

August 2022

8/1/22: Help your kids find their way to play

We all know that kids need physical activity to be healthy. But did you know that sports can give them beyond physical health? I'm Clarissa Moon here with the low-down.

Sports can teach kids essential life skills such as focus, teamwork, leadership and work ethic.

If you're not sure how to get your kids interested in anything beyond screentime, take a 1 hour screen siesta each day and fill it in with a healthy alternative. Next, just try different things to figure out what they like. Maybe they are very social and prefer a team sport. Or maybe they just want to compete against themselves and do their own thing.

There's no need for them to be super athletic, being a kid is supposed to be fun and educational. Try new things to figure out what they like. Start small by finding a local league or class or just do something as a family or small group of families.

Remember kids age 6-17 need 60 minutes of activity a day. Playing sports is an easy way to achieve this goal. Bonus points for anything that gets them a variety of activity including aerobic, muscle strengthening and bone strengthening.

This summer, mix it up and try new activity cocktails with your kids. With a little of this and a little of that, it will be the sweetest summer ever.

For more info visit health.gov or panola.agrilife.org

https://health.gov/sites/default/files/2021-04/PAG_YSS_FactSheet_4.26.21_0.pdf

8/8/22: Lunchtime Pawn Shop Games

Back to school is near and so are the lunchtime pawn shop games. How do you know what food your child will eat versus trading, throwing away, or bringing back home? As parents, y'all have a tricky job, needing to provide a lunch that's nutrient rich yet also appealing to your little pawn shop pro. I'm Clarissa Moon with a few tips doing just that.

- 1) Put your kids in the chef's seat. When kids help plan their lunches, they're more likely to eat them. Look at school lunches ahead of time and talk about which ones they like. School lunches are great at providing a variety of food groups, but everyone is entitled to their own preferences. To this day I still cringe when I hear "cheesy hamburger soup". The point is, sit down with little Johnnie and learn his preferences. While he may not love broccoli, he may eat carrots. Give him some general guidelines and let him choose what foods appeal to him.

- 2) Go for the gold! Variety is the spice of life- and nutrition. But don't worry if your child wants the same lunch for two weeks straight. Work around normal pickiness by creating a list of alternatives.
- 3) Make fruits and veggies fun. Try to work in a variety of colors or fun presentations like kabobs or dips. For a more convenient option, choose prepackaged options like applesauce or fruit cocktail with no sugar added. Soups, wraps and pizza are also a good way to sneak in extra fruit or veggies.
- 4) Last but not least- make it pretty. Kids, just like adults, eat with their eyes first. Invest in a fun lunch box and containers.

I hope these tips help you to sweeten the deal with your child's lunches. For more info, visit [eatright.org](https://www.eatright.org) or panola.agrilife.org.

<https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/eat-right-at-school/making-the-grade-at-lunchtime>

8/15/22: Hacks for getting more Fruits + Veggies

Did you know that you're supposed to get 5 servings of fruits and veggies A DAY? 5 seems like such an overwhelming number. I'm Clarissa Moon here with some fruit and veggie hacks for you to get a virtual high 5 today.

- 1) Include more produce in meals that you already eat. Add some veggies to your morning eggs, inside your favorite sandwich, or on top of your cheesy pizza.
- 2) Get more bang for your buck. Try leaving the skin on certain fruits/veggies like apples, potatoes and cucumbers since the skin is where lots of fiber and antioxidants are found! If you're eating fresh produce, you might as well get the most out of it.
- 3) Make simple swaps. Try subbing half or all of your pasta noodles with veggies. Swap out the egg or butter in your baked goods for a fruit puree.
- 4) Make it easy! Keep fruit on top of your counter so you're more likely to grab that for a snack instead of the chips or cookies. Slice fruit and veggies up in advance so that there's less prep work involved when you're hungry.
- 5) Waste not, want not. Think of 2-3 ways to use all the produce you're buying. For example, don't buy watermelon just to have it as a side for one meal. Instead, cut the whole thing up and plan to use it a few different ways such as smoothies, fruit salad, and infused water.

I hope these ideas helped you realize that maybe 5 a day isn't so far away! To view more ideas from this long list of fruit and veggie hacks, visit fruitsandveggies.org, panola.agrilife.org or the Panola county AgriLife Extension Service Facebook page. Thanks for listening to the Moon Minute!

<https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/hacks-to-help-you-eat-more-produce/>

8/23/22: Scientists never fail

Have you ever heard that quote from Thomas Edison about never failing, just finding ten thousand ways that didn't work? This quote is a good reminder about personal growth and life in general. I'm Clarissa Moon here with some positive thoughts.

Each person has his own goals and objectives, and it's normal to experience setbacks. When these things happen, I encourage you to take a scientist's approach with curiosity rather than criticism.

Stumbling blocks are actually big clues that can help you identify what part of your habit needs to be adjusted. Whether it's the reminder cue, routine, or reward- there are many opportunities to explore and readjust to reach your goals.

For the cue- if a sticky note didn't work, maybe an alarm on your phone will. If it's too crazy to exercise before work or school, try working it in over lunchtime. Then look at your habit- was it enjoyable and doable, or should you try something different? Make sure the habit is fun and rewarding.

Lastly, don't be too hard on yourself. We all mess up and sometimes, life just gets in the way! Give yourself permission to start fresh or try something new.

For more information on celebrating failures, check out the American Heart Association on YouTube or panola.agrilife.org

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nvHrw6Zt62c>

8/29/22: Get your sleep back on schedule

Sleep schedules often change as we age. If you're getting tired earlier than you're used to- feel free to blame it on biology! Circadian rhythm is your body's natural timing of functions like sleep and appetite. Work schedules, light exposure, and other factors can influence this natural clock. I'm Clarissa Moon with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension- If you're having trouble with your rhythm, here are a few tips to get you back in the groove.

- Get outside- sunlight exposure helps your clock keep time better.
- Stick to a schedule. Waking and sleeping at the same time each day helps; so try not to get too out of whack on the weekends or days off.
- When taking naps- shoot for 30 minutes or less so that you can still drift off at night.
- Exercise! This can help you fall asleep and sleep more deeply.
- Watch the caffeine after 3 p.m.

- Avoid big meals before bedtime
- Unplug and avoid screentime within 30 minutes of bedtime.
- Lastly, find a way to unwind before bed whether it's a warm shower, reading a book, or petting your furry friend.

I hope these tips help you get some zzz's! For more information, visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org) or panola.agrilife.org.

https://www.mayoclinic.org/connected-care/trouble-sleeping-it-might-be-biology/cpt-20522418?mc_id=us&utm_source=pes&utm_medium=e&utm_content=engagement&utm_campaign=mayoclinic&geo=national&placementsite=enterprise&invsrsrc=patloy&cauid=122853