

Wheeling School Based Health Program Newsletter November 2017 ISSUE 2

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*First we give thanks for
the food that we
are given*

*Then we give thanks for
the houses that we
live in*

*Then we give thanks for
the sun that
shines above*

*But mostly we give
thanks for
the people that
we love!*

**Parent to
Parent**

Foods can't touch? No problem!

My daughter doesn't like it when the food on her plate touches—even if she loves each food.

After talking with other parents, I learned that my daughter isn't the only one like this. Now I'm trying strategies that have worked for them.

First, I let her spoon her foods into separate tiny bowls. She enjoyed arranging the bowls on her dinner plate, and she ate all the healthy foods—separately. Another time, she put colorful cupcake liners into a muffin tin and filled each one with different food. Then, just yesterday, we used a carrot stick and a green bean to keep her food apart. When she finished everything else, she even ate the dividers!

With these simple changes, my daughter now eats without a fuss, making mealtimes happier for everyone.

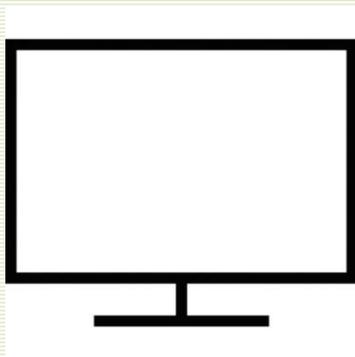


Mason Jar Omelet

Here's a fun breakfast to make with your youngster. Crack 2 eggs into a Mason jar. Add chopped veggies like bell pepper and tomatoes, plus 1 tablespoon of shredded cheese. Screw the lid on tightly, and let them shake it well. Remove the lid. Microwave 2-3 minutes until eggs are set. Cool, and enjoy. Note: You can also make this in a mug. Whisk the mixture instead of shaking.

Ref: Nutrition Nuggets

Screen Free Alternatives



Let your youngster plan activities that don't involve sitting in front of the screen.

They might:

- Create a workout routine that you can record for your family to follow along with later.
- Map out new routes through your neighborhood for family bike rides.
- Organize a neighborhood kickball or softball game.



Q & A Nutrition

Q – What drinks make the healthiest choices?

A – Water is the best option—it can keep your child's digestive system healthy and quench their thirst without adding extra sodium, sugar, or calories. It's also important for your child to drink fat-free milk so they get the calcium they need for strong bones and teeth. Fruit juice can be a healthy alternative, if limited to about one glass a day. Make sure you buy only juices labeled 100% real fruit juice.

Q – What can we do to make our weekly menus healthier?

A – Little changes can mean a lot. You can get started with simple steps like these:

Step 1: Try to eat more foods prepared from scratch. Processed foods (quick-to-prepare boxed dinners, for example) are often high in salt, fat, and calories. To save time, plan a day when you can cook double batches of healthy recipes—then eat one, and freeze the other for later.

Step 2: Incorporate more fruits and vegetables into meals and snacks. You might stir a handful of berries into your child's oatmeal at breakfast, tuck spinach leaves into his sandwich for lunch, give him celery sticks with peanut butter for afternoon snack, serve asparagus and baked acorn squash with dinner, and offer them a fresh orange or apple before bedtime.

Step 3: Add flavor without adding sugar or salt or salt by trying different herbs and spices. Basil, oregano, and marjoram are good in pasta and tomato dishes, for instance. Dill, chives, and tarragon liven up salads. And red pepper flakes, chili powder, and cumin make spicy additions to Mexican-style dishes like burritos and enchiladas.



ref: Nutrition Nuggets

Making the Holidays Less Materialistic



"The gimmes" are all around us during the holiday season. It can be hard for kids — and parents — to look beyond all of the product-driven hoopla and remember what the holidays are really about.

It's not the gifts but what's behind them that's important — the spirit of giving. Help your kids learn the fun of giving, and how rewarding it can be to look for, make, and wrap something special — or *do* something special — for people they care about and others who are in need.

Here are five ways to curb materialism in your kids and reinforce the real reason for the season:

1. Teach Kids to Question Marketing Messages

From the TV commercials during cartoons to the promos on the backs of cereal boxes, marketing messages target kids of all ages. And to them, everything looks ideal, like something they simply have to have. It all sounds so appealing — often, so much better than it really is.

The ads kids see around the holidays can help foster unrealistic expectations and lead to disappointment. After imagining their "wish list" items all around them, it's hard for reality to measure up when they actually open their gifts.

Of course, it's nearly impossible to eliminate all exposure to marketing messages. You can certainly turn off the TV or at least limit your kids' watching time, but they'll still see and hear ads for the latest gizmos and must-haves.

Explain, when your kids ask for products they see advertised, that commercials and other ads are designed to make people want things they don't necessarily need. And these ads are often meant to make us think that these products will make us happier somehow. Talking to kids about what things are like in reality can help put things into perspective.

- Ask what they think about the products they see advertised as you're watching TV, listening to the radio, reading magazines, or shopping together. Ask thought-provoking questions, such as "Do you think that product really looks, tastes, or works the same way as it seems to in the ad?"
- To limit exposure to TV commercials, choose public television stations, recorded programs (without the ads), and children's videos and DVDs.

Teach your kids that not everything they want can always be theirs. The key is to want things in moderation and to fully appreciate what you're given. Emphasize that the holidays are a special time to be with family and friends, and that a lot of love and thought is put into gift giving.

2. Focus on Family Traditions

Traditions that focus on family or friends can be a great way to put meaning back into the holidays. Here are a couple of ideas:

- **Talk about which family traditions your family loves the most.** Then figure out how you can put more emphasis on them. If you love the tradition of lighting the menorah, get together as a group to make your own candles. If you enjoy the family trip to pick out a tree, make it an all-day event and head to a tree farm to choose your own.
- **Find out what the holidays mean to others.** Have your kids talk to a grandparent, parent, uncle, or aunt about how they spent the holidays growing up. Some holiday traditions that used to be strong — such as neighborhood caroling — are all but lost today. Maybe you'd like to revive some of these as a way to share some holiday spirit with your family, friends, or community.
- **Build some new traditions.** If you don't have any family traditions, it's never too late to start. Get together around activities that you all enjoy, such as cooking or ice-skating. Ask your kids what they would enjoy doing every year and make an effort to do it. If you can't all decide on one thing, make traditions out of several, so that everyone feels like part of the festivities.

3. Teach Kids to Give of Themselves

Volunteerism, especially around the holidays, offers an ideal opportunity for families to have fun and feel closer to each other at the same time. Community service helps to drive home the message that giving is much more than laying down cash for the hot gift of the season or scrambling around to buy mounds of presents.

Volunteerism can show kids that giving your time, effort, and kindness is more rewarding than just expecting to receive lots of presents.

Also, if volunteering begins at an early age, it can become part of your kids' lives — something they just want to do. It can teach them:

- **That one person can make a difference.** A wonderful, empowering message for kids is that they are important enough to have an impact on someone or something else.
- **The benefit of sacrifice.** By giving up a toy to a less fortunate child, a child learns that sometimes it's good to sacrifice. Cutting back on recreation time to help others reinforces that there are important things other than ourselves and our immediate needs.
- **Tolerance.** Working in community service can bring kids and teens together with people of different backgrounds, abilities, ethnicities, ages, and education and income levels. They'll likely find that even the most diverse individuals can be united by common values.
- **To be even more appreciative of what they have.** By helping others who aren't as fortunate, kids can better see all the remarkable things to be grateful for in their own lives.

Choose to help an organization or group that fits with your family's values and the things you believe in. Just a few ways you can help out in your community and beyond:

- **Sponsor another family in need or purchase some presents for less fortunate children** through a holiday donation program. Let your kids pick out and wrap the gifts themselves.
- **If your kids love animals, talk to your local animal shelter.** Many distribute staples like pet food to low-income pet owners over the holidays and need volunteers to help.
- **Give back to the elderly in your area.** Help out at a nursing home; visit with older people who could use a little extra joy and company around the holidays; bring gifts or meals to those who are homebound; or lend a hand to elderly neighbors with decorating, cooking, or wrapping presents.
- **Volunteer your family's time** by helping out at a children's hospital or homeless shelter or building or refurbishing housing for people in need.

Community service can teach kids that giving comes in many forms, not just as presents. Emphasize that giving of their time, effort, and caring can mean so much more — and last longer — than any gift that money can buy.

4. Give Gifts With Meaning

Of course, gift giving will always be a large part of the holiday season. And with good reason — it can teach kids to really consider what might make others happy and what's important to people they care about. Watching loved ones' faces as they open presents that your children put a lot of heart and thought into can make the holidays more worthwhile for your kids.

But presents don't always have to be purchased in a store. Teach your kids how to put some real meaning and feelings into their gifts this year and beyond. Making their own presents can help show just how much kids care and can make the experience of giving more rewarding for both kids and their gift recipients.

Here are some ideas to get your family started:

- **Make homemade gifts together.**

- Create photo albums that family members can carry around with them. Not only does this capture precious memories and show just how much they mean, making photo album gifts also shows loved ones that a lot of thought and time was put into their presents.
- Print and frame favorite digital photos of friends and loved ones.
- Create customized stationery for people on your family's list using your home computer and printer.
- Have your kids create their own customized artwork — collages, paintings, drawings, etc. — and put them in fun frames. They can even decorate the frames.
- Create a customized family tree for family members (something grandparents would especially appreciate).
- Make your own batches of presents, like potpourri or ornaments, or wrapping paper and customized home decorations like wreaths.
- Create personalized family videos for long-distance friends and loved ones.

- **Give philanthropic gifts.** Many communities hold fairs where you can buy gifts by making a donation to causes your family and friends care about. Others offer actual gifts made by people with special needs. Check out charity organizations' websites for information on donating money on behalf of others and about gifts whose proceeds go to the charity itself.

- **Instead of giving gifts of things, teach kids to consider giving gifts of time.** For example, their grandmother may welcome their help in learning how to use a computer program. Or their little sister may want to learn how to knit. Have family members create special gift certificates (e.g., "two free car washes," "five free specially prepared meals," "10 free loads of laundry," etc.). These days, when everyone's so stretched, a gift of time can be more meaningful than one that costs big bucks.

Be a Good Holiday Role Model

Show your kids that the holidays can be joyous and fulfilling, not just a stress-ridden time that revolves around marathon shopping trips. Emphasize early on that it's not about tons of presents, but giving and receiving a few heartfelt gifts.

By starting early with traditions that emphasize the true meaning of the holidays and the caring thoughts behind gift giving, you can help to mold your kids' perspectives on the holiday season and what it means to both give and receive all year long.

Re: KidsHealth.org

