

YMCA of MEWSA

483 Middlesex Avenue

Metuchen, NJ 08840

732-516-9200

ymcaofmews.org/locations/child-care

April 13, 2020

HEPA TIP

(Healthy Eating & Physical Activity)

Let kids help plan & prepare one meal a day. Children are more likely to eat a meal they have the opportunity to create, and they'll learn valuable skills as well.



Notes from the office...

At the Y we are committed to always being there for our community, even during these challenging times we are all currently navigating. This newsletter was our first attempt at continuing to support the community. However, this week we have found another way to help.

Although we have had to close all of our locations to prevent the spread of COVID-19, this week, we have been approved by the state to open a child care program at our Edison Y location, 1775 Oak Tree Road, for essential employees only. We have been able to engage a few families & staff from our various programs. This helps those families in essential positions to feel confident their children are in a safe & healthy space. Then they can continue doing the important work necessary to keep our community safe & healthy.

If you are an essential employee interested in our child care services or need assistance during this time visit our website at www.ymcaofmews.org or ChildCare@ymcaofmews.org.

Be well & take care of each other!

Erin Siemers & Cindy Shields
Senior Child Care Directors

Healthy Recipe Mini Pepper Pizzas

- 4 bell peppers, halved & cored
- 1 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup pizza sauce
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1/3 cup mini pepperoni
- 1 tbsp. chopped parsley



1. Preheat oven to 350°. On a sheet tray, drizzle peppers with olive oil and season with salt and pepper.
2. Spoon sauce onto each pepper half. Sprinkle with mozzarella and Parmesan and top with pepperoni. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes, until the peppers are crisp-tender and the cheese is melted.
3. Garnish with parsley before serving.

This recipe was supplied by Wegmans. Wegmans is a proud partner of the YMCA, providing the healthiest of snacks to our growing children.

ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

- ⇒ **LITERACY:** Letter formation is an important skill to develop in a child's early years. With young children creating sensory opportunities to explore letter recognition is helpful. Fill a baking sheet with sugar, small beans or sand if you have it. Let your child use their finger to create letters or even words (a baking sheet can also be used with magnetic letters for older children to create words or even sentences). Playdoh is another fun way for young children to explore letter formation. Let them create letters out of the playdoh and share them with you. For more early literacy ideas, click [here](#).
- ⇒ **MATH:** Children can learn many math skills in many unlikely ways. At this time of year jelly beans should be easily accessible. Have your child sort, count & create patterns with jelly beans. They can start by putting all the red jelly beans in one pile, all the blue in another & so on for each color in the package. Then have them count how many of each color there are (for older kids you can create math problems as well-how many blue and red together, how many more blue than red, or how many in total). Finally, for those more advanced, see if they can create patterns (red, blue, blue, red, blue, blue, etc.) Want more ideas, click [here](#).
- ⇒ **STEM:** Go on a shape hunt around your neighborhood. Make a paper with the shapes you are looking for & ask your kids as you walk what shapes they see. Prompt them with things like stop signs, basketball hoops, wheels & windows. For more fun STEM activities, click [here](#).
- ⇒ **MUSIC:** Play different genres of music for your children. Let them dance to the music with ribbons, streamers or other fun accessories. Ask older children to identify what instruments are playing. For the best music for young children, click [here](#).
- ⇒ **GROSS MOTOR:** Find items in your house for each color of the rainbow. When you find each item, jog in place and count to ten. Or go outside and play I Spy. Each time someone says I Spy.... You have to all walk, run or gallop to that object. If your child loves being active & you need more ideas, click [here](#).

APRIL 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Keep a weather chart for this month. Each day is it sunny, rainy or cloudy?	2 Draw 2 flowers. Color one yellow & the other purple.	3 How many things can you think of that can fly in the air?	4 Make a picture to send to Grandma or Grandpa.
5 Talk about something you did yesterday.	6 Count your socks. How many do you have? How many pairs do you have?	7 Can you touch your elbows behind your back?	8 Draw a map of your bedroom. Then try harder rooms, the kitchen or the garage.	9 Look at the stamps on the mail you receive. How are they alike & different?	10 Follow a recipe with you Mom or Dad.	11 Stack paper or plastic cups. To make a castle. Add other items to create a bridge.
12 Happy Easter! Hide & seek plastic Easter eggs around the house & yard.	13 Take a walk around the block with someone.	14 Close your eyes, stick out your tongue & stand on one foot. How long can you stay like that?	15 Draw a picture of your pet or a friend's pet.	16 Research & purchase seeds you would like to plant next week for Earth Day.	17 Count all the stairs/staircases in your home.	18 Plan an arts & craft project to do tomorrow.
19 Do the arts & craft project you planned Saturday.	20 Look for things in the kitchen that are BLUE.	21 Can you wink? Practice with each eye.	22 Today is EARTH DAY. Look it up & read about it.	23 Plant a seed.	24 Find at least 5 things that are the shape if a circle in your bedroom.	25 Talk about an incident that was so funny you couldn't stop laughing.
26 Fill a jar with small items like buttons or candies. Then have people guess how many are inside.	27 Make up a story about a dragon that wears a red sweater.	28 Jump rope.	29 Roll a ball & an orange. Do they roll the same? Why or why not?	30 Tally the result from your weather chart. How many days were sunny, rainy & cloudy?		

CATCH TIP: Play a game of follow the leader. Move around your house or around the block outside in different ways as the people behind you copy your movements. Take turns being the leader.

HELPING YOUR CHILD DURING THE PANDEMIC

With the increasing prevalence of the Coronavirus, you might be feeling vulnerable, concerned, or anxious about the spread of the virus & the effects on your family. Your child might also be feeling this way in response to changes in your mood, information they are hearing, or changes in their daily routine or environment. The following suggestions and resources are designed to help you support your child at this time.

#1 Be available. It is important to let your child know that you are there to listen or help them when they feel anxious, scared or worried. Listen to your child's feelings & use age appropriate language when responding to your child's questions or concerns.

#3 Teach your child things they can do to feel safe. Explain new safety routines like wash our hands for 20 seconds, cough/ sneeze into your elbow. Help them think of strategies for they start to feel emotional like yoga, exercise or meditative breathing.

#5 Create a back up plans. Let your child know that some activities might be postponed or look different. Have some distraction games ready to play and help your child create an activity bin filled with things they enjoys and can do independently.

#2 Let them know they are safe. Make sure you are calm when talking with your child. Tell them that you and other adults in their lives are doing your best to make sure they are safe. Let them know that you can listen and help.

#4 Keep daily routines as normal as you can. Just like us, children find safety in their daily routine. Keep a predictable schedule for meals, sleep, and nap times. Provide choices when you can and communicate when things might look different and why.

#6 Build family time into the routine. Schedule a time for everyone in the house to connect. Play board games, do puzzles, bake or prepare snacks together. Also try to connect your children virtually with grandparents, family members, and friends.