



Enjoy Cooking and Playing with Kids

Do you worry that your kids are turning into snack-munching, couch potatoes this summer? Researchers say summer can be a time that kids experience a lack of structure and resort to unhealthy eating behaviors and putting on weight.

A great way to help kids make healthier choices is to get them into the kitchen, the garden, or grocery store. Food becomes more special when they can shop for it, grow it, or prepare it themselves.

Combine cooking experiences with lots of play time. Kids, just like adults, don't always like to exercise, but they love to play. A key for the whole family is to make moving fun, while everyone improves their fitness level.

Think about ways to provide active fun in the yard. Family games of kick-the-can, freeze tag, or badminton will be remembered long after the summer is over. Playing in the sprinkler on a hot day or Frisbee can provide the continued connection kids want with friends.

Use your community as much as possible. Walking, biking, rollerblading, or driving to a park, even to play the same game you play in your backyard, makes the event a little different.

Many kids think cooking is fun and exciting. Pick a food and brainstorm all the different ways it can be prepared. Then chose one way and do it. Maybe you can put together a recipe book of things they make this summer, the "Summer of 2007" collection. Overall, have fun as you create magical (and healthy) memories with that special child in your life!

The Northeast Iowa Food & Farm (NIFF) Coalition and the Food & Fitness Initiative are working together to create community environments that support access to fresh, locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. More information about these programs can be found at www.niffcoalition.org.