



HCSF Newsletter

September
2011



September is here! Now is the time for new routines and cooler weather activities with the arrival of **Autumn** on September 23. Now might be the perfect time to rethink your family routines... everything from **screen time** to **bed time**! Have some indoor fun playing "Food Sleuths" with your kids, then head to the kitchen to try out some new recipes together.

Apple picking, **leaf peeping** and **nature walks** are all great family activities for fall!



Refresh

Refresh Your Routine!

Most people think of New Year's as a time to make changes – but the beginning of a new school year is also a great time to rethink your routines.

Are your kids spending too much time parked in front of a screen... watching TV, playing video games or playing on the computer? Why not use the start of the new school year to set some new guidelines about screen time for the whole family. Decide on your rules together so *everyone* is on board.

'Cause let's be honest here, sometimes it's not the kids who want the TV on....*it's us too*. Yes, it's easier to get things done when the kids are watching TV or are busy on the computer, and yes sometimes you just want to veg on the couch after a long day. But too much time being inactive isn't good for you *or* your kids. Do you want your kids' childhood memories to be of watching TV or do you want them to remember the fun you had together?



So, these new rules... will the kids go for it?

There will be some grumbling at first, but as long as you're consistent, the kids will get used to it. You can try asking "what would you like to do instead of watching TV or being on the computer" or you can simply set up some basic rules like "the TV/computer doesn't come on until after supper and for older kids, until homework is done." You may want to create a schedule for each child to have some computer time, and you can decide together what TV shows can be watched that day.

Won't they complain about being bored?

Probably. But they will find something to do. You can help them out by offering some suggestions, *but encourage them to find activities on their own too*. Try these:

Play a board game
Color or draw
Puzzles



Read books
Play dough or clay



Crafts – even something as simple as handing over a box of elbow noodles, some paper and glue. Or give them an old magazine and child scissors and let them cut to their heart's content.

Playing outside (tag, hide and seek, hopscotch, Frisbee, hula hoops, basketball...encourage them to make up their own games!)

Mama or Daddy's Helper – have them help you (with dinner, or making tomorrow's lunches or folding laundry or whatever you are working on. You may find that with more hands on deck you'll be freed up to join your kids for some active play). If you are a crafter doing beading, basket making or sewing can you begin to pass your skills on to your kids?

A Restful Night's Sleep



Sleep is important as it allows our minds and bodies to rest and become energized for a new day. Read on for some tips on how to get your child ready for the school day by getting enough sleep each night:

- * **Set a bed time:** It is recommended that young children get 11-14 hours of sleep each night. If the family has to be up at 7a.m., plan for an 8 p.m. bedtime so the kids can get plenty of sleep. *Kids ages 7-12 still need 10-12 hours of sleep.*
- * **Start a routine:** Get your child into a night time routine each night before bedtime. For example, before their 8 pm bedtime, have your child pick out clothes for the next day, put on their PJ's, brush his/her teeth, and tuck them into bed with a bedtime story. This can be some great quality time with your kids!
- * **Be consistent.** Make bedtime the same time every night. This helps your child know what to expect and helps him establish healthy sleep patterns.
- * **Avoid active play right before bed.** Active play may make your child too excited to sleep.



Eat Fresh! Fruits and veggies at their best this month:



Apples
Broccoli
Cauliflower
Carrots
Garlic
Leeks



Mushrooms
Peaches
Plums
Pumpkins
Spinach
Squash



SLUETHS



FOOD

What's a food sleuth, you ask? Its someone who gathers information using their senses – by feeling, looking, and smelling. Once you've thoroughly investigated, you get to the fun part – tasting!

Materials:

- Paper lunch bag
- Fruit or vegetable in season (Some suggestions that will be fun – cantaloupe, kiwi, mango, pineapple, dates, avocados, dried plums, raisins, peaches, acorn squash, asparagus, cabbage (try purple if you can find it!), kohlrabi, small pie pumpkins, sugar snap peas, sweet potato, zucchini.)
- Magnifying glass

Directions: Mom and Dad – without the kids seeing, place the fruit or vegetable in a paper bag. Have them reach their hands in without looking in the bag to feel what's inside.

Ask? - What does it feel like?

Help them describe how it feels by asking questions like: Is it bumpy or smooth? Is it furry? Prickly?



Next, have them take the fruit or veggie out of the bag. Kids can use their magnifying glass to get a closer look!

Ask? - What does it look like?

Is it shiny? What color is it?



Ask? - What does it smell like?

Does it smell sweet? Does it smell earthy? Does it smell spicy?

Get rid of the evidence!

Last but not least, everyone gets to see what it tastes like! If you chose a fruit, you can simply wash it, cut it up and eat it fresh. This will work with some veggies, but others will be better cooked. Find a recipe you think would be fun to try before you play food sleuth with your kids. Then get them into the kitchen with you as you prepare to "eat the evidence"! Check out some contenders below...

Toasted Pumpkin Seeds

Fresh pumpkin seeds out of hollowed out pumpkins – the kids will love retrieving the seeds – gooey, stringy fun!

Ingredients:

- 🍂 pumpkin seeds
- 🍂 cooking spray or vegetable oil
- 🍂 optional: Worcestershire sauce, salt, garlic powder, onion powder, seasoned salt



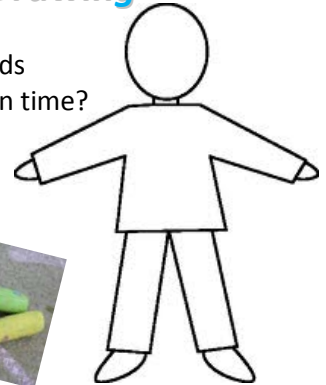
Directions:

Clean pumpkin seeds with water and pat dry, removing any pulp that sticks to them. Let dry overnight. Toss pumpkin seeds in oil or with cooking spray, and sprinkle on the seasonings of your choice. Toss to coat. Place seeds on a cookie sheet in an even layer and bake at 250 degrees for 1 hour or until seeds are browned. Stir every 15 minutes during cooking time.

Cool before eating. Enjoy!

Shadow Drawing

Need another idea for the kids instead of TV or other screen time? Try this one on for "size"...



Take brown grocery bags, cut them open and tape them together until you have enough paper to be the same size as your child. Have your child lie down on the paper bags and trace your child's outline. Your child can then color her "shadow" drawing to look anyway she wants.

No paper bags? Try this outside using sidewalk chalk to trace your child! Then let them color away!



- 2 cups purple cabbage, diced
- 1 apple, diced
- 1 carrot, grated

Purple Cabbage Coleslaw

- ½ cup diced pineapple (drained if using canned)
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons olive or canola oil

Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl, mix well and serve!

