

How to save on grocery bills

It's not easy to feed a family when you're on a budget. Use these suggestions to get the biggest bang for your buck.

Begin "couponing." Clipping coupons takes time, but that time will pay off when you check out. Make your child the "Coupon King." He could help file coupons from grocery circulars, newspapers, or websites—and be in charge of remembering to take along and use the coupons. *Healthy tip:* Don't gather coupons for junk foods. That way, you won't be tempted to "save money" by buying them.



Comparison shop. Notice the prices from store to store for the items you buy regularly—you might be surprised at the differences. Then, keep a list (on paper or in your phone) of the best buys for each, and shop accordingly. Plus, if you know the price ranges for your most popular items, you can see when they hit a low point—and stock up.

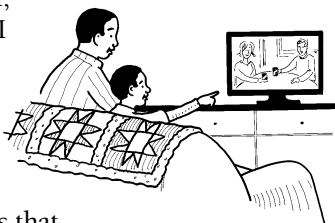
Be produce-savvy. Cut-up fruit and vegetables are certainly convenient, but you pay for that convenience. Instead, buy items whole, and get your kids to help you rinse and prepare them. Another plus: Produce will last longer if it hasn't been cut yet. Also, buy produce in season when it's cheaper, and get extra to freeze. Here's a handy guide: healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/features-month/whats-season. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

"As seen on TV"

My son was always asking for candy or other unhealthy foods he saw on television or online. When I mentioned this to our pediatrician, Dr. Dawson suggested that I ask Aidan if he knew who produced food ads or what they're designed to do.

Together, Aidan and I looked up answers. He was surprised to find out



about tricks that advertisers use to make products look better in ads, such as putting dish soap in soda to make bigger bubbles or painting hamburgers with shoe polish to give them more color.

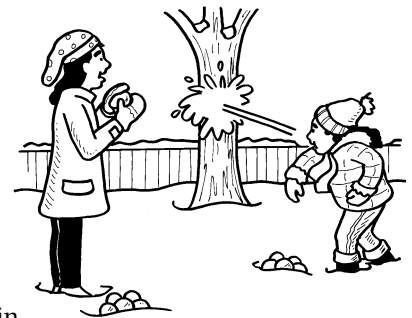
We also learned about "product placements"—how companies pay to put their foods into online games, on television shows, or in movies. Now, when Aidan wants to try a new game, I'll ask, "Is that a game or an ad?" We've had interesting conversations, and I'm hoping he's getting a better understanding of advertising and how to make healthy choices for himself. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Winter games

Cold outside? Bundle up, and head outside for winter fun with these games.



"Horseshoes"

Place a shallow plastic bowl on the grass or in the snow. Stand a few yards back, and take turns tossing pebbles toward the bowl. Whoever lands the most pebbles in the bowl wins the round.

Hidden flag

After a snowfall, tie a white cloth (an old T-shirt or a white rag) to a ruler, and secretly stick it in the snow. The first one to find it hides it next. *No-snow variation:* Tie a green or brown cloth to a stick, and hide it in grass or the woods.

Snowball toss

Have each player pile up snowballs and take aim at a tree trunk. Count how many hit the target—top score wins. Or instead of snowballs, play with tennis balls. ♥

IN THE KITCHEN

Toast toppings

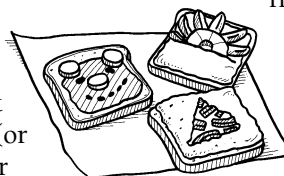
Toast a slice of bread—whole grain, please—and dress it up for a healthy snack or meal that's fun for your child to make and eat.

1. Sunrise, sunset. Cover toast with cream cheese. Your youngster could use pineapple rings and orange slices to create a beautiful sunrise or sunset.

2. Beary good. Spread toast with a thin layer of peanut (or other nut) butter. Have your

child make it into a bear's face, with banana slices for the ears and nose, and raisins for the eyes and mouth.

3. Shape filler. Let your youngster draw a shape on aluminum foil, cut it out, and place it on the toast. Spread skim ricotta cheese all around the shape, and sprinkle with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. dried oregano. She can lift off the foil and fill the empty shape with chopped bell peppers. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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