



# Learning to Grow

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII ♥ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## Food Safety and Your Child

Infants and young children are vulnerable to foodborne illnesses, including food poisoning; their immune systems have limited ability to fight infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children under the age of five are one of the groups at greatest risk for food borne illnesses.

Food poisoning is particularly dangerous for young children because it often comes with diarrhea. Since children's bodies are small, they can quickly lose a lot of body fluid, causing dehydration. Other symptoms of foodborne illnesses may include nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, cramps, as well as fever and chills.



Families and care providers can help prevent and lower the risk of food poisoning at home by following proper hand washing procedures and implementing food safety behaviors at home. This newsletter will provide you with food safety tips for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers.

Keep in mind:

- ♥ **Books, songs, and rhymes are fun ways** to help children remember basic ideas about food safety.
- ♥ **Children need to know that food safety is part of the process** of cooking, eating, and cleaning up. Show your child what you do to keep food areas sanitary.
- ♥ **Involving children** in food preparation and clean up is a great way to help them learn and develop new skills.

### In This Newsletter:

To support you in fostering your child's healthy development and school readiness, this newsletter includes:

- ♥ **Age-specific information and suggestions** about activities to do with your infant, toddler, or preschooler,
- ♥ **Featured activities** for each age group,
- ♥ **How This Helps:** a summary of how your child develops when you do these activities together,
- ♥ **Community Resources:** for more information about this topic, and
- ♥ **Suggested Books:** a list of books to read with your child.

# Infants

Feeding infants, whether it's breast milk, formula, or baby food, is one area in which you can help prevent foodborne illnesses. The following are some tips from [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov).

- ♥ **Breast milk** – Transport bottles in an insulated cooler when traveling with your baby. Perishable items left out of the refrigerator or without a cold source for more than two hours should not be used. When heating baby's milk (in bottles with disposable inserts or glass bottles under hot running water), always shake the liquid to even out the temperature and test on top of your hand before feeding. Milk that's "baby-ready" should feel lukewarm.
- ♥ **Infant formula** – Don't make more formula than you will need. Preparing formula in smaller quantities on an as-needed basis greatly reduces the possibility of contamination. If using powder, reconstitute immediately before feeding. If using liquid concentrates or ready-to-feed products,

follow label instructions provided by the manufacturer.

- ♥ **Baby food** – Avoid feeding your baby food straight from the jar because this "double dipping" introduces bacteria from your baby's mouth to the spoon and into the food. Instead, put a small serving of food on a clean dish and refrigerate the remaining food in the jar (store for no more than three days). If baby needs more food, use a clean spoon to serve another portion. Throw away any food in the dish that's not eaten.

When feeding your baby, engage in the following:

- ♥ Describe the texture, colors, and taste of the food.
- ♥ Show her how to wipe her hands and mouth with a clean, damp wash cloth after eating. She might only play with and suck on the wash cloth at first.
- ♥ Talk about new or favorite foods.

## Activity for Infants: *Food Building Blocks*

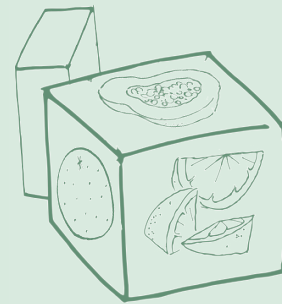
### Materials:

- Photos of different food items
- Boxes
- Scissors (for adult use only)
- Glue

### What to Do:

1. Cut out a variety of different food items from magazines, newspapers, or food boxes.
2. Use old boxes to create building blocks. Stuff the boxes with old newspapers to help maintain their shape. Tape the open ends closed to make six flat surfaces.
3. Glue different pictures on each surface. The bigger the picture, the better. You can glue one food item per surface or group the foods by color or food group.
4. As you are making your blocks, talk to your infant about the different foods. Let your infant enjoy playing with the boxes as long as they remain sturdy.

*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*



# Toddlers

As toddlers eat a greater diversity of food, they are at a higher risk for choking. The following are some food safety tips for your toddler.

- ♥ **Foods with skins** (sausages, hotdogs) – Remove skins, cut lengthwise, and then into small pieces.
- ♥ **Round foods** (whole grapes, cherry tomatoes) – Cut in half.
- ♥ **Foods with seeds** (cherries, stone fruit, olives) – Remove seeds, pips, and stones and cut into small pieces.
- ♥ **Foods that are hard, crunchy or stringy** (raw apple, carrot, and celery) – Grate, finely slice, cook, or mash.
- ♥ **Foods that are tough and chewy** (meat with gristle and bone) – Remove fat, debone, and cut into small pieces. Mince, shred or slow cook.
- ♥ **Foods containing small bones** (fish, chicken) – Remove bones and cut into small pieces.



When eating with your toddler, encourage her to follow your safe eating practices:

- ♥ Insist that she sit down to eat and drink, and not lie down, walk, or run while eating.
- ♥ Remind her to eat slowly and chew well.
- ♥ Celebrate any efforts she makes to feed herself.

## Activity for Toddlers: *Biscuit Ring*

Adapted from: <http://extension.psu.edu/>

Materials:

Refrigerated biscuits (or rolled biscuits)

What to Do:

1. On a baking sheet, help your child arrange the individual biscuits in a circle or oval, with the sides slightly touching.
2. Allow your child to add a topping to each biscuit, if desired. Possible toppings are dried fruit such as cran-raisins, a sprinkle of sugar and cinnamon, or a light shake of grated parmesan cheese.
3. As your child places the circle and oval biscuits on the baking sheet, sing together:

*Ring-a-round a Rosie  
A pocket full of posies  
Ashes! Ashes!  
We all fall down!*



*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*

## Preschoolers

Cooking with your preschooler is a great activity to do together. While it's a good way to engage your child in learning about the process of preparing food, it's also an opportunity to illustrate how to be safe in the kitchen. According to [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov), the following are four basic messages of food safety.

- ♥ **Clean** – Wash your hands before and after you touch food. Items that touch food, like cutting boards and dishes, need to be washed. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.
- ♥ **Separate** – Keep raw foods separate from cooked foods by using different cutting boards, dishes, and utensils.
- ♥ **Cook** – Use a food thermometer to ensure food is cooked to the intended temperature.
- ♥ **Chill** – Any leftover foods should be refrigerated promptly and not be kept at room temperature for more than two hours.



When cooking with your child, you can talk about the following:

- ♥ How she is contributing to the cooking process.
- ♥ How the ingredients are changing.
- ♥ Ways that you are being safe in the kitchen.

### Activities for Preschoolers: *May I Take Your Order?*

Materials:

- Take-out menu from your child's favorite restaurant
- Pencil
- Jumbo crayons or washable markers
- Colored paper

What to Do:

1. Talk with your child about her favorite restaurant. Ask her questions such as "What is your favorite food there? Or "Why do you like this restaurant?"
2. Help your child design a take-out menu for a "pretend" restaurant. For ideas, you could look at a real restaurant's take-out menu. Talk about the different categories the menu has such as soups, salads, entrees, drinks, and desserts.
3. Ask her to tell you what she would like on her restaurant's menu and write them down. When you are done writing her suggestions, invite her to decorate the menu with drawings of different foods.
4. Have your child share what she would like to order from the menu she created.
5. Set up a pretend restaurant where one of you "cooks" and serves the "food" and the other orders and "eats" it.

*(See page 5 for information on how doing these kinds of activities with your child helps her development and school readiness.)*





## How This Helps

The activities suggested in this newsletter help promote many different aspects of development:

### Physical Development

- ♥ Learn to use her body with intention
- ♥ Develop eye-hand coordination

### Social and Emotional Development

- ♥ Develop her unique identity
- ♥ Develop a close bond with you

### Language and Literacy Development

- ♥ Learn to ask and answer questions
- ♥ Build verbal skills and vocabulary

### Cognitive Development

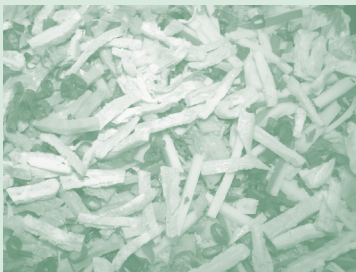
- ♥ Begin to understand cause and effect
- ♥ Develop her thinking and problem-solving skills



## Kids in the Kitchen

Cooking teaches valuable lessons. As you do this recipe with your child, show her how to safely handle the items and allow her to do as much as she is capable of. Ask questions throughout the process to encourage her thinking skills. Make sure to wash your hands and your child's hands before preparing any food.

### Somen Salad



#### Ingredients:

- 2 bundles somen noodles
- ½ head lettuce, shredded
- 1 cup cooked meat, sliced
- ½ kamaboko
- ½ cucumber, thinly sliced, lengthwise
- 2 eggs, beaten, fried and sliced thin
- 2–3 green onions, minced

#### Dressing:

- 1–2 Tablespoons sugar
- 3 Tablespoons rice vinegar
- ¼ cup sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoons shoyu

#### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, have your child break the uncooked somen noodles in half.
2. Add the broken noodles to boiling water and cook for 2-3 minutes (or according to package instructions), then drain.
3. Fill a bowl with water and ice. Help your child pour the cold water onto the noodles to rinse and cool them.
4. Place noodles in a large dish. Have your child place the rest of the prepared toppings on the noodles, starting with the lettuce, then cucumbers, meat, egg, onions, and kamaboko.
5. In another bowl, measure the dressing ingredients and have your child pour the dressing over the noodles and vegetables.

## Community Resources

### Food Safety

<http://www.foodsafety.gov>

Provides federal food safety information, including food recalls and alerts.

### The Healthy Meals Resource System

<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov>

Click on the “Food Safety” link for games and activities to teach food safety to children.

### Safe Foods for Babies

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/pubs/yf/foods/fn656.pdf>

Find tools and guidelines in this publication.



## Suggested Books

Recommended by **Hawaii State Public Library** [www.librarieshawaii.org](http://www.librarieshawaii.org).

### Infants and Toddlers

#### ***Baby Food*** by Saxton Freymann and Joost Elffers

This board book features unique illustrations of baby animals carved out of fruits and veggies. An eggplant becomes a little penguin and a red pepper transforms into a baby hippo. A turnip becomes a baby duck and a cauliflower a sheep.

#### ***Rah Rah Radish!, A Vegetable Chant*** by April Pulley Sayre

Celebrate fresh veggies with this book of rhymes, “Carrots are calling, take a bite!” This book features photos of actual vegetables for your child to see and get excited to eat.

### Preschoolers

#### ***Eating the Alphabets, Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z*** by Lois Ehlert

Take an alphabet tour of a variety of fruits and vegetables from all around the world. Expose your child to fruits and vegetables that they may not have heard of before like currants, dates, rhubarb, quince, xigua, and kumquats.



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