



Fun and
Resources
for
Monday
April 13,
2020

Homemade Cheez-Its

Ingredients

- 8 oz Shredded Cheddar Cheese
- 2 tbsp cold Butter cut into small pieces
- 2 tbsp Shortening
- 1 tsp Kosher or Sea Salt
- 1 cup Flour
- 2 tbsp Ice Cold Water



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Instructions

1. Blend the cheese, butter, shortening and salt together on medium low speed in a stand mixer or with a hand mixer.
2. Add the flour and mix on low to incorporate (the dough will be dry).
3. Slowly add the water just until the dough comes together in a lump.
4. Form into a ball and wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for an hour.
5. Preheat oven to 375.
6. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.
7. Flour your work area and roll out the dough very thin (less than 1/8").
8. Use a pastry cutter to cut into 1" squares and use a skewer or toothpick to put a hole in the center of each.
9. Transfer to prepared baking sheet.
10. Bake for 12-15 minutes or until light brown at the edges.
11. Transfer to a cooling rack and allow to cool.



Why Kids Need Routines

<https://www.ahaparenting.com/parenting-tools/family-life/structure-routines>

Why do kids need routines?

Because routines give them a sense of security and help them develop self-discipline.

Humans are afraid of many things, but "the unknown" edges out everything except death and public speaking for most people.

Children's fear of the unknown includes everything from a suspicious new vegetable to a major change in their life. For better or worse, children are confronted with change daily, which is a growth opportunity, but also stressful.

The very definition of growing up is that their own bodies change on them constantly. Babies and toddlers give up pacifiers, bottles, breasts, cribs, their standing as the baby of the house. New teachers and classmates come and go every year. They tackle and learn new skills and information at an astonishing pace, from reading and crossing the street to soccer and riding a bike. Few children live in the same house during their entire childhood; most move several times, often to new cities and certainly to new neighborhoods and schools.

And few of these changes are within the child's control.

Children, like the rest of us, handle change best if it is expected and occurs in the context of a familiar routine. A predictable routine allows children to feel safe, and to develop a sense of mastery in handling their lives. As this sense of mastery is strengthened, they can tackle larger changes: walking to school by themselves, paying for a purchase at the store, going to sleepaway camp.

Unpredictable changes – Mom called away on an unexpected business trip, a best friend moving, or more drastic, parents divorcing or a grandparent dying – erode this sense of safety and mastery and leave the child feeling anxious and less able to cope with the vicissitudes of life. Of course, many changes can't be avoided. But that's why we offer children a predictable routine as a foundation in their lives--so they can rise to the occasion to handle big changes when they need to.

While helping children feel safe and ready to take on new challenges and developmental tasks would be reason enough to offer them structure, it has another important developmental role as well.

Structure and routines teach kids how to constructively manage themselves and their environments.

Kids who come from chaotic homes where belongings aren't put away never learn that life can run more smoothly if things are organized a little. In homes where there is no set time or space to do homework, kids never learn how to sit themselves down to accomplish an unpleasant task. Kids who don't develop basic self-care routines, from grooming to food, may find it hard to take care of themselves as young adults. Structure allows us to internalize constructive habits.

Won't too much structure dull our sense of spontaneity and creativity?

Sure, if it's imposed without sensitivity. There are times when rules are made to be broken, like staying up late to see an eclipse, or leaving the dinner dishes in the sink to play charades. But even the most creative artists start by mastering the conventions of the past, and find the pinnacle of their expression in working within the confines of specific rules.

There's no reason structure has to be oppressive. Think of it as your friend, offering the little routines and traditions that make life both easier and cozier. Not only will your kids will soak up the security, they'll internalize the ability to structure their own lives.

Does this mean infants should be put on routines as early as possible?

NO! Infants tell us what they need. We feed them when they're hungry, change them when they're wet. Over time, they learn the first step of a routine: We sleep at night. But forcing an infant to accommodate to our routine is not responsive to your infant's needs. She is not capable of adapting to yours yet. If her needs aren't met, she will simply feel as if the world is a place where her needs don't get met, so she has to resort to drama to try to meet them.

As your infant moves into babyhood, she will establish her own routine, settling into a schedule of sorts. Most babies settle into a fairly predictable pattern. We can help them with this by structuring our day around their needs, so, for instance, we make sure conditions are appropriate for her nap at the time she usually sleeps. Gradually, over time, we can respond to her natural schedule of eating and sleeping by developing a routine that works for her and for the whole family.

Seven Benefits of Using Routines with Your Kids

1. Routines eliminate power struggles

Routines eliminate power struggles because you aren't bossing the child around. This activity (brushing teeth, napping, turning off the TV to come to dinner) is just what we do at this time of day. The parent stops being the bad guy, and nagging is greatly reduced.

2. Routines help kids cooperate



Routines help kids cooperate by reducing stress and anxiety for everyone. We all know what comes next, we get fair warning for transitions, and no one feels pushed around, or like parents are being arbitrary.

3. Routines help kids learn to take charge of their own activities.

Over time, kids learn to brush their teeth, pack their backpacks, etc., without constant reminders. Kids love being in charge of themselves. This feeling increases their sense of mastery and competence. Kids who feel more independent and in charge of themselves have less need to rebel and be oppositional.

4. Kids learn the concept of "looking forward" to things they enjoy...

...which is an important part of making a happy accommodation with the demands of a schedule. He may want to go to the playground now, but he can learn that we always go to the playground in the afternoon, and he can look forward to it then.

5. Regular routines help kids get on a schedule

Regular routines help kids get on a schedule, so that they fall asleep more easily at night.

6. Routines help parents build in those precious connection moments.

We all know that we need to connect with our children every day, but when our focus is on moving kids through the schedule to get them to bed, we miss out on opportunities to connect. If we build little connection rituals into our routine, they become habit. Try a snuggle with each child when you first see them in the morning, or a "recognition" ritual when you're first reunited:

"I see you with those beautiful gray eyes that I love so much!" or a naming ritual as you dry him after the bath: "Let's dry your toes...your calf...your knee...your thigh....your penis....your belly ..."

Rituals like these slow you down and connect you on a visceral level with your child, and if you do them as just "part of the routine" they build security as well as connection and cooperation.

7. Schedules help parents maintain consistency in expectations.

If everything is a fight, parents end up settling: more TV, skip brushing teeth for tonight, etc. With a routine, parents are more likely to stick to healthy expectations for everyone in the family, because that's just the way we do things in our household. The result: a family with healthy habits, where everything runs more smoothly!



Five Minute Crafts: Gel Paint Color Mixing Experiment

I love cheap and easy crafty projects. Craft supplies get expensive especially when you have a kiddo who changes what she likes more frequently than her clothes.

Today's Five-Minute Craft uses only two relatively cheap ingredients: hair gel and food coloring.

If you haven't made gel paint yet, do it! You can get such gorgeous colors with lovely transparency.

And the texture is fascinating for finger painting.

I picked up a big bottle of clear hair gel at the dollar store and added food coloring I already had in the cabinet (About 5 drops of food color per tablespoon of gel used). Mixing it was part of The Babe's fun....



Something about the transparency of the paint made her really into mixing colors, so I whipped up a quick wheel for her to color in. Cheap and easy craft turned learning experience? Even better. She found it interesting how the colors changed as she layered on more of the paint, too, so we talked a little bit about transparency.



Magic Scarf Box (9-12 months)

This is an entertaining activity that is sure to stimulate your baby's curiosity. You will need an empty tissue box and some lightweight, colorful scarves (cloth squares may also work).

Tie all the scarves together (end to end) then place them in the empty tissue box. Leave one small end of a scarf out, enough to pique your baby's interest. Now get your baby's attention and start to pull out the scarf line saying, "Look at what papa found, you try now!" Offer her the scarf and watch the fun begin! As she gets older, you can also teach her how to put the scarves back in the tissue box to start over.

You can also try using an empty paper towel tube instead of the tissue box. Be sure to never leave your baby alone with the line of tied scarves so she cannot get tangled!

Learning and Development Skills:

- Cognitive, Problem Solving and Memory



Self-Regulation Skills: Breathing Strategies

Self-Regulation is the ability to recognize and manage your emotions and behaviors in different settings and activities.

Children who learn to regulate their emotions:

- ▶ Have an easier time making friends
- ▶ Handle disappointment better
- ▶ Relate more successfully with peers and adults
- ▶ Are less impulsive

Teaching this Skill

Teach the following strategies when the children are calm and engaged. Remind children of the strategies when they need to calm down through use of visuals or props.

Controlled Breathing: Smell the Flower, Blow Out the Pinwheel

Using visual on the following page, have children smell the flower (to breathe in through their nose) and blow out the pinwheel (to exhale through their mouth). Repeat several times.

Belly Breathing

Have children lie on their back on the floor and place a small stuffed animal on their stomach. When the children inhale and exhale rapidly have them notice what happens to the stuffed animal. Then have the children slow their breathing and notice what happens to the stuffed animal.

How You Can Help Children Self-Regulate

- ▶ Teach clear positive expectations/rules daily.
- ▶ Model and discuss reasons for desired behaviors.
- ▶ Validate feelings.
- ▶ Assist with language through labeling actions, feelings, and emotions.
- ▶ Provide positive feedback in response to the child regulating their behavior and help child regulate by modeling ways to calm down when needed.
- ▶ Provide opportunities for developmentally appropriate play.
- ▶ Promote children's independence across the day.
- ▶ Provide a place child can go to take a break and calm down.

Take a Deep Breath

Smell the flower



Blow the pinwheel



INTRODUCTION



Save More at the Store

The smartest shoppers know that saving money is more than luck. When shopping for groceries, it's about having a game plan and making smart decisions about what to put in your cart.

- 1 Ask for advice. Ask friends and family where they shop and find their best bargains!
- 2 Eat before you shop. Grocery shopping hungry can lead to impulse buying and unhealthy food choices.
- 3 Read the sales flyer. Sales flyers are usually released mid-week and can be found at the store's entrance, in the newspaper, or on their website.
- 4 Use coupons – but only for items that you know you'll use. If you don't need an item right away, save the coupon and see if it goes on sale.
- 5 Look up and down for savings. Stores often stock the priciest items at eye level. You can save big by looking at the upper and lower shelves too.
- 6 Check for store brands. Most stores offer their own brand of products that often cost less than name brands.
- 7 Grab from the back. Stores typically stock shelves from back to front, placing the newest items behind the older ones. Reach in the back for the freshest items.
- 8 Ask for a rain check. If a sale item has run out, ask the store for a rain check. This allows you to pay the sale price after the item is restocked.
- 9 Join your store's loyalty program. Most stores offer a free loyalty program. Get special offers and discounts that non-members do not.
- 10 Think outside the store. Farmers markets and farm stands can be great options for picking up fresh produce at a discount.