling, then reduce heat to low.
4. Steam the apples on low heat for 15 minutes, or until they are easily pierced with a fork.
5. Let them cool before storing in the fridge. Serve chilled or warmed!

Safety notes: *Keep children away from the hot stove.*

🍏 **Fruit**

How do I pick the best apples?

Which apples bake best? For the best pies, crisps, and other baked treats, apples need to be firm enough to hold their own during the cooking process. We call these apples "baking apples" and to namedrop, they include Braeburn, Cortland, Honey Gold, Jonathan, Fuji, Gala, Granny Smith, Haralson, and Newtown Pippin. Try mixing a variety of baking apples to take the flavor of your pie to whole new depths.

Use fewer firm apples for cakes and sauces. Red Delicious, McIntosh, and Golden Delicious apples tend to break down faster when they bake, making them perfect for your alternative treats.

How do I know what apple to choose? The best apples are the ones that are in season. Out-of-season apples have been kept in storage, which affects their freshness, crispness, and juiciness.

- Look for firm apples with no bruises or bug holes.
- Unripe apples will be overly hard and too green or yellow for their variety.
- Fresh, ripe apples will have a strong apple aroma.

■ Source: mytoddlerkitchen.com | bettycrocker.com ■ Image: bettycrocker.com



FORM A CO-OP!

A different way to save money is to form a bulk meal co-op!

Team up with nearby childcare providers to form a small buying co-op. Pool your grocery orders for staples like milk, grains, produce, and snacks. Buy in bulk from wholesalers or local farms to get lower prices. Split the cost and divide the goods fairly. This saves money, cuts down trips to the store, and reduces packaging waste.

You can even plan similar weekly menus so everyone uses ingredients efficiently without waste. A group chat or shared spreadsheet (free on Google Sheets) can keep orders organized.

It's an easy way to work together and stretch your food budget further!



You can expand the co-op to share other supplies like cleaning products or art materials, buying large quantities at wholesale rates. Consider rotating pickup duties or deliveries to save time.

Building these partnerships strengthens connections with fellow providers, creates a support network, and makes running your program a little easier and more affordable for everyone involved.

■ Source: childcare.extension.org

Celebrating the Great Lakes Apple Crunch!

The Great Lakes Apple Crunch is a vibrant annual event celebrated across schools, communities, and organizations in the Great Lakes Region. The purpose is to promote local agriculture, healthy eating habits, and community engagement through the simple (and yummy!) act of biting into an apple. This year's crunch kicks off in Illinois on October 9, in Michigan on October 16, and is celebrated all through the month of October.

History

Originating in Michigan in 2013, the event was inspired by farm-to-school efforts to connect students with fresh, locally grown produce. It quickly gained popularity spreading to the neighborhood states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and eventually across the entire Great Lakes region. The idea is to synchronize a massive, simultaneous crunch into apples as a symbolic gesture of support for local farmers and healthy eating.

Participants are encouraged to host apple-themed activities focused on local agriculture, nutrition, etc. Like past years, the crunch emphasizes buying locally grown apples to boost farm-to-school programs, supporting regional producers, and shortening food supply chains.

How to Take Part

Register your school, childcare program, etc.

[Register Here for Michigan](#)

[Register Here for Illinois](#)

Source local apples - ideally from local orchards.

Plan Crunch Day activities. Schedule your main crunch for noon on your state's date! Add apple tastings, farm visits, and lessons in art, STEM, etc.

Share your crunch! Post photos and videos of the crunch! It's a fun day for both providers and kids!



Apple Printing

- Apples
- Knife
- Washable paint
- Glue
- Googly eyes
- Easel paper

STEP 1

Cut the apples in half for the kids to use. Cut smoothly so the stamps are as flat as possible on the paper.

STEP 2

Start by creating a pattern on the paper. The kids should continue the pattern by dipping the apple in the paint. In the end, let the kids add googly eyes to each of the apples! They can glue them on, or if the paint is wet, they can stick them on the paint!



Cotton Ball Apple Tree

- Cardstock paper
- Construction paper
- Washable paint
- Cotton balls
- Clothespins
- Scissors
- Glue stick

STEP 1

Draw and cut out the trunk of your tree and paste it onto the paper.

STEP 2

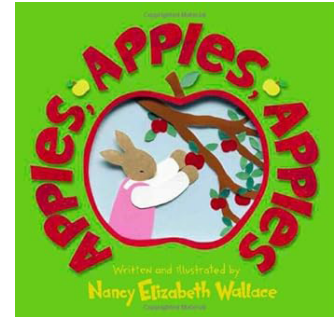
Attach a clothespin to a cotton ball and have the kids dip it into green paint.

They will make prints all around the trunk to look like a tree.

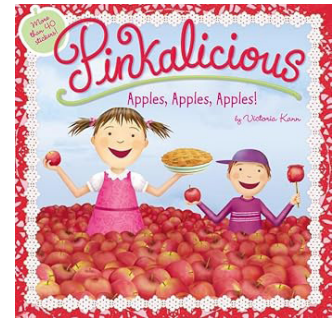
Then, have the kids use their fingers to create apples for the tree. They will dip their finger in red paint and make apples all throughout the tree. They can also make some at the bottom of the page for apples that fall off the tree.



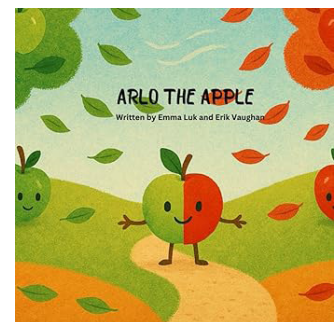
In honor of this month's Great Apple Crunch, let's take a look at some fun books about apples!



Apples, Apples, Apples
by Nancy Elizabeth Wallace
(Author, Illustrator)



Pinkalicious: Apples, Apples, Apples!
by Victoria Kann (Author, Illustrator)



Arlo the Apple
by Emma Luk (Author), Erik Vaughan (Author)

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

Building a Culture of Safety in Childcare Settings

Keeping children safe is at the heart of what you do as childcare providers. But safety isn't just about following rules or completing checklists. It's about creating a shared culture where everyone cares about keeping kids protected, every single day.

Policies

A strong safety culture starts with clear, easy-to-understand policies. Make sure all staff know not just what to do, but why it matters. When everyone understands the reasons behind safe practices—like careful handwashing, disinfecting toys, or close playground supervision—they're much more likely to follow them thoughtfully and consistently.

Communication

Open communication is really important. Encourage your team to speak up if they see something that doesn't seem right, even if it feels small. Regular staff chats about safety can be a great way to share ideas, review any incidents, and think of ways to do even better. The more comfortable people feel talking about safety, the quicker you can solve problems.



Learning by Example

Children also learn by watching us! When caregivers show safe habits—like storing cleaning supplies out of reach or using child-friendly furniture carefully—kids pick up on those good habits, too.

Be Prepared

It's also a good idea to be ready for emergencies. Practice drills for fires, weather events, or lockdowns so everyone knows exactly what to do. Check that first aid kits are stocked and easy to find. These steps help everyone feel calmer and more prepared if something unexpected happens.

Keep an eye on your environment each day. Look around for anything that might cause a fall, broken toys, or loose playground equipment. Fix problems quickly or make sure they're clearly marked until you can.

Share with Families

Finally, bring families into the conversation! Share your safety policies and encourage parents to tell you about any allergies, medical needs, or changes that could affect their child. When families and caregivers work together, kids get the safest, most caring environment possible.

By building a true culture of safety, you're not just meeting requirements—you're showing families they can trust you, supporting your team, and giving children a wonderful place to learn and grow.

September 2025

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

1. Choose mushrooms that are:

- a. Dry and bumpy
- b. Smooth and plump
- c. Wet and soft
- d. None of the above

2. Which fruits should you leave whole for freezing?

- a. Melons
- b. Blueberries
- c. Apples
- d. Peaches

3. Sweet corn, cucumbers, and green beans should be stored on the counter.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Selenium is an important nutrient for immune function.

- a. True
- b. False

5. The Great Apple Crunch emphasizes ____.

- a. Buying local produce
- b. Shortening food supply chains
- c. Boosting farm-to-school programs
- d. All of the above

6. Before you freeze many vegetables, you need to blanch them first.

- a. True
- b. False

7. The best apples are the ones that are in season.

- a. True
- b. False

8. Producing one pound of mushrooms requires ____ of water.

- a. 1.2 gallons
- b. 1.8 gallons
- c. 2.3 gallons
- d. 2.7 gallons

9. Fresh, ripe apples will have a strong apple aroma.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Which produce should be stored where light cannot get to them.

- a. Onions
- b. Peaches
- c. Strawberries
- d. Okra

11. A closed veil under the mushroom cap indicates ____?

- a. Strong flavor
- b. Rot
- c. Delicate flavor
- d. Region where it was grown

12. First aid kits should be easy to find.

- a. True
- b. False

13. Once mushrooms are harvested, the soil cannot be repurposed.

- a. True
- b. False

14. It's best to store mushrooms ____.

- a. In a dark place
- b. In the freezer
- c. Outside
- d. In the original packaging

15. A strong safety culture starts with clear policies.

- 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.