You can help your child develop healthy habits early in life that will bring lifelong benefits. As a parent, you can encourage your kids to think about their food choices and physical activity habits. Here are some tips to get you started.

1. **Be a good role model** - You don’t have to be perfect all the time, but if kids see you trying to eat right and getting physically active, they’ll notice. You’ll send a message that good health is important.

2. **Keep things positive** - Kid’s don’t like to hear what they can’t do, tell them what they can do instead. Celebrate successes and task done well. Help children and teens develop a good self-image.

3. **Get the whole family moving** - Plan times for everyone to get moving together. Take walks, ride bikes, go swimming, garden or just play hide-and-seek outside. Everyone will benefit from the exercise and the time together.

4. **Be realistic** - Setting realistic goals and limits are key to adopting any new behavior. Small steps and gradual changes can make a big difference in your health over time, so start small and build up.

5. **Limit TV, video games and computer time** - These habits lead to a sedentary lifestyle and excessive snacking, which increase risks for obesity and cardiovascular disease.

6. **Pick truly rewarding rewards** - Don’t reward children with tv, video games, candy or snacks for a job well done. Find other ways to celebrate good behavior.

7. **Make dinnertime a family time** - Get your kids involved in cooking and planning meals. Everyone develops good eating habits together and the quality time with the family will be an added bonus.

8. **Make a game of reading food labels** - The whole family will learn what’s good for their health and be more conscious of what they eat.

9. **Stay involved** - Be involved with your children’s health care. Ask questions.

Source: [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Top-10-Tips-to-Help-Children-Develop-Healthy-Habits_UCM_303805_Article.jsp#.WHZyJE0iyUk](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/HealthyKids/HowtoMakeaHealthyHome/Top-10-Tips-to-Help-Children-Develop-Healthy-Habits_UCM_303805_Article.jsp#.WHZyJE0iyUk). Retrieved 1-11-2017
VALENTINE COLLAGE

1. Start with a large sheet of paper or construction paper.
2. Take old magazines and the advertisements from papers. Look for anything Valentine's Day related, such as hearts, flowers, and candies.
3. Have child create a Valentine Collage with these magazine cutouts. Use markers, crayons and stickers to further decorate it.
4. Hang the finished collages for a Valentine's Day display.

Source: http://www.kidactivities.net/. Retrieved 1-11-17

VALENTINE RUBBINGS

Materials: Heart-shaped paper doilies or sandpaper, Scissors, White paper, Crayon

1. Cut out a heart shape from the sandpaper or use the heart-shaped doily.
2. Tape the heart to the table, with the tape on the back side of the heart.
3. Place a piece of white paper over the heart and rub a crayon (with the wrapper removed) sideways over the shape.

Rubbings are fun for any season and for all ages to learn about texture.

NOTE: KidActivities used a large doily heart. It's difficult to see in the image, but all the delicate elements showed very nicely on the rubbing. (Image by KidActivities.net)

COOKING WITH KIDS

COOKIE CUTTER APPETIZERS

1 whole wheat tortilla
2 tablespoons low-fat cream cheese
1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 cup vegetables (recommended: broccoli, carrots, red pepper, green onions), chopped

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
Cut out multiple shapes from one whole-wheat tortilla using cookie cutters.
Spray a cookie sheet with non-stick cooking spray.
Place cut out tortilla shapes onto cookie sheet.
Bake in oven for 12-15 minutes or until golden brown.

While tortillas are baking, mix cream cheese with garlic powder. Set aside.
Once tortilla cut outs are finished baking, let cool.
Spread the cream cheese mixture onto each cut out shape and decorate with mixed vegetables.

Number of servings: 1
Nutrition facts per serving: 192 calories, 5g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 374mg sodium, 31g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 7g protein.

Source: What's Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl

Sincerely,

Audrey Myers
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