

November, 2009

# Alphabet Soup

*Nourishing ways to fill children's days.*

**broadreach**  
family & community services

## *Enjoying the Family Meal*

### See inside for:

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- \* And More!



Most people recognize the worth of making a special holiday turkey with all the fixings for the holidays, however family meals are important the rest of the year too!

Families create close bonds and lifelong memories around the dinner table.

Family meals can teach your child about healthful eating. Family meals create time for parents and children to talk about what's important to them. Studies show that the more often kids eat dinner with their families, the less likely they are to smoke, drink or use illegal drugs.

Try these easy ways to make family meals a pleasant part of your family routine.

- Set a regular family mealtime. Regular mealtimes give your child a better chance to eat a variety of foods to get the right amount to grow, stay healthy and keep a healthy weight.
- Show that family meals are important. During mealtime, turn off the TV. Let the answering machine take your phone calls. Make mealtime a time for your family to be together and share.
- Eat around a table. It's easier to talk and listen to your family when you face each other.
- Make it simple, make it quick! Spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the family table. Simple meals, even cold sandwiches, taste as good as meals that take more work. You can make any meal feel special if you all feel relaxed and mealtime is filled with caring and laughter. Simplify- to take care of you too!
- Enjoy meal talk. Make easy conversation- no nagging or complaining. Talk so everyone can be a "star" at mealtime. Your child will learn by feeling included.

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# Family Meal Suggestions for November

## “I Can Help”

Helping with the family meals makes your child feel important. You get time together too! Your child learns even when tasks aren't perfectly done. So even if you work faster alone, ask your child to help.

Here are some ideas to get your child started.

- Choose flowers for the table.
- Color a paper place mat.
- Help with setting the table.
- Help with simple kitchen tasks, like making the salad or putting bread in a basket.
- Pour the milk, perhaps with your help.
- Clear and clean the table.



## Two Fast and Tasty Dinner Recipes for Busy Families

### English Muffin Pizza

Top an English muffin half with canned tomato sauce, chopped broccoli and shredded cheese. Heat in a toaster oven or broiler. Serve with carrot sticks, apple wedges and a glass of milk.

### Fiesta Chicken Salad

- 1/2 tsp. fresh garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 to 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup mild or medium salsa
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1/2 cup finely diced red bell pepper
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 2/3 cup small, pitted black ripe olives
- 4 cups cooked chicken, diced

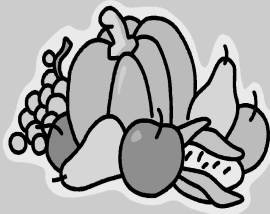


In a large bowl, combine the garlic, olive oil, lemon juice, salsa, salt and pepper. Stir in the bell pepper, corn and olives. Add the chicken and mix.

## Nourish and Warm your body with Ravioli Soup

### Ingredients

- 1/2 pound ground turkey breast
- 1 tablespoon Italian-seasoned bread crumbs
- 1/8 teaspoon ground sage
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) Italian-seasoned diced tomatoes
- 1 can (8 ounces) no-salt-added tomato sauce
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup frozen green beans, thawed
- 1 package (7 ounces) refrigerated mini three-cheese ravioli



### Directions

1. Heat oven to 400°F. Line a baking pan with aluminum foil and coat with vegetable cooking spray. Combine turkey, bread crumbs, sage, pepper and salt in a bowl; shape into 8-10 small meatballs. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until browned.
2. In a 3-quart saucepan combine broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, celery, and carrots. Boil, then reduce heat. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Cut up beans and stir into broth with ravioli. Cook, covered, 5 minutes more. Add meatballs and serve.



## More Fall Fun

### Pictures We Paint in Our Mind

As parents and teachers, we strive to provide many learning opportunities to support each child to be unique, true individuals and yet still feel a part of the family and classroom. Here is an art activity that you can do with your child and display for all to see.



**Materials you will need: crayons, paper.**

- Ask your child to close their eyes and think of something they think is beautiful. (This might be the colorful autumn leaves on the tree, a flower, the family pet.)
- Ask your child to open their eyes and find a crayon which is the color of the beautiful thing they thought of. Ask your child to make some marks on the paper with the crayon.
- Repeat the visualizing, finding the crayon and marking the color two more times.
- When your child has at least three colors of crayons on their paper, ask your child to talk about the three beautiful things they remembered.
- Ask the child to draw a picture of something that is beautiful that they want to remember during the upcoming gray days of winter.

### ECIP Family Harvest Lunch Thursday, November 19

Parents of children attending the Early Childhood Inclusive Program in Belfast are invited to join their children for a healthy Harvest Feast on November 19th. Times will vary for each age group. More information will be sent home to parents at a later date.

## MCCS News

Mid Coast Children's Services classrooms will celebrate the season on November 25th with our traditional "Feast of Fruit". Families are asked to contribute a piece of fruit to be shared with the children. Staff and parent volunteers turn the contributions into beautiful fruit trays which are shared at a festive, common table!

Parents should be on the lookout for signup sheets for Parent/Teacher conferences, to be held mid-November through early December. Conferences are a terrific way to connect with your child's teacher(s) and explore his/her preschool experiences!

As the cold weather approaches parents are reminded that MCCS classrooms are open on "snow days" with the exception of our Head Start program at MacDougal. When RSU 13 is closed because of the weather, our Head Start program is also closed.

## Let Them Play!

Children are amazing! They start out so tiny, and grow and change rapidly. They shift from delicate infants to walking talking toddlers, curious preschoolers, active children, exploring teens and then they're off into adulthood before we know it! Playing with your child is one of the best ways to help your child grow and build strong bonds.

- Plan some special time for you and your children to play together.
- Listen to your child's ideas; praise and encourage their creativity.
- Try to follow your child's lead rather than imposing your ideas.
- Be patient, supportive and positive rather than critical, or sarcastic.
- Be a role model on how to share, take turns, and problem solve peacefully.

Let yourself pretend, be silly and laugh right along with your child. Most of all, have fun!





# November Spotlight on you.....

Shelley Colson has worked for over 9 years at the MIDCOAST CHILDREN'S SERVICES program in Rockland. Her natural caring, sunny disposition and easy smile helps to set an incredible welcoming atmosphere to children and families who enter our 272 Park Street's early childhood education center. There is no task too small or too big for Shelley. She literally tackles every task with a "can do" approach and offers her assistance without hesitating. Shelley's own two children attended "Early School", as it is so fondly referred to in this community, when they were preschoolers. Having this parent's perspective of the services offered and having her children have the opportunity to learn about their world through play has certainly been an asset to our program and to her own professional career. In her nine plus years of working with children at Mid Coast Children's Services, Shelley has worked in many roles: a teacher assistant, an office support and as a 1:1 aide. For such a petite woman, Shelley is a giant for advocating for what's best for children. Her passion, dedication and understanding of working with children with developmental delays is a gift to us all. Shelley works closely with her co-teachers to create an inclusive classroom filled with lots of hands on exploration and of course, fun and love. We are honored to have this opportunity to spotlight Shelley Colson for making a difference in the lives of children and their families and for being one of our bright stars at Broadreach. Thank you, Shelley, for everything you do every day. You truly make a difference!



## Fall Into Finger Plays

### Crunchy Food for Winter

(Where is Thumbkin?)

Where is Gray squirrel? (Fist behind back)  
 Where is Gray squirrel?  
 Here I am. (Fist in front, wiggle thumb)  
 Here I am. (Repeat with other fist)  
 How are you today squirrel?  
 How are you today squirrel?  
 Busy, busy, busy. (Roll fists around.)  
 Busy, busy, busy. (Roll fists around.)  
 Where are your acorns?  
 Where are your acorns?  
 Here they are! (Wiggle four fingers)  
 Here they are! (Wiggle four fingers)  
 Crunchy Food for winter  
 Crunchy Food for winter,  
 Hide them quickly! (Hide hand behind back)

### Five Little Squirrels



Five little squirrels sitting by the door,  
 One ran away and then there were four.  
 Four little squirrels climbing up a tree,  
 One ran away and then there were three.  
 Three little squirrels with coats so new.  
 One ran away and then there were two.  
 Two little squirrels warming in the sun,  
 One ran away leaving only one.  
 One little squirrel wasn't having any fun,  
 He ran away and then there were none.



### It's Fall Time!

All the leaves are  
 Falling down,  
 Falling down,  
 Falling down,  
 All the leaves are  
 Falling down.  
 It's fall time!  
 All the leaves are  
 Red and Brown  
 Red and Brown  
 Red and Brown  
 All the leaves are  
 Red and Brown  
 It's Fall Time