

Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers
 packed with food, facts & fun
 from your local county extension office

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Let's Eat Valentine Day Snacks



It only seems like yesterday that we were baking Christmas cookies and making candy. Actually you may still have some hanging around. But February is here and with it comes Valentine's Day and more chocolate and other sweet treats. This can make it very hard for families to develop healthier eating habits. To help support better eating habits, you can make healthier snacks and desserts for your family this Valentine's Day!

- ♥ Smoothie: Blend raspberries, strawberries and low-fat yogurt and low-fat milk
- ♥ Fresh fruit cut in the shape of hearts
- ♥ Fruit pizza
- ♥ Fruit bars: Freeze blended strawberries and bananas on popsicle sticks
- ♥ Yogurt parfaits
- ♥ Pudding cups: Mix fat-free vanilla pudding with strawberries and raspberries
- ♥ Kabobs: Place strawberries, cherries, raspberries and apples on skewers and serve with melted chocolate for dipping
- ♥ Angel food cake with fresh berries

You can certainly still enjoy your favorite sweets or chocolate treat, but do so in moderation. Adding fruit and low fat dairy foods adds nutrients to your diet, instead of just empty calories.

Another healthy twist you can include for Valentine's Day is using time together with a loved one to go for a walk, to go ice-skating, bowling or any favorite physical activity you and your family enjoy. Spending time together is always a wonderful way for everyone to spend Valentine's Day and being active together and enjoying healthy treats will benefit you and your loved ones all year long.

Source: Laurie Messing, Michigan State University Extension

Play Time Valentine's Day Gross Motor Activities



Materials

Large felt hearts from the dollar store - You could substitute foam hearts, paper hearts, or even cut out your own heart shapes from felt.

Various Ways to Play

Scatter the hearts on the floor, a fair distance apart to encourage jumping and large steps. Or

pretend that the floor is lava and only touch the hearts.

Instead of stepping from heart to heart, try hopping on one foot from heart to heart. Or practice double footed jumps.

Another way to play is to move from heart to heart on all fours, only letting one body part touch a heart at a time. It's a great way to stretch the body and get the kids moving.

Arrange the hearts in a snake-like game board shape. Roll a die and use your feet as game board pieces to move from the start to the finish.

Arrange the hearts to make a hopscotch. You could label the hearts with numbers if you wish.

Make a tic tac toe grid on the floor using tape. Play tic tac toe with the felt hearts (one person uses one color, while the other person uses the other color).

Source: <https://www.andnextcomesl.com/2016/01/valentines-gross-motor-game-for-kids.html>



Celebrate Love Means Celebrating Difference and Love of All Kinds

In a world where it can often seem like negativity reigns, it is more important than ever to help children see the beauty of love of all kinds. Helping kids to understand that there is no single way to love and that there is beauty both in our similarities and differences is a poignant lesson to embrace on Valentine's Day.

February is a perfect month to find books about love in all different kinds of families as libraries will typically have their love-themed books out on display. All families are not the same and that is a



beautiful thing because they were created with love. February is also Black History Month which provides opportunity for discussing and celebrating important achievements in history. To help our children grow into open-minded and loving people, we can show them how important it is to understand the past and the struggles that people face today in order to move into a more loving and connected future.

We don't have to buy into the Hallmark version of Valentine's Day, but a holiday focused on love gives us the chance to share some valuable lessons. Working together as a family to show our love for each other and our love for others is a beautiful thing and allows us to redefine the holiday with a focus on empathy, kindness, generosity, and education. Enjoy this special family opportunity!

Source: Alvin Poussaint, M.D. and Susan Linn, Ed.D. <https://www.familyeducation.com/fun/valentines-day/helping-younger-children-celebrate-valentines-day>

Sincerely,

Darrell Simpson
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