

# Parent Provider Connections – January 2022

## UPCYCLED RACE CAR

Use a tissue paper cardboard tube, cut a hole in the top where the “seat” will be. The children can decorate as they choose and attach black construction paper circles with paper brads for wheels. Adult help will be needed to cut out top for race car seat and attaching wheels.

## MEAT ALTERNATES

Meat alternates include foods such as eggs, peanut or soy butter, yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, tofu, and beans. You can serve meat alternates up to three times per week in place of grains at breakfast, but remember the amount you serve must be equal to or more than the grains component for the age group.

## SPEEDY SALSA CHICKEN

1 lb chicken breasts, skinless, boneless  
8 oz salsa

Place chicken in Crockpot and cover with 8 oz salsa. Add taco seasoning or other seasonings to taste. Cook on low for 6 hours. Shred. Serve in tacos, stuffed peppers or over sautéed vegetables.

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## FLOOR RACING

Using painter's tape, children can create their own racetrack or streets. Add obstacles with small building blocks or other toys around the child care. They will have a great time racing toy cars on their own track!



Happy New Year Everyone!

We are excited to share the start of a new year with adventures and learning ahead! This month we will have fun with racing while the children are in our care and you can try any of these activities at home as well. The Speedy Salsa Chicken recipe is great to have at home when you have a busy day of work and not much time to prepare dinner.

Please note, we will be open on Martin Luther King Day on January 17, 2022. Look for spring field trip and Valentine's Day Celebration information to be coming home soon!

As always, thank you for trusting us with the care of your children. We look forward to a wonderful 2022 together!

Sincerely,  
Donna

**In the body of each newsletter, there is space for you to customize information you would like to convey to the parents. This is an opportunity to share with parents examples of the healthy food you provide, as well as the fun and educational activities their children are engaged in. To customize, open the PDF and click on the blank field to type your newsletter, like the example above. Then save the file and print your copies to distribute them to parents.**

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# Parent Provider Connections – February 2022

## MAGIC FAIRY DUST JAR

Using a mason jar, glue the gasket and lid together with hot glue. Have children pour a bottle of clear glue into the jar and add iridescent glitter. Fill the rest of the jar with warm water and adults should shut tightly or glue the lid to the jar. Shake the jar and watch the fairy dust swirl.

## GOING GREEN

All vegetables are important, but green vegetables pack a powerful punch. They include fiber to aid in digestion, folate to help with red cell production, iron to oxygenate the blood, calcium for bone support along with the efficiency in muscular, nervous, and urinary systems. Vitamins A, C, E and K are also found in green vegetables and help to support the immune system, vision, provide antioxidants, and aid in blood clotting.

## ENCHANTED BRUSSELS

1 lb Brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered  
2 tbsp olive oil  
Salt and pepper

Place Brussels sprouts on baking tray. Drizzle olive oil and mix to evenly coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Cook at 400°F until crisp and browned on the outside, but tender on the inside. Stir every ten minutes.

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## PIXIE BOOT CAMP

Lead the children in strength exercises: right foot stand, left foot stand, leaping, spinning, arm circles, and reach far overhead with one hand and then the other.

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# Parent Provider Connections – March 2022

## JUMP THE MOAT

Using two pool noodles or ropes, position them parallel to each other to create a “moat” and have children take turns jumping over the moat. Continue moving the ropes further apart to make it more challenging.

## WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains include corn, oats, rice, rye and whole wheat. Whole grain-rich foods contain at least 50% whole grains and the remaining grains are enriched or are 100% whole grains.

## STRAWBERRY SWORDS

Pretzel sticks

Strawberries, whole or cut into chunks

Give each child 1/2 cup of strawberries and 16 pretzel sticks. The children can use their edible sword to stick into each chunk of strawberry. For a twist, use various fruits cut into chunks, such as kiwis, peaches or mandarin oranges. Fun and yummy!

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## SHIELD OF ARMS

Every knight needs their own shield! Have children create their own using the template at [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org). Have a show and tell when they are finished.



[cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org)



# Parent Provider Connections – April 2022

## I'M AN ASTRONAUT!

Have children cut out and decorate the astronaut template from [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org). Take a headshot picture of each child. Complete each astronaut with the children's pictures.

## SWEET STOP

As CACFP providers, we can educate children on the importance of limiting sugar and fueling our bodies with vitamins, minerals and protein to help us grow big and strong. We wouldn't want to fill up a space shuttle with bad gasoline, and that's what sugar does to our bodies. Limit sugars in cereals and yogurt and read labels for added ingredients ending in "-ose," such as fructose and sucrose.

## SPACE FRUIT POPS

4 cups fruit - berries, mango, or peaches, sliced or crushed  
2 cups yogurt

Combine ingredients and pour into 3 oz paper cups. Freeze until consistency allows you to put popsicle stick in the mixture. Continue to freeze until firm. Peel off plastic cups and enjoy!

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## COLD ASTEROID

Asteroids are actually very cold to the touch. Too cold, in fact! Create an asteroid from crumbled aluminum foil and play just like the traditional game of hot potato, where the goal is to pass it along as fast as possible. Fun twist on a classic!

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# Parent Provider Connections – May 2022

## PICKY PALATES

Taste tests are fun and can be done regularly as a part of your curriculum to allow children to increase their preference of fresh vegetables and fruits. Lead children in interaction with the food through smell, taste, touch, and sight before tasting. You can also integrate literacy by introducing an alphabet letter and a book to read about the tasted food.

## TYRANNOSAURUS TRACING

Using plastic dinosaur figures and construction paper, have children set up an art studio by placing the dinosaurs on a sidewalk or hard surface. Then place a piece of paper by the dinosaur to make a shadow. They can trace around the shadow with pencils, crayons, or even sidewalk chalk if you want to skip the paper. Experiment with how to make the shadows bigger and smaller.

## DINO DANCE

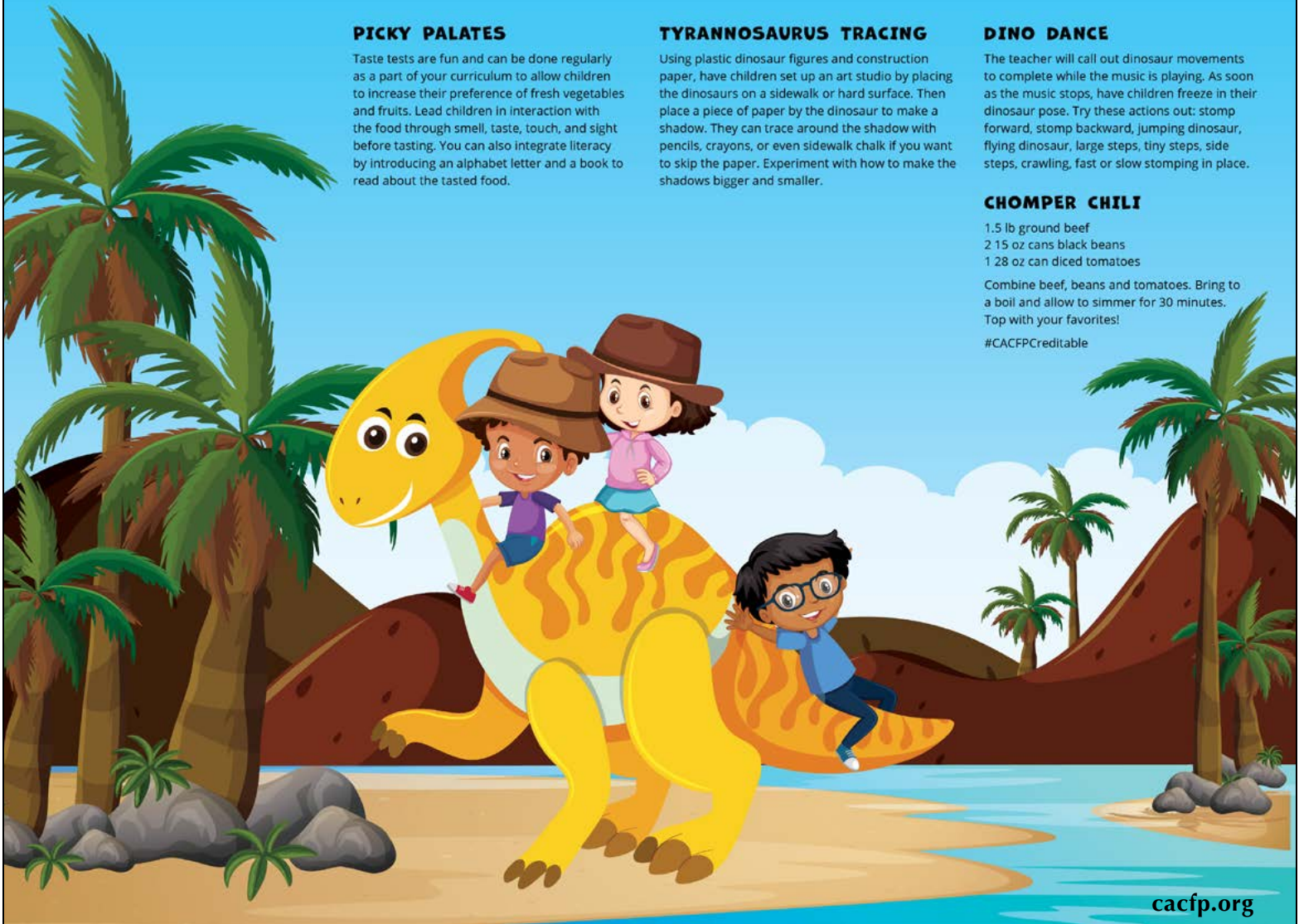
The teacher will call out dinosaur movements to complete while the music is playing. As soon as the music stops, have children freeze in their dinosaur pose. Try these actions out: stomp forward, stomp backward, jumping dinosaur, flying dinosaur, large steps, tiny steps, side steps, crawling, fast or slow stomping in place.

## CHOMPER CHILI

1.5 lb ground beef  
2 15 oz cans black beans  
1 28 oz can diced tomatoes

Combine beef, beans and tomatoes. Bring to a boil and allow to simmer for 30 minutes. Top with your favorites!

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# Parent Provider Connections – June 2022

## HYDRATION INFORMATION

The body uses water to regulate temperature, eliminate waste, and cushion bones and joints. Dehydration happens because more fluid leaves the body than enters it. Children ages 1-2 need 8-16 oz of water per day, 3-5 year olds need 24-40 oz of water per day and 6-13 years of age need 48-64 oz of water per day.

## SUPERHERO CUFFS

Using tissue paper rolls cut in half, allow children to decorate two each with their favorite superhero symbols. These could even be spray painted metallic before decorating. Secure to wrists with a loose, but snug piece of yarn to activate superpowers.

## POWER PUNCH SMOOTHIE

1 cup frozen berries  
1 1/2 cups orange juice  
1 1/2 cups Greek yogurt  
1 banana  
Blend all ingredients together and serve.  
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## HOT SPOT HOP

Create hot spots around the room with posters saying a superhero action word. Make one hot spot per child. The actions could include lunge, twist, jump, leap, spin, hop, fly, squat, and lift. Turn on the music and let the children hop around. When the music stops, the child will go to the closest hot spot and perform the action until the music turns on again.



# Parent Provider Connections – July 2022

## FARM TO ECE

We can incorporate Farm to ECE by sourcing from local food providers, going on field trips to farms and produce vendors, and including raw taste tests and learning materials in our curriculum. Our goal is to create a healthier environment where the children have access to nutritious, high quality food.

## HULA HOOP LASSOS

Place outdoor toys and objects in a large space outside where children can spread out. Using the hula hoops, have them try to gently toss (or lasso) the targets on the ground. Set up different challenges to include an assortment of objects at various distances.

## COWBOY CLUSTERS

1/2 lb long grain brown rice  
1 lb frozen corn

Add 1/4 cup warmed corn to 1/4 cup cooked brown rice and form into a ball. Children will love this healthy side dish.

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## BUCKAROO BOOTS

Every cowboy needs a pair of boots! Use the template found at [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org) and allow the children to create their own special, one-of-a-kind cowboy boots.



[cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org)



# Parent Provider Connections – August 2022

## DEEP SEA PRINTING

Paint the palms and 4 fingers (not the thumb) of your children and help them stamp them onto a blue sheet of paper. Once the paint dries, turn the fingers pointing downward to become the tentacles of the jellyfish. Add googly eyes and let the children decorate their ocean scene.

## SHARK ATTACK!

This is a fun twist on Hide-n-Seek. One child will be designated the shark and while the shark counts, the fish will hide. When the shark finishes counting, they yell "Shark attack!" Then all the fish try to swim to the safe spot without being caught by the shark.

## HEALTHY COOKING

Frying by submerging food in fat to cook is not allowed in the CACFP. Instead try these healthier alternatives: roast, bake, broil, sauté, pan fry, stir fry, or grill. You can put healthy twists on classics like Oven Roasted Potatoes and Mashed Potatoes instead of French Fries.

## CORAL CAULIFLOWER

2 lbs cauliflower, trimmed and steamed  
Cheddar cheese  
Butter  
Salt and pepper  
Steam the cauliflower and sprinkle Cheddar cheese over the top. Add desired seasonings and butter for flavor.

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# Parent Provider Connections – September 2022



## RAINBOW PIZZA

Large whole grain-rich pizza crust  
Pizza sauce  
2 1/2 cups rainbow color vegetables, diced  
Mozzarella cheese, part skim, shredded

Cook crust according to directions. Add pizza sauce, cheese, and then let the children help you add the diced vegetables in a rainbow pattern. Rainbow vegetables ideas include tomatoes, carrots or orange peppers, yellow peppers, broccoli, and purple onion. Slice into 8 pieces.

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## GROW YOUR BRAIN

Ninety percent of brain development occurs from pregnancy through age 5 and Iron, Omega-3 Fatty acids, Iodine, zinc, copper, Vitamin A, and folates are vital. Foods high in Omega-3 Fatty Acids help brain function and development. Serve foods like salmon, walnuts and soybeans. Vitamin A improves learning and memory and can be found in foods such as dairy, sweet potatoes, spinach, and cantaloupe.

## COTTON BALL PAINTING

The children will need multiple cotton balls and rainbow paint. Have them create their own rainbow by stamping the paint with a cotton ball on construction paper. They'll have a beautiful picture and practice their fine motor skills!

## FIND THE COLORS

Hide multiple, various color balls around the room or yard. Call out the first color to make your rainbow. The children will search for that color ball and bring it back. Repeat until they have found all of the colors of the rainbow.

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# Parent Provider Connections – October 2022

## SERVING FRUIT

100% juice can be given to children and can be a part of a healthy diet. However, we know as CACFP providers we must limit fruit juice to once per day as part of a creditable meal. Serve whole fruits, which will also include the fruit fiber that is removed from juicing. The act of actually eating the fruit helps to keep our tummies full, which reduces snacking and hunger.

## BUCCANEER BITES

1/2 cup of mixed fruit per child  
2 oz yogurt per child  
Graham crackers

Give each child their portion of yogurt and fruit. They can make their own buccaneer bites by layering the graham cracker, yogurt, and then topping with fruit for a yummy creditable snack.

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## YO HO HO MOVES

Turn on the music and have children free dance. Once the music stops, they have to freeze in the pirate move you call out: walk the plank, sword in the air, looking through a periscope, hand over the eyes looking for land, and digging for treasure with a shovel. Be creative!

## PAPER PLATE PIRATE

Have children paint the back of a paper plate with skin tone paint. Once dry, have them glue fabric to the top of the plate to make pirate head scarves, add smiles with a marker, and googly eyes. They can even make paper eye patches!



[cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org)

# Parent Provider Connections – November 2022

## TREASURE PEPPER

6 red bell peppers, stem and seeds removed  
12 oz can tuna  
1 tablespoon mayonnaise  
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard  
Parmesan cheese

Combine mayonnaise and Dijon, then mix in tuna. Cut bell peppers in half. Add 1.5 oz or 3 tablespoons of tuna on each half. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese over the top. Cook at 375°F for 25 minutes.

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## FIND THE GOLD

Using plastic coins or the paper coin template from [cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org), hide the coins throughout your child care. Give the children clues to follow or a map with marked stops along the way. Clues could be: what do people come through to get inside?, where do we wipe our feet?, where do we keep our food cold?, or where does my teacher sit to read us a book?

## X MARKS THE SPOT

Let the children get creative and make their own treasure map using construction paper and craft supplies. They could use the classroom or outdoor as a guide for their map and then take turns trying to follow the map.

## WHAT ABOUT CEREAL

When choosing whole grain-rich ready-to-eat cereal, make sure to meet these three requirements. First, read the food label and make sure whole grain is the first ingredient or second, only after water. The cereal also must be fortified, meaning it contains added vitamins and minerals that aren't naturally present. Third, make sure it meets the CACFP sugar limit requirement.

[cacfp.org](http://cacfp.org)



# Parent Provider Connections – December 2022

## KING OF THE JUNGLE

Children will paint the back of a paper plate tan for a lion. Assist as needed to attach tan ears and googly eyes. Use a black marker to draw the nose and mouth. Then turn the plate over and glue brown paper rectangles all around the edge to create the lion's mane.

## IT'S A JUNGLE

It really is a jungle out there and children will have so much fun going through an obstacle course. Run through hula hoops, go under a limbo stick, skip through the quicksand, rock hop through the water, leap over a canyon gorge. The possibilities are endless!

## MILK IS MORE

Each sip of milk is loaded with essential nutrients needed for growth and development. Milk is high in protein, calcium, potassium, and Vitamin D. These nutrients build strong bones, teeth, and muscles. Whole milk is only creditable for 1-year-olds. Low-fat and fat-free milk are only creditable for ages 2 and older. Lactose-free milk is creditable for all ages 1 and older. Remember, non-dairy beverages that are not nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk are non-creditable.

## SAFARI PASTA

1/2 lb whole grain-rich pasta, dry  
Olive oil  
3 cups broccoli florets  
Salt and pepper  
Parmesan cheese

In a large skillet, heat oil. Add bite sized broccoli florets and seasonings until al dente. Add cooked pasta and sprinkle with Parmesan.

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