

Feeding Your Child's Potential

Bridget Swinney, MS, RD, is a highly-regarded expert in child nutrition and family eating matters. As a dietitian and mother of two, Bridget knows that beyond thinking about feeding your child's appetite, it's also important to feed their potential. Habits like eating well and exercise are the cornerstones to building a healthy brain and body; but there's also emotional and intellectual growth to think about.

Following are a few of Bridget's favorite tips to help you feed your child's potential:

Mix it Up

From lunchtime to snack time, be sure to constantly introduce new foods into your child's diet. Food choices that are pumped with nutrients like dairy, whole grains, lean meats and fruits are good. Eating a wide range of foods that cross all food groups helps ensure that your child will obtain all the nutrients needed for optimal brain developmentⁱ.

Brain Food

Brain growth happens from the inside and the outside. Essential fats, especially omega-3 fats and DHA, are critical, and so are activities, like reading, that stimulate cognitive developmentⁱⁱ. Research shows children who read regularly are more confident, perform at a higher level academically and are overall much happier people. So after eating a well-balanced meal, encourage your kids to curl up with a good book.

Kitchen Connection

Cooking is a great way to connect with your children and boost their confidence. You'll be amazed at how creative they can be, and how cooking exercises math skills by calculating measurements, science skills by watching and learning how ingredients like baking soda makes dough rise, and organizational skills as they plot out a recipe's directions step-by-step.

H₂O to Go

A recent survey revealed that 65 percent of children between the ages of five and 14 drink less water than they shouldⁱⁱⁱ, which is especially troubling since dehydration can lead to a reduction in both mental and physical performance. Children need at least six to eight glasses per day^{iv}. It's essential to keeping them healthy and helping them to perform better in school.

Fun and Fit

Exercise is a key component of any child's healthy development for both their brains and bodies. It strengthens muscles and improves bone health. Activities such as basketball, tennis, dancing and active video games are great ways to ensure that ALL parts of your body are getting a work out^v.

To view the full lineup of new **Lunchables Lunch Combinations**, which offer wholesome lunchtime options including lean meats, breads made with whole grains and spring water, visit www.lunchables.com.

ⁱ <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/childrens-health/hq01107>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/omega-3-fats/index.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>

^{iv} <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>

^v <http://health.rutgers.edu/brochures/pyramid.htm>