

# Alphabet Soup

February, 2009

*Nourishing ways to fill children's days.*

**broadreach**  
family & community services

## Six Tips to Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

### See inside for:

- \* Love Your Children Daily Checklist
- \* Heart-Healthy Recipes
- \* Promote Literacy at Home
- \* And more!



1. **Start the day with breakfast.** Easy to prepare breakfasts include cold cereal with fruit and low-fat milk, oatmeal, whole-wheat toast with peanut butter, yogurt with fruit, whole-grain waffles or even last night's pizza!

2. **Get Moving!** Look for little ways to increase physical activity in your family's daily routine, such as choosing a parking spot at the edge of the supermarket lot rather than as close as possible.

3. **Snack smart.** Snacks are a great way to refuel. Offer your family snacks from different

food groups - a glass of low-fat milk and a few graham crackers, an apple or celery sticks with peanut butter and raisins, or some dry cereal.

4. **Balance your food choices - don't eat too much of any one thing.** You don't have to give up foods like hamburgers, french fries and ice cream to eat healthy. You just have to be smart about how often and how much of them you eat. And balance them out with lots of healthy choices, such as fruit, whole grains and vegetables.

5. **Get fit with friends or family.** Being active is much more fun with friends or family. Include some vigorous activities each week- sledding is a favorite winter activity for many Maine families and really gets hearts and lungs working. And don't forget to invite friends and family along!



6. **Eat more grains, fruits and vegetables.** These foods give you carbohydrates for energy, plus vitamins, minerals and fiber. Besides, they taste good! Offer whole-wheat and whole-grain options of bread, english muffins, bagels and pita. Spaghetti and oatmeal are also in the grain group. Bananas, apples and melons are some great tasting fruits. While grocery shopping with your child, let your child choose a new fruit or vegetable for the family to try. Place a dish of cut-up raw fruits and vegetables on the kitchen table for family members to nibble on as they wait for dinner to be ready.

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## Heart-Healthy Family-Friendly Recipes

### Easy Bacon Broccoli Salad

- 1 lb of broccoli, washed
- 1/4 lb of bacon
- 1/4 c. of sunflower seeds
- 1/2 c mayonnaise mixed with 2 tsp vinegar

Cut broccoli florets into small pieces. Steam on stove top or microwave until dark green and allow to cool. Place in a medium bowl. Cook bacon, cool and crumble over cooked broccoli. Add sunflower seeds. Pour dressing over and serve! Makes a great pot-luck dish.



### Chicken Rice Skillet

**Serves:** 8 (that means enough for leftovers!)

**Cooking Time:** 20 minutes

#### Ingredients

- 1 Tbs. Canola oil
- 1 lb. chicken breasts, boneless and skinless, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 1/2 cup low-sodium barbecue sauce
- 1 cup water
- 1 10-oz. package frozen corn, thawed
- 1 small green pepper, chopped
- 1 small red pepper, chopped
- 1 cup instant rice (Note: instant brown rice will have a different cooking time, so adjust accordingly.)

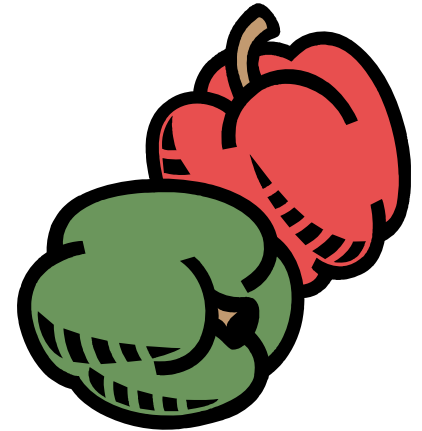
#### Instructions:

**Step 1.** In a large skillet, heat oil. Add chicken and brown for 4 to 5 minutes over medium flame, turning often. Add barbecue sauce, water, corn, and peppers. Bring to boil, then reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 5 minutes.

**Step 2.** Remove from heat and stir in instant rice. Cover and let stand for 5 to 7 minutes, until rice is fluffy.

#### Each serving

277 calories, 21 g protein, 33 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat (1 g saturated), 2 g fiber, 48 mg cholesterol, 23 mg calcium, 2 mg iron, 364 mg sodium



# Leap into Learning!



*Supporting Preschoolers in Reading and Language Success (SPIRALS) is a special initiative that is enhancing learning for preschoolers and their teachers in early childhood classrooms across Waldo and Knox County!*

## Exploring Snow with Preschoolers

### Create Snow Drawings

Using sticks, pine boughs or their fingers, have your child draw pictures on the snow. Hint: Use food coloring to get the drawings to show up in the snow.

Take pictures of their drawing to use as greeting cards for friends and family.

### Look at Snowflakes

Let snow flakes fall onto dark construction paper and have your child take a close look at snowflakes through a magnifying glass. Talk with your child about the uniqueness of each snowflake. Make up stories about the different snowflakes. Ex- Oh no...Here comes Suzy the snowflake! Where will Suzy land? I predict Suzy will land on our green truck.

### Experiment with Snow

- Watch snow melt when table salt is added.
- Discover which toys sit on top of the snow and which ones are heavy enough to sink down.
- See how long it takes for different sized snowballs to melt in the sun.
- Find surfaces that the snow will stick to.



### Paint the Snow and Ice

Using food coloring added to water, let your child paint the snow and ice with brushes or spray bottles. Let them see what happens when two different colors are mixed on the snow's surface and how the colors blend when the ice melts. Help your child paint their name in the snow. Talk about the letters. Ex- Your name starts with S. What else starts with S? Snow, sun, Saturday...

Resource: [www.suite101.com](http://www.suite101.com) (Author: Angela Krueger)

## Making Your Home a Place for Readers



### Here are several tips to help parents of young children promote literacy at home.

- Choose a quiet time for reading to your child, such as before a nap or bedtime, or after dinner.
- Choose a special place for family reading, such as a comfortable chair or pillows piled on the floor.
- Let your child select the book for you to read aloud.
- Hold the book so that she or he can see the pictures. If possible, also let her or him turn the pages.
- Take time to look at and talk about the pictures. **Don't** just read the story: talk about it. Let your child point out letters, shapes, colors, and animals.
- Understand that reading **begins at home**. Children read their environments, so make your home a print- rich environment.
- **Read!** Show your children that reading is important to you.
- Invite your child to read to you. If they are a pre-reader, they will often interpret their own story using illustrations and imagination.
- Make lists, lots of them. Make them for grocery shopping, books to buy and things to take on trips.
- Read aloud to your child every day.

## Checklist for Supporting Loving Homes

### A Parent's Daily Love Checklist

- Tell each child, "I love you."
- Communicate love through gentle touch.
- Talk up what your children do that's right.
- Notice small steps toward competency.
- Ask your children their opinion.
- Answer their questions patiently and thoroughly.

