



# Fuel Their Minds

Ideas for Better Eating and Active Play with Young Children



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## Winter Blues!

The cold weather is here and children are beginning to come down with the sniffles.

Each child may come down with 3 to 10 colds per year but it is 99% certain that each child will catch a cold at least once per year. **There are over 200 different strains of cold viruses!** It's no wonder children get the sniffles so often.

Symptoms of a common cold include a runny nose, sore throat, sneezing, coughing, nasal congestion, headache and possibly a fever.

The common cold may be contagious for up to 5 days. This is why sanitizing and cleaning should be a high priority in the classroom.

Cold germs can live

Adapted from Parents.com



**To get rid of germs have the children sing "Happy Birthday" twice while washing their hands with soap and warm water.**

up to 2 days on toys, door handles, faucets, pencils and pens. Make sure your classroom washes their hands after sneezing, coughing, going to the restroom and coming in from recess. It is a great way to reduce the number of germs in the classroom. Follow this with a weekly disinfecting spray over all surfaces, hot water washing of all naptime linens, and a few hours of circulating fresh air to beat the odds.

Improve your immunity by drinking a lot of water, eating extra fruits and vegetables, getting enough sleep, and making time to exercise and be active.

Ask for our creative hand washing classroom activity kit. It will help teach your students how to correctly wash their hands and be germ free!

## Let's Get Moving

Don't let the cold weather slow you down! Exercise is just as important in the winter as it is in the spring and summer. Children still need to have at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day.

Short on ideas? Try some of these fun indoor activities:

- ◆ *Act out a story.* Read a fun book together while moving around as if everyone is the main character. If the book is about a goat who likes to take hikes through the forest, let the children pretend they are walking through the forest.

- ◆ *Create an obstacle course.* Children love to crawl through boxes, step through hula-hoops, or hop over jump ropes.
- ◆ *Turn on that music!* Put a fun CD or cassette into the boom box and let the kids shake and wiggle. Using music is a great way to get the children moving!!



While doing all of these fun physical activities, make sure the children are drinking lots of water to replace any lost fluids.

Adapted from Nibbles for Health 38: Nutrition Newsletter, USDA

## What You Need to Know about Food Allergies

Food allergies have recently gained more public attention. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has come up with a list of 8 major food allergens.

When feeding children, make sure your school provides non-allergy foods. According to the FDA, more than 160 foods can cause allergic reactions in those who have food allergies.

**Food allergies affect 2% of adults and 5% of infants and young children.** Foods you should watch carefully with young children are:

Milk

Eggs

Tree Nuts (almonds, walnuts, pecans)

Peanuts

Wheat

Soybeans

Every year, food allergies cause a lot of sickness. Teachers should be informed of food allergies children may have to avoid causing sickness.

To reduce the number of allergic reactions in the classroom, make sure cooks are reading food labels carefully. Cooks need to inform teachers if they use ingredients from the list of major food allergens. This way teachers can avoid serving certain foods to those children who have food allergies.

(A full list of all eight major foods identified by law as allergy causing can be found at [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov). There are food allergen handouts available in English and Spanish for print.)



Tip: Peanuts and tree nuts should not be served to children 4 years of age and younger. In their whole form they are choking hazards. It is recommended to delay the introduction of these foods to children in any form, including peanut butter, so that they do not create an allergy. Strawberries and shellfish should also be delayed.

## Let's Make Play Dough

Children love playing with dough! They get to squish, squeeze, flatten it and even make shapes and animals with it. Let the children be creative and see what fun activities can come out of having play dough! Here is an easy-to-follow recipe for you to try!

- ◆ 2 cups flour
- ◆ 1 cup salt
- ◆ 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- ◆ 2 cups water
- ◆ 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- ◆ Food coloring



In a medium saucepan, heat up water. Add food coloring then mix all the ingredients together. Cook over medium heat, stirring until it forms a ball. Let the dough cool then knead it softly by pressing, folding and stretching. Let the children feel the dough when it is warm, then when it has cooled off. You can then review with them how the dough changes temperatures. Finally, let the children play with the dough for a fun group activity or you can let each child take some home to show their parents. The dough can be stored in an airtight container to make it last longer.

## Sugar Q's and A's

Choosing healthy snack foods can be difficult if you aren't sure what the ingredients are that may be listed on each food package. Limiting extra fat and sugar from children's food intake should be a high priority when serving meals. Choose foods that use whole grains, real fruits or vegetables, and are low in sugar.

How do you know if a food has added sugars? Look at the ingredients list. Sugar may be listed in many ways such as:

- ◆ Corn syrup
- ◆ Honey
- ◆ Corn sweeteners
- ◆ Molasses
- ◆ High fructose corn syrup
- ◆ Natural sweeteners
- ◆ Invert sugar
- ◆ Malto-dextrin
- ◆ Any ingredient whose name ends in *-ose* (such as *dextrose, lactose, and fructose*)



Food labels may hide sugar by listing it as its chemical form such as dextrose, sucrose, etc. Be aware of the many forms sugar comes in and be ready to give up or limit that favorite classroom snack for something a little healthier.

\*Adapted from The Lunch Box Series, University of California, Publication 8108

## Tangerine Carrot Cupcakes

California is known for its variety of citrus fruits so why not take advantage of fresh seasonal produce! Reward your students this winter with a tasty tangerine-carrot treat. The vitamin C in these just might help keep a few colds away.

Don't let your students sit on the sidelines! Let them get involved by making fresh tangerine juice using fruit juicers and measuring cups. Now you have fresh tangerine juice to use for the recipe! Recipe makes about 24 cupcakes

### Ingredients

- ◆ 3 Cups Flour
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoons Baking Powder
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoons Baking Soda
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon Salt
- ◆ 1 1/2 teaspoons Cinnamon
- ◆ 4 Eggs
- ◆ 2 cups Sugar
- ◆ 1/2 cup Canola Oil
- ◆ 1/2 cup Applesauce
- ◆ 1 teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- ◆ 3 tablespoons Tangerine Juice
- ◆ Grated Zest of 2 Tangerines
- ◆ 2 cups Carrots, finely grated



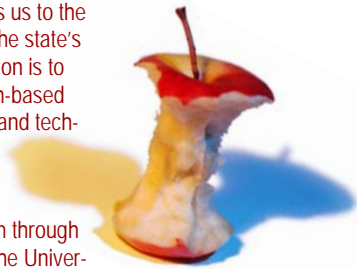
### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.
2. In a medium bowl, mix flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon.
3. In a large bowl, beat eggs and sugar until thick and light colored. Add oil and applesauce and beat well for 3-4 minutes. Add vanilla extract, tangerine juice, and zest. Mix well. Use a wooden spoon to slowly add in the grated carrots.
4. Mix all ingredients together. Place paper cupcake liners into a muffin pan and fill each one with 90% batter.
5. Bake for 15 minutes or until a toothpick poked in the middle of a cupcake comes out clean. Allow to cool then enjoy!



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## Activity Kits Free From the University of California

The University of California has prepared activity kits to help you teach nutrition and physical activity concepts to your young children, while integrating math, language and science. **These lessons come "ready-made"** with all of the materials you need to teach a fun and interactive lesson with your preschoolers or kindergarteners. The curriculum was developed by the University of California or Scholastic, Inc.

**We will bring the materials to your site, free of charge,** and we can even provide your staff with trainings and additional resources to increase their confidence in these topics. We can also plan classroom, food-themed parties, special events, and other fun sessions.

If you are interested in signing up to receive these materials, please contact us.

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