

## NUTRITION 4 HEALTH

### Lifestyle Breaks

Do you have health issues such as:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Raised cholesterol levels
- Wanting to lose some weight
- Just not feeling very good
- Stress and under pressure
- Do you just need some time out to take stock on your life
- Child have elevated body mass index
- Low iron

If you do, contact *Ms. Hester Roberts, Health Service Specialist*, at 244-2606 to arrange an appointment with *Ms. Deanna Howard, Registered Dietician*

for Okaloosa County Comprehensive Head Start and Early Head Start. She can assist with:

- Diet and nutrition consultations for understanding your own eating habits
- Guidance for making small changes which will help you feel and look better
- Ideas to design your own eating plan that will fit in with how you live your life
- Help with making the right food choices when shopping
- Advice for simple cooking techniques
- Smart = Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timeframe

Submitted by: *Hester Roberts, Specialist Health Service*





## **Green Chile-Chicken Casserole**

### **Yield**

12 servings (serving size: about 3/4 cup)

### **Ingredients**

- 1 1/3 cups fat-free, less-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup canned chopped green chilies, drained
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup fat-free sour cream
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 (10 1/2-ounce) cans condensed 98% fat-free cream of chicken soup, undiluted (such as Campbell's)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Cooking spray
- 24 (6-inch) corn tortillas
- 4 cups shredded cooked chicken breast (about 1 pound)
- 2 cups (8 ounces) finely shredded sharp cheddar cheese

### **Preparation**

Preheat oven to 350°.

Combine the first 9 ingredients in a large saucepan, stirring with a whisk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Remove from heat.

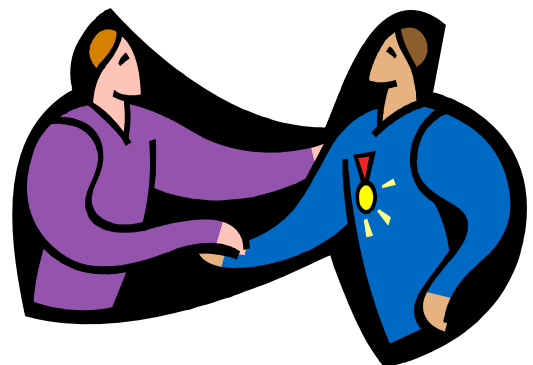
Spread 1 cup soup mixture in a 13 x 9-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Arrange 6 tortillas over the soup mixture, and top with 1 cup chicken and 1/2 cup cheese. Repeat layers, ending with the cheese. Spread remaining soup mixture over cheese. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until bubbly.

Submitted by: Luci Kounlavong, Fiscal Manager



**To:**

**The Staff at our Kennedy  
Street Center, for their  
outstanding licensing  
inspection!!!!**





**BREAKFAST WITH DAD**

**Bay Street Center**



**EDNEY CENTER**



**February 5, 2010**



OKALOOSA COUNTY HEAD START



NEWSLETTER  
FEBRUARY 2010



**PARENTS ROCK!!!!**



**THANKS TO ALL OF YOU  
FOR MAKING THIS A SUCCESS!!!!**





## How academic should a preschool be?

The best preschools blend play time and "seat work," helping develop academic skills while allowing children to learn through play.



**By Pam Gelman, M.A.**

How do you know which academic skills your child should learn in preschool to be ready for kindergarten? How academic should preschool be? Visiting programs and asking teachers the right questions will help you decide if a particular preschool will adequately prepare your child and is a good match for your child's learning style.

### **Evaluating academics in preschool**

"This is a challenging question, even for researchers," says Leanne Barrett, a policy analyst for Rhode Island Kids Count. "Get teachers to articulate how the curriculum helps children in the domain areas listed in the standards."

You'll hear language from teachers, such as "developmentally appropriate," "child-centered," and "whole child" — ask how these words relate specifically to the program. Another reliable indicator is teacher education.

"Look for programs with teachers who have some college-level training in early childhood education," advises Barrett.

### **Differing philosophies**

As you visit preschools, you'll learn about different approaches for preschool curriculum design, including "school readiness" and "developmental." In practice, these philosophies typically blend to meet the needs of all the children.

### **The school-readiness approach**

An approach focused on school readiness will be structured with learning through direct instruction. Children may be expected to work on specific assignments. While some kids can focus for a period of time on an activity, many are not ready and this frustration could affect a child's enthusiasm for learning.

### **The developmental approach**

A developmental perspective favors learning through play. Early childhood educators believe learning occurs by building on the child's interests, and the social development through play is invaluable for later success in school. Kids who prefer to learn through hands-on interactions are better suited for the developmental approach. Parents may walk into these classrooms and note that the kids are happy and having fun, but are they truly learning their ABCs that kindergarten teachers will expect them to know?

### **Blending the two approaches**

The best approach to prepare preschoolers for kindergarten has been an ongoing topic of discussion among educators and policymakers, both wanting to meet the academic needs of all children. Research has shown that children in academically geared programs must also have time for social engagement with peers through play, and developmentally based programs must provide time for all kids to nurture literacy skills in preparation for kindergarten.

Most preschools blend the philosophies. "There should be a good balance," Laura Drake, a preschool teacher in Danville, Calif., says. "Pre-K can provide a unique opportunity to embrace a preschool learning environment that contains a kindergarten-readiness structure while remaining play-based and developmentally appropriate."

### **What to look for**

#### **Reading and writing**

Literacy is a common benchmark for parents to gauge the academic rigor of a program. Books, words, letters and writing materials should be accessible for all children throughout the day. Pre-reading skills can be developed through children's experiences with letters and words in writing stations, art projects, reading nooks, music and more. Literacy can also be supported through the daily routine in the classroom, such as putting initials on helper charts or labeling where supplies are stored. Preschoolers must have opportunities to cut with kid-safe scissors, squeeze clay, or explore other materials that develop muscles and coordination necessary to hold a pencil and write.

#### **Math and science**

Placing one block on another, arranging seashells in patterns or counting up the number of cereal pieces at snack time — these activities contribute to future understanding of mathematical concepts. In the



classroom, kids need to experience materials and activities that promote thinking about the spatial relationships between objects with dice, dominoes, manipulatives, blocks and puzzles.

Like math, science helps kids make sense of their world by prompting them to ask questions, problem-solve and think critically. Preschool teachers build on children's natural curiosity when gardening, caring for classroom animals, following the changing seasons or studying an object under a microscope.

#### **Play and social learning**

Play is paramount to learning and preparation for the academic experience in kindergarten. The ability to work with others cooperatively is learned through the development of play.

Understanding how to negotiate compromise and process the disappointment when not getting one's way are all important skills for working on a team. Expressing needs to adults and ideas to peers can be challenging for young children, so the practice provided in preschool sets the stage for language expectations in kindergarten...

#### **Independence and self-help skills**

Being able to separate from loved ones is another critical piece toward academic learning. If children are worried or sad because they're missing their parents or caregivers, they'll be distracted and will distract others. Preschool teachers must be prepared to help kids who have trouble saying good-bye, so that they'll be able to master this skill by kindergarten. And kids who know how to take care of themselves, such as hanging up their jackets or washing their own hands, will feel more confident when asked to do so in the kindergarten setting.

#### **Know your school district's expectations for kindergarten readiness**

All high-quality preschools promote learning, but nowadays teachers also need to be aware of what will be specifically expected in kindergarten. Drake adds, "It is beneficial if the preschool knows the readiness skills expected of entering kindergartners in the local school district. Every district varies. In this respect the school can gear academic programming to the readiness skills expected."

The bottom line for academic preparation is to find a preschool that works for the individual child's learning style, temperament, needs and interests. Judy Kriege, a childcare resource and referral counselor at BANANAS, Inc., in Oakland, Calif., says, "I receive calls from parents wanting a specific experience for their children in preschool. People have to trust that children have the innate ability to learn." Being happy about going to preschool and enthusiastic about learning are good signs the academic skills are developing to launch your child successfully into elementary school.

#### **Questions to ask when visiting preschools**

- What is the director's educational background, and how long has he or she worked at the school?
- What are the teachers' educational backgrounds, and how long have they worked at the school?
- What is the school's education philosophy, and how does that apply to the curriculum?
- What is the adult-to-child ratio?
- What is the schedule of daily activities?
- Are you familiar with the academic expectations of local public schools for incoming kindergartners?
- How often are children read to? What strategies are used for children who cannot sit still to read?
- How does the curriculum support problem-solving skills?
- How do the teachers support children in developing their self-reliance skills?
- How do teachers keep track of children's development?
- Do you offer parent-teacher conferences to discuss children's progress?





**PARENTS IT IS REALLY IMPORTANT TO GET YOUR CHILDREN TO SCHOOL ON TIME AND NOT TO PICK THEM UP EARLY.**

**BOTH OF THE ABOVE CAUSES A DISRUPTION TO THE OTHER STUDENTS.**

**WE APPRECIATE YOUR COOPERATION WITH THIS!**



**KEEP TURNING IN THOSE IN-KIND SHEETS!!! YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB!!!!**



From McGriff, Niceville, and Chester Pruitt Centers.

February is National Children's Dental month and in the classroom children will learn how to take care of their teeth and mouth. This month your child will also learn about the different parts of the mouth such as the teeth, gums, cheeks, lips, and tongue. We believe our dental health lessons in Head Start will help your child learn about importance of the mouth and help him or her prevent dental problems.

You may want to have your child tell you about the different parts of the mouth and ask your child to name that part. More information on the dental health activities as it continues.

During the week of **February 8<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>** Head Start will also be having Spirit Week. Children as well as staff are encouraged to dress in different attire for the entire week.

Teachers will be giving out more information on this activity.

Thanks for all your help in advance to make this month **Fun!**

**Sheila Fuller**  
Early Childhood Education Manager  
Teaching Staff at McGriff, Niceville, and Chester Pruitt



**Former Head Start student, Joseph Lofton, Jr.**  
**with mother, Angela Wicks,**  
**Head Start Family Services Specialist**  
**pictured signing with TROY UNIVERSITY,**  
**Alabama for a full football scholarship.**



*How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and the strong. Because someday in life you will have been all of these. Trust yourself. Think for yourself. Act for yourself. Speak for yourself. Be yourself. You will be successful.*

*Quotes taken from the book "Great Quotes by Great Teachers".*

*Submitted By:*  
*Jo Rita Thompson*  
*Parent Involvement Specialist*





**Parent Committee Meetings:**



**Edney**

Already occurred this month

**Lakeview/Kennedy**

February 10 @ 8:00 am

**Chester Pruitt**

February 11, 2010 @ 8:30 am

**McGriff**

Already occurred this month

**Niceville**

Already occurred this month

**Bay Street**

Already occurred this month

**Laurel Hill**

TBA



**Board of Directors Meeting:**



**February 25, 2010 @ 4:30 pm at the  
Administration Office in Shalimar**

**Policy Council Meeting**



**February 16, 2010 @ Administration  
Office @ 10:30 am.**

REMEMBER.....

DON'T WORRY.....

BE HAPPY!!!!!!!