

potpourri

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What's Inside?

Eating Seasonal Produce

Foolproof Grilling

Kids & Composting

Children's Eye Health

& More!



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As we welcome the month of May, we celebrate the warmer days ahead and the renewed focus on children's health and well-being. This is an exciting time of year in the Great Lakes region as the local produce starts to become available and farmer's markets come alive.

With the school year winding down, many families face the challenge of maintaining consistent access to healthy food. That's why our work, along with the dedication of childcare providers, is more important than ever. Together, we can bridge this gap and ensure that children continue to receive the nourishment they need to grown, learn, and thrive.

I'd like to take a moment to recognize the incredible efforts of our childcare providers who play a vital role in shaping young lives. Your commitment to not only feeding children but also fostering environments of care and support is invaluable. We appreciate all that you do!

As we look ahead, let's continue working together to make sure no child goes hungry, this month and every month!

Denise Meyer

Denise Meyer
Executive Director

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Time for Something New!

Here are some new recipes from the Institute of Child Nutrition!

Baked Tilapia Fish Fillets

6 servings
theicn.org

Ingredients

13 ½ oz tilapia fish fillets, fresh or frozen, thawed (each piece should be about 2 ¼ oz)

1/4 cup breadcrumbs, whole-wheat, seasoned

1 tsp herbs de Provence seasoning blend, dried OR italian seasoning

1 tbsp plus 1 tsp mayonnaise, reduced-fat

Instructions

- Preheat oven to 400 °F.
- Place a baking rack on top of a baking sheet. Spray rack with nonstick cooking spray. Set aside.
- In a small bowl, combine breadcrumbs and Herbs de Provence. Mix.
- Lightly coat each piece of fish with mayonnaise. Top coated fish with the seasoned breadcrumb mixture.
- Place coated fish on prepared baking rack. Bake for 15 minutes. Wash hands after touching uncooked fish. Heat fish to an internal temperature of 145 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds or until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork. Remove from the oven.
- Serve 1 fillet. Serve immediately, or keep warm at 140 °F or higher.

Tips: Can use pollock, catfish, grouper, haddock, cod, halibut, rockfish, sole, or bass instead of tilapia.

⊕ Grain ⊕ Meat/Meat Alternate

Barbecue Beef Sliders

6 servings
theicn.org

Ingredients

6 whole-wheat rolls or slider buns

14 1/2 oz beef chuck roast, fresh or frozen, thawed, without bone, practically free-of-fat

1/4 cup barbecue sauce

Instructions

- Place beef in a two-quart slow cooker. Cook on low for 4 hours or on high for 2 hours. Heat to an internal temperature of 145 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds.
- Remove beef from slow cooker. Place on a cutting board. Use two forks to shred beef into strips.
- In a medium bowl, combine shredded beef, barbecue sauce, and 2 Tbsp of au jus (liquid) from the slow cooker. Mix.
- Slice rolls in half horizontally (if not pre-sliced).
- Place 1/4 cup barbecue beef between each roll.
- Serve 1 slider. Serve immediately, or keep warm at 140 °F or higher.

⊕ Meat/Meat Alternate

⊕ Grain



Beef Picadillo

6 servings
theicn.org

Ingredients

1/2 cup brown rice, long-grain, uncooked

1 cup water

12 oz. raw ground beef, 90% lean, fresh or frozen

1 1/4 cups onions, diced

1 cup green bell peppers, diced

1 clove garlic, fresh, minced

1/3 cup tomatoes with juice, diced, canned

1 cup tomato sauce, canned

1/2 cup raisins

1/4 tsp oregano, dried

1/2 tsp cumin, dried, ground

2 tbsp cilantro, fresh, chopped (optional)

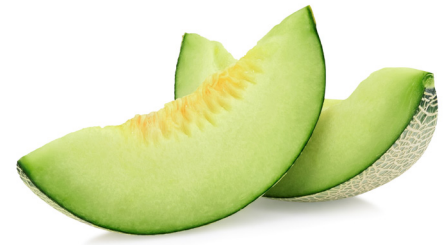
Instructions

- Combine brown rice and water in a small pot. Stir once.
- Heat on medium-high heat to a rolling boil. Cover and reduce heat to medium. Cook until water is absorbed, 15–20 minutes. Fluff the rice gently with a fork.
- Heat a medium skillet on medium-high heat on top of stove.
- Brown ground beef. Drain.
- Add onions, bell peppers, and garlic to ground beef. Sauté on medium-high heat until onions and bell peppers are soft. Stir frequently.
- Add diced tomatoes with juice, tomato sauce, raisins, oregano, and cumin. Bring to a boil, and remove from heat.
- Serve 1/2 cup picadillo over 1/4 cup rice. Garnish with 1 teaspoon cilantro (optional).

⊕ Meat/Meat Alternate ⊕ Vegetable
⊕ Grain

Meals & Menus

CACFP Requirements



CACFP	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	
BREAKFAST	1. GN/BP OR MT** 2. FT OR VG 3. MK	1. WG Bagel 2. Melon 3. Milk	1. WG Waffle 2. Banana 3. Milk	1. WG Bagel 2. Strawberries 3. Milk	1. Low-fat Yogurt w/ Granola 2. Blueberries*** 3. Milk	1. Oatmeal 2. Orange Slices 3. Milk
LUNCH/DINNER	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. VG 4. FT OR VG 5. MK	1. Turkey Meatballs 2. WG Pasta 3. Steamed Zucchini 4. Orange Slices 5. Milk	1. Baked Tofu Cubes 2. Brown Rice 3. Roasted Broccoli 4. Pineapple 5. Milk	1. Chicken & Cheese Quesadilla 2. WG Tortilla 3. Carrots*** 4. Peaches 5. Milk	1. Tuna Salad 2. WG Crackers 3. Cucumber 4. Watermelon 5. Milk	1. Lentil Soup 2. WG Roll 3. Mixed Greens 4. Kiwi 5. Milk
SNACKS*	1. MT 2. GN/BP 3. FT 4. VG 5. MK	1. Cottage Cheese 2. WG Pita Chips 3. Pears 4. Cherry Tomatoes*** 5. Milk	1. Hard-Boiled Egg 2. WG Crackers 3. Grapes*** 4. Carrots*** 5. Milk	1. Nut/Seed Butter 2. WG English Muffin 3. Applesauce 4. Cucumber 5. Milk	1. Nut or Seed Butter 2. Brown Rice Cakes 3. Bananas 4. Edamame 5. Milk	1. Greek Yogurt 2. WG Waffle Strips 3. Blueberries*** 4. Celery*** 5. Milk
(*) Choose two food groups from “Snacks” list.			(**) MT may be substituted for GN/BP up to 3x a week.			
FT: Fruit VG: Vegetable GN: Grain WG: Whole Grain MK: Milk BP: Bread Prdt. MT: Meat/Meat Alternate			(***) Choking hazard for children under age 4.			



REMINDERS:

March 2025 final claim due: **May 26 (Mon.)**

- Please remember to submit enrollments/renewals in a timely manner.
- Please open any mail that comes from ACD. Also, please check your email and spam folders for news and information from us.
- Please remember to mark children out of school and to call in daycare closures.
- Send enrollments to: **Michigan:** mifrontdesk@acd kids.org | Fax: (517) 332-5543
Illinois: ilcustomerservice@acd kids.org | Fax: (708) 236-0872

May's Fresh Picks: Tasty, Healthy & Fun for Kids!

Eating seasonal produce is a great way for families to enjoy fresh, flavorful, and nutrient-packed foods! As spring fully settles in, farmers' markets across the Midwest come alive with vibrant produce, making it the perfect time to introduce kids to the joys of eating locally grown food!

In the Great Lakes region, May marks the arrival of crisp asparagus, tender rhubarb, and leafy greens like spinach and lettuce. Soon, we'll have strawberries too! These fresh picks aren't just delicious, they're also packed with nutrients essential for growing kids! Strawberries are loaded with vitamin C, asparagus is a great source of fiber and folate, and rhubarb provides calcium to support strong bones.

A few of the best ways to get kids excited about seasonal eating:

- Visit a local farmers' market
- Pick your own produce at a U-pick farm
- Do activities that illustrate how food gets from farms to tables

This hands-on approach helps children develop an appreciation for fresh food and encourages them to try new flavors!

Get everyone involved. A simple meal could include a fresh strawberry and spinach salad, grilled asparagus, or a homemade rhubarb crisp (with whole-grain topping) for dessert. Letting kids help with washing and mixing ingredients make them more likely to enjoy the food they've helped prepare.

Eating seasonally also supports local farmers and the environment. By choosing locally grown produce, you can reduce the distance food travels, ensuring fresher flavors while reducing your carbon footprint as well as supporting your local agricultural community!

So, this month and in the months ahead, take advantage of the best that Illinois and Michigan have to offer! Whether it's a planting activity, a fun kitchen experiment, or just enjoying a sweet, sun-ripened strawberry, seasonal eating is a delicious and healthy way to celebrate spring!

Healthy Rhubarb Muffins

2 cups whole grain flour
 3/4 cup granulated sugar
 1 tsp baking soda
 1 tsp baking powder
 1/2 tsp fine sea salt
 1 1/2 cups full-fat Greek yogurt
 1/2 cup avocado oil (swap in favorite neutral oil)
 1/4 cup milk
 1 egg
 1/2 tsp vanilla extract
 2 cups finely chopped rhubarb (pieces the size of small peas)



Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a 12-cup muffin pan with muffin liners; set aside. In a large bowl, whisk together flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder and salt.

In a separate bowl, whisk together yogurt, oil, milk, egg and extract(s).

Add yogurt mixture to dry ingredients and use your biggest spatula to gently fold together, scraping the bottom, until 80% incorporated with floury streaks remaining.

Gently fold in the rhubarb. Don't overmix.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin tin.

Bake for 18-22 minutes, until golden brown and tops spring back when lightly pressed.

BBQ Season Has Begun!

Tips & Tricks for Foolproof Grilling

Grilling outdoors successfully is a great feeling with the sizzling sounds and the mouth-watering aromas. Whether you are flipping burgers, charring veggies, or slow-cooking something more adventurous, grilling brings out the best flavors while letting you soak up the fresh air. Here are some tips from Weber to give you confidence at the grill:

1. Preheat the Grill

Preheat your grill with the lid closed for 10 to 15 minutes. With all the coals glowing red, or all the gas burners on high, the temperature under the lid should reach 500F.

2. Keep Your Grill Clean

When bits of food have stuck to your cooking grate, and the grate is hot, clean it with a stainless steel brush. This step is not only for cleanliness. It also prevents your food from sticking.

Note: Replace brush if any loose bristles are found on cooking grates or brush.

3. Keep The Grill Lid Down

Here are four important reasons why your grill lid should be closed as much as possible.

1. It keeps the grates hot enough to sear the food.
2. It speeds up the cooking time and prevents the food from drying out.
3. It traps the smokiness that develops when fat and juices vaporize in the grill.
4. It prevents flare-ups by limiting oxygen.

If the wind is blowing hard, it will lower a gas grill's temperature and raise a charcoal grill's temperature.

4. Direct vs. Indirect Heat Grilling

Direct heat (when the fire is directly below the food) is best for relatively small, tender pieces of food that cook in 20 minutes or less.

Indirect heat (when the fire is on either side of the food) is best for larger, tougher cuts of meat that require more than 20 minutes of cooking.

5. Tame the Flame

Too many flare-ups can burn your food. Keep the lid on as much as possible. This limits the amount of oxygen inside the grill, which will help extinguish any flare-ups.

If the flames are getting out of control, move the food over indirect heat temporarily, until they die down. Then move the food back.

6. Caramelization is Key

One of biggest reasons for the popularity of grilled food is its seared taste.

To develop this taste for maximum effect, use the right level of heat and resist the temptation to turn food often. Your patience will allow for caramelization, or browning. That creates literally hundreds of flavors and aromas. *As a general rule, turn food only once.*

7. Lighter Fluid: No Way!

It's a liquid product that evaporates. Who wants that, and its foul chemical fumes under their food? Chimney starters and lighter cubes are much cleaner and much more effective.



Turkey Avocado Burgers

Yield: 8 1/8-pound burgers or 4 1/4-pound burgers

Ingredients:

1 pound ground turkey (93% lean/7% fat)
 2/3 cup fresh or panko breadcrumbs
 1/2 cup plain whole-milk Greek yogurt
 1/4 cup minced shallots (from 1 large shallot)
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
 1 teaspoon chili powder
 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt, divided
 1 medium avocado, pitted and diced
 1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice
 4 slices Monterey Jack cheese
 Whole grain buns



Instructions:

1. Place the breadcrumbs, yogurt, shallot, garlic, chili powder, cumin, and 1/2 teaspoon salt in a large bowl and mix to combine.
2. Add the turkey and use your fingers to combine the meat and flavorings until just combined. Divide the mixture into 4 or 8 equal portions. Place on a plate or baking sheet. Press your thumb into the center of each patty to create a dimple, which will help keep the burgers from bulging in the center as they cook. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
3. Heat an indoor or outdoor grill to medium-high heat. Meanwhile, lightly mash together the avocado, lime juice, and the remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt in a small bowl.
4. Grill the burgers uncovered until cooked through and they reach an internal temperature of 160°F, 3 to 4 minutes on each side. During the last minute of cooking, top each burger with a slice of cheese, cover the grill, and let the cheese melt. Transfer to a clean plate.
5. Grill buns until toasted, about 30 seconds per side.
6. Place a patty on the bottom of each bun. Top the patties with the mashed avocado, and close the bun.

Safety notes: Keep children away the hot grill.

🌾 Grain 🥬 Vegetable 🍖 Meat/Meat Alternate

■ Source: thekitchn.com

■ Images: Adobe Stock Images



LIMIT IMPULSE BUYS

Impulse buying can quickly drain your budget and leave you with unnecessary items. Here are a few practical ways to control impulse spending and make mindful choices.



Follow the 24-hour (or longer) rule.

Before making a non-essential purchase, wait at least 24 hours. For bigger purchases, extend this period to a week or even a month. This cooling-off time helps you determine whether the item is a real need or just a fleeting want.

Make a shopping list and stick to it.

Before going to the store or shopping online, write down exactly what you need. This reduces the temptation to buy extra things you didn't plan for.

Avoid shopping when emotional or bored.

Many impulse purchases happen when people are stressed, sad, or just looking for something to do.

Leave your credit card at home.

If you struggle with impulse purchases, try using only cash or a debit card when shopping. This helps you stick to a budget and makes you think twice before spending.

Set a monthly "splurge" budget.

Instead of cutting out impulse buys completely, set a small budget for discretionary spending. This allows you to enjoy occasional treats without feeling guilty.

■ Source: nerdwallet.com

Kids & Compost!

Little hands love to dig, explore, and discover! Composting is the perfect way for young kids to do just that while learning about nature! Turning food scraps into rich soil isn't just a science lesson, it's a hands-on adventure that teaches kids how to care for the earth in a fun and meaningful way!

What Is Composting?

Composting is the process of turning food scraps and natural waste into healthy soil. Tiny organisms (think bacteria, worms, insects, and fungi) break down things like fruit peels and leaves, creating nutrient-rich dirt that helps plants grow.

Benefits of Composting

- **Reduces Waste:** Keeps food scraps and natural materials out of landfills.
- **Helps Plants Grow:** Creates nutrient-rich soil for gardens.
- **Protects the Earth:** Cuts down on pollution and greenhouse gases.
- **Teaches Kids About Nature:** Shows how food and plants cycle through the environment.
- **Saves Money:** Reduces the need for chemical fertilizers.

What Can You Compost?

Brown + Green = Compost!

Browns: Leaves, pine needles, sawdust, wood

chips, uncoated paper – source of carbon

Greens: Fresh grass clippings, vegetable scraps, weeds – source of nitrogen

Mixed ingredients: Moss, coffee grounds, tea bags, flower

Do NOT Compost: Meat scraps, bones, dairy products, pet wastes, seeds and tuberous plants or diseased plants

Get Started

There are lots of different ways to compost outdoors that you can look into but for a quick and easy kid project, try bucket composting.

Collect the right scraps on the counter in a coffee can, Tupperware or gallon Ziploc. Once you have enough transfer them to a bucket. Chop the scraps and mix them with an equal amount of greens and browns in your bucket. Turn the contents or add a lid and shake once or twice a week. This will yield usable compost for the garden in about a month. To make it more interesting you can add some holes to bring air in and some worms to try your hand at vermicomposting!

Whether in a backyard bin, bucket or results in the garden, composting helps little ones see the magic of nature in action while building lifelong habits of sustainability!



■ Source: extension.uga.edu ■ Image: timeforkids.com

Sidewalk Chalk Pops (Caregiver Activity)

Plaster of Paris
 Tempera paint (neon works best)
 Silicone pop mold
 Wood craft sticks
 Plastic cups & spoons
 Cold water
 Scissors
 Measuring cups

STEP 1

Cut down your craft sticks to about 3 inches long.

STEP 2

You will need one plastic cup for each color you wish to make. Fill each plastic cup with 1/3 cup very cold water.

STEP 3

Add two tablespoons of tempera paint to each plastic cup. Use the plastic spoons to gently stir the water and paint together. Don't worry if it remains a little chunky or separated—it will smooth out in the next step.

STEP 4

Add 2/3 cup Plaster of Paris to each plastic cup. Stir until thoroughly combined. Ideally, the mixture will have the consistency of thin yogurt.

STEP 5

Carefully pour the colors into the silicone mold. Gently tap the mold on a work surface to release any air bubbles.

STEP 6

After two minutes, the plaster will begin to firm up. Insert your craft sticks (cut side down) into the middle of the chalk "pops."

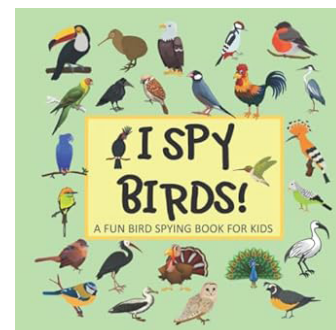
STEP 7

Setting these out in the hot sun is a great way to cure them quickly. After an hour, you will be able to carefully remove them from the mold. Leave them in the sun to continue drying. Allow to cure for 24 hours if possible.

Note: Do not put Plaster of Paris down your drain! It will harden in your pipes and cause damage. This is why you use disposable spoons and cups.

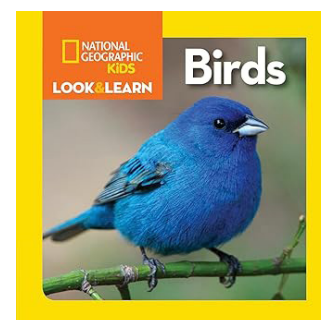


May is the time many interesting birds come through on their migratory routes! Let's read about them!



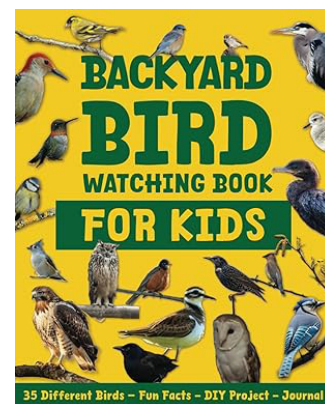
I SPY BIRDS!

by Janice Fletcher (Author)



National Geographic Kids Look and Learn: Birds

by National Geographic Kids (Author)



Backyard Bird Watching Book for Kids: Discover 35 Popular Backyard Birds

by Elvi Media (Author)

■ Books: [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Be Proactive About Children's Eye Health

Good vision is essential for a child's growth, learning, and overall well-being. Healthy eyes help children explore the world, succeed in school, and stay active. Regular eye check-ups, a nutritious diet, and proper screen time management play a crucial role in maintaining good eyesight. Prioritizing children's eye health today sets the foundation for a brighter, clearer future.

Boost visual engagement

You can help engage your child visually as a newborn and toddler with high-contrast colors and patterns in toys and décor. Give your child time to focus on things around them when in new environments, and approach objects from all angles to get your child comfortable with a wider field of vision. Playing games such as peekaboo and patty cake can help stimulate hand-eye coordination for babies the same way a game of catch can do with your toddler or school-aged child.

Provide a balanced diet

Nutrients such as zinc, lutein, omega-3 fatty acids, and vitamins A, C and E have been found to be beneficial to eye health.

Fruits with vitamins C and E, such as oranges, strawberries and mangos, can help restore tissues and prevent infections.

The omega-3 fatty acids found in fish can prevent dry eye and reduce future risk of cataracts and Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD).

Leafy greens containing Vitamin A such as spinach and kale can help fight dry eye as well as night blindness.

Non-meat proteins such as eggs and nuts also help balance your child's diet.

It is also important to remember that a healthy diet can help prevent conditions such as obesity and hypertension, which have been linked to additional eye diseases.

Protect eyes with appropriate eyewear

Recent studies have shown that 90 percent of pediatric eye injuries can be prevented. As children become more active, be sure to equip them with protective eyewear made with shatterproof plastic, called polycarbonate lenses. Look for eyewear that has been tested to meet the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards. Be sure to scope out any hazardous equipment in the indoor or outdoor locations where a child may be playing.



Limit use of digital screens

As digital learning becomes more common, screens from computers, tablets and mobile phones are more present in the lives of children than ever. Keep screens at least 18 to 24 inches from eyes, and encourage your child to follow the 20-20-20 rule, which is to look up from the screen every 20 minutes and look at something at least 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

While studies have shown that blue light from digital devices is not dangerous to the eyes, continuous viewing of these screens up close can cause digital eye strain, a condition which can cause blurred vision or dry, irritated eyes, as well as issues with focusing.

Look out for warning signs

You may be able to detect vision problems if you see a child struggle with the following:

- Disinterest in distant objects
- Squinting
- Head tilting
- Holding objects very close to the eyes
- Eye rubbing
- Sensitivity to light
- Poor hand-eye coordination
- Disinterest in reading or viewing distant objects

A visit to an eye doctor may be in order if a child is showing the symptoms above.

Eye health is critical to our kids' development.

May 2025

Submit quiz answers to your Field Monitor to receive FREE training credit.
Do not (e)mail quiz to the ACD office.

1. Screens should be at least how many inches from a child's eyes?

- a. 6-12
- b. 12-18
- c. 18-24
- d. 24-30

2. Preheat a grill for ___ minutes before cooking?

- a. 5-10 minutes
- b. 10-15 minutes
- c. 15-20 minutes
- d. 20-25 minutes

3. Omega-3 fatty acids found in fish can prevent dry eye.

- a. True
- b. False

4. Non-meat proteins like eggs and nuts do not help to balance a child's diet.

- a. True
- b. False

5. Strawberries are high in ____.

- a. Vitamin C
- b. Vitamin D
- c. Omega-3s
- d. Zinc

6. You can compost meat and dairy products.

- a. True
- b. False

7. You can reduce your carbon footprint by buying local produce.

- a. True
- b. False

8. If you struggle with impulse purchases, you should?

- a. Always carry a credit card
- b. Shop when you are bored
- c. Make a shopping list
- d. Not wait 24 hours

9. When grilling, you should keep the lid off as much as possible.

- a. True
- b. False

10. Warning signs of vision problems include:

- a. Eye rubbing
- b. Sensitivity to light
- c. Squinting
- d. All of the above

11. The temperature of your grill under the lid should reach ___ degrees.

- a. 800
- b. 700
- c. 600
- d. 500

12. Avoid shopping when bored to limit impulse purchases.

- a. True
- b. False

13. If the wind is blowing hard, it will raise a gas grill's temperature.

- a. True
- b. False

14. Mix which two colors to make a good compost.

- a. Red and Brown
- b. Brown and Green
- c. Green and Red
- d. Brown and Black

15. Eating seasonal produce helps support local farmers.

- a. True
- b. False



The Association for Child Development educates parents and caregivers about nutrition to promote the development of children and establish healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.



As a nonprofit, ACD has been operating for more than 45 years in Illinois and Michigan. A large part of our work involves serving more than 36,000 children through the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) – a program ensuring children have access to nutritious meals.

Alongside this critical work, ACD looks to make a greater impact by expanding our mission to include a safety component focused on decreasing the risk of harm or injury in homes children are cared for through outreach, education and safety products.

Support ACD's efforts to prevent child injury.

Donate today at www.acdkids.org.