



# Parenting Young Children

Denton County Government Center ★ 306 N. Loop 288 Suite 222 ★ Denton, TX 76209-4887 ★ 940.565.5537 ★ 972.434.2052

## Should You Eat Out?

Eating out is becoming more and more common. We eat out when we are too tired or rushed to cook. We also eat out when we are away from home or are having a family celebration. Should you take your preschool child out to eat? What can you expect if you do?

As you know, it is hard to predict how a preschool child will behave. There are things you can do to make eating out both healthy and fun.

## A Restaurant Survival Guide

*Here are a few tips to make eating out with your child more fun.*

- ☺ **Try to eat at the time your child usually eats.** Avoid the restaurant's busiest time, if possible.
- ☺ **Go where children are welcome.** These places usually have booster chairs, high chairs, and children's activities.
- ☺ **Look for restaurants with healthful foods** that you and your children enjoy.
- ☺ **Stay away from noisy places.** Mealtime should be a quiet time to talk.
- ☺ **Ask for a booth or large table.** This will give you room for play while you wait.
- ☺ **Look at the child's menu carefully.** Often these are smaller portions of high-fat foods like hamburgers, fried chicken, and hot dogs. Check the appetizers and side dishes for better choices. See if you can order smaller servings of a main course. Or, order a healthful food for yourself and ask for an extra plate for your child.
- ☺ **Do things as you would at home.** Don't require your child to clean the plate. Avoid rewarding your child with dessert.

## Fast Food

Almost everyone eats fast food. But these foods can be high in fat, salt, or sugar. Here are some ways to eat a healthier meal.

- ✱ **Order low-fat milk, juice, or water instead of soft drinks.**
- ✱ **Order sandwiches and other food without mayonnaise or creamy sauces.** This will reduce the fat and salt.
- ✱ **Interest your child in foods besides burgers and fries.** Pizza, a taco, grilled chicken, fried rice, and submarine sandwiches can expand the list of foods that are familiar and enjoyable.
- ✱ **Consider a salad.** This can be healthful, especially if you include lots of dark green, deep yellow, or leafy green vegetables.

## Inside This Issue...

*Should You Eat Out?  
Restaurant Survival Guide  
Fast Food  
Activities and Books  
Eating Out With Your Child  
A Recipe You Can Make with Your Child  
Enjoy Easter Eggs – Safely  
Craft – Bunny Envelope*

- ✱ **Make sure your child has lots of fruits and vegetables for snacks and other meals.** Or, bring carrot sticks or fruit along.

## Activities

*Have fun with your child as he or she learns.*

- ✱ **When eating out with your child, take along a favorite toy or activity.** This will keep your child busy and happy while you wait.
- ✱ **Ask your child to think of foods that are eaten in different forms** (example mashed potatoes, baked potatoes, french fries). Which can be eaten with your hands? Which do you like best? Which are most healthful?

## Eating Out With Your Child

*Here are things to consider before you take your preschool child out to eat.*

- ✱ **It is hard for a preschool child to sit and wait quietly.** A child has a lot of energy and loves to explore new places.
- ✱ **Consider your child's habits.** Is your child used to getting up and playing as soon as he or she is done eating? If so, it will be hard for your child to sit and wait for others to finish at a restaurant.

## A Recipe You Can Make With Your Child

### Chicken Nuggets

1 3/4 cups herb-seasoned crumb stuffing mix  
 1/4 cup low-fat milk  
 1 pound chicken with bones and skin removed  
 Vegetable oil

1. **You** – Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. **Child** – Place stuffing mix in a plastic bag and crush with a rolling pin.
3. **You** – Cut chicken into 1-inch chunks or strips and dip in milk.
4. **Child** – Put chicken in bag with crushed crumbs and shake.
5. **You** – Place coated chicken on a lightly oiled baking sheet and bake for 15 to 20 minutes.
6. **Both** – Serve immediately with your favorite dipping sauce if you like.

## Books to Read with Your Child

Check for these at the library or bookstore:

*Frank and Ernest.* A. Day. New York: Scholastic, Inc., 1988.

*Little Nino's Pizzeria.* K. Barbour. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987.

*Popcorn,* Frank Asch. New York: Parents Magazine Press, 1979.

## Enjoy Easter Eggs – Safely

*Eggs have been used to celebrate spring festivals for centuries. Symbolic Easter rabbits and colored eggs came to America with German settlers, and egg hunts have been beloved by children ever since. Easter egg hunts can be fun and safe for all if a few simple guidelines are followed.*

- ! Inspect eggs before purchasing them, making sure that they are not dirty or cracked. Dangerous bacteria may enter a cracked egg.
- ! Store eggs in their original carton on a refrigerator shelf until ready for preparation. Keep eggs away from foods with strong odors (such as fish). Be sure that they do not freeze.
- ! For best results with hard-cooked eggs, buy eggs 1 week in advance and refrigerate them. Eggs can be “too fresh” to peel easily.

**Follow these directions for perfect hard-cooked eggs:**

- ! Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan; add enough tap water to cover at least 1 inch above eggs.
- ! Cover and quickly bring just to boiling. Turn off heat, and if needed, prevent further boiling by removing pan from the burner.
- ! Let covered eggs stand in the hot water for 15 to 17 minutes for *large* eggs. Adjust time up or down by about 3 minutes for each size larger or smaller.
- ! Immediately run cold water over eggs or place them in ice water until completely cooled.
- ! Dry and refrigerate, or decorate eggs immediately. Do not decorate cracked eggs. Refrigerate them and use as ingredients in holiday recipes.

**To decorate Easter eggs:**

Decorate Easter eggs with food coloring or commercially available egg dyeing kits. Use water 10 to 15 degrees warmer than the eggs for the dye bath. Write names or holiday messages on eggs with a wax crayon before coloring. Marking out patterns during repeated coloring can give intricate designs.

**To make your own colors from nature:**

Simmer uncooked eggs in water for up to 20 minutes with 1 tablespoon white vinegar per cup of water and one of the following materials. This is an art, so colors may vary.

**After decorating:**

Return eggs to the refrigerator until time for the hunt. Do not hide cracked eggs. Do not hide eggs where they may come into contact with pets, wild animals, birds, reptiles, insects, or lawn chemicals. Gather eggs as soon as possible after they are hidden. Do not allow them to remain hidden overnight.

**After the hunt:**

Inspect eggs; discard cracked eggs. Any uneaten eggs can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Eggs gathered at public hunts should not be eaten if they are out of refrigeration for more than 2 hours.

Material	Color
Fresh beets or cranberries, frozen raspberries	Pinkish red
Yellow onion skins	Orange
Orange or lemon peels, carrot tops, celery seed or ground cumin	Light yellow
Ground turmeric	Yellow
Spinach leaves	Pale green
Yellow Delicious apple peels	Green-gold
Canned blueberries or red cabbage leaves	Blue
Strong brewed coffee	Beige to brown

**Table decorations:**

Eggs used for table decoration should not be eaten.

**Take care from the time of selection, and eggs can help make your holiday safe and fun!**

**A REMINDER...**

This newsletter is public information and may be reproduced and distributed but you must keep the reference to the Texas Agricultural Extension Service and the number distributed must be reported to the Denton County Extension Office. Thank you!

*Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, handicap or national origin. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas cooperating.*

---

**This project is rated EASY to do.**

---

## Bunny Envelope

*This can be made at a classroom party and filled with treats for the children to take home.*

### What You Need

4x6 envelope in pastel shade  
Pencil  
Scissors  
Pink Construction paper  
White construction paper, optional for eyes  
Black construction paper, optional for eyes  
Red marker, pen, or crayon  
Wiggle eyes, optional – *(Only for older children because it can be a choking hazard for small children.)*



### How To Make It

1. Lick the envelope shut.
2. Turn the envelope up long ways (portrait). Note: Most of the envelope will be ears.
3. Leave about 2 inches to draw on the bunny face. Draw on ears and cut around the ears. Note: This leaves you with a little opening for the grass and eggs.
4. Cut out inner ears out of pink construction paper and glue in place.
5. Glue on wiggle eyes, or cut eyes out of construction paper and glue in place.
6. Glue on pom pom nose, or cut a nose out of construction paper and glue in place.
7. Draw on mouth with red pen.
8. Fill opening with Easter grass and an egg or goodies.

### Tips

1. You can make the ears larger and the face smaller if you wish.
2. If you would like to include more goodies, consider using a small brown paper sack instead of an envelope.

---

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This newsletter was compiled March 2001 by Kimberly Vanderbeek, County Extension Agent, Family & Consumer Sciences with information from the following sources:

*Kids' Meal Times - Issue No. 4, Eating Out...*, North Central Regional Extension Publication No. 598e, October 1996.

*Enjoy Easter Eggs-Safely*, Publication L-5086, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, March 1995

Bunny Envelope Contributed by **R. Defevers** to *The Kid's Domain* – [www.kidsdomain.com](http://www.kidsdomain.com) (C) 2001 Attitude Network, Ltd.,

*For more parenting information or if your group/organization would like to schedule a program, please contact the following County Extension Agent.*

*Kim Vanderbeek*

Kimberly Vanderbeek  
County Extension Agent  
Family & Consumer Sciences

Denton County Government Center  
306 N. Loop 288, Suite 222  
Denton, TX 76209-4887  
972.434.2052 940.565.5537  
FAX 940.565.5621  
k-vanderbeek@tamu.edu