

Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

September 2010

Middlesex County Public Schools
Margo Bridge, Food Service Coordinator



BEST BITES

Volunteer in PE

In PE class, your youngster will get exercise and learn skills to help her enjoy physical activity. Consider supporting the school's efforts—and your child's education—by asking the PE teacher how you can volunteer. She might need a parent to time races, set up obstacle courses, or assist at Field Day.

Bag your own lettuce

Bagged lettuce is convenient, but it can be expensive. Try this instead. Tear the leaves off a head of lettuce. Rinse, dry, and put into a large zipper bag (add a paper towel to remove extra moisture). Press the air out, and seal. Refrigerate for up to a week.



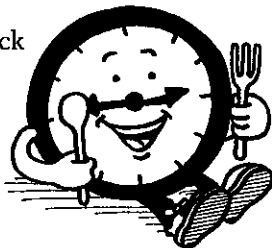
DID YOU KNOW?

About 7 in 10 children do not get enough vitamin D. The best source is the sun, and just 10–15 minutes a day outside is enough. Also, your youngster can drink milk or eat cereal that's fortified with vitamin D. This vitamin is important for bone and joint health because it helps the body absorb calcium.

Just for fun

Q: How do you know if a clock is hungry?

A: It goes back for seconds!



Set healthy goals

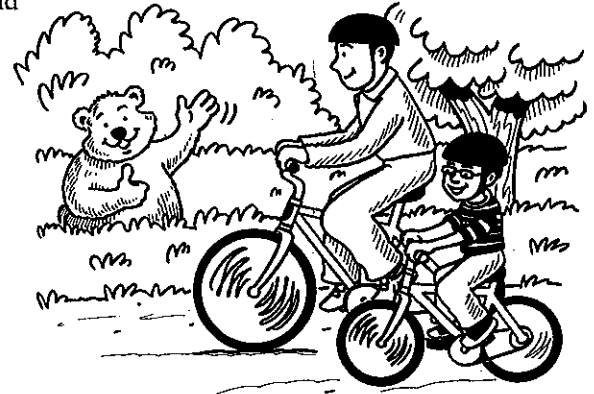
How can you motivate your child to eat well and be active? Together, set goals that will keep him on track and make him feel good when he succeeds. With these ideas, you can encourage him to aim high—and stay healthy.

Make a plan

Talk about ways your youngster can be healthy and grow strong. *Examples:* eating fruits and vegetables, drinking water instead of soda, playing outside every day. List all the ideas, and let your child pick a nutrition goal and an activity goal for each month. Try to make the goals as specific as possible ("eat one fruit and one vegetable at each meal" or "ride my bike 30 minutes a day").

Stay motivated

Seeing his goals and his progress will inspire your youngster to stay committed. Have him write the goals on a poster board, decorate it, and hang it up. Then, post a calendar where he can keep a record. He could make a tally mark for each fruit and vegetable he eats and add



a sticker on days he meets his goal. Keep him pumped up by mentioning his goal each morning. ("Let's ride bikes after school. Where should we go?")

Celebrate success

Be excited by your youngster's progress—praise from you will go a long way. Let him know that you notice his efforts. ("Great idea to put a tomato slice on your bagel!") When he meets his goal every day for a week, have a celebration. You might go bowling, play miniature golf, or attend a sporting event. Then, encourage him to start on his next goal. ●

"Anytime" or "sometimes" foods

Some foods are so healthy that your youngster can eat them anytime. Others might taste good but should only be eaten sometimes because they have more sugar or fat. Help your child understand the difference.

- Explain that foods like fruits, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free yogurt and milk, whole grains, and lean meats are nutritious and can be eaten every day. Foods like cookies and chips are high in sugar, fat, or salt, so your youngster should have them just once in a while.
- Have your child help you put away groceries. As she places each item in the pantry or refrigerator, she can say whether it's an "anytime" food or a "sometimes" food. *Idea:* Let her mark small, blank stickers with "A" for "anytime" or "S" for "sometimes." She can label the foods for an easy reminder. ●



Know the food groups

Youngsters should eat a variety of foods from each food group to get the vitamins and nutrients they need. Help your child learn about the food groups with these fun activities.

Name the group. During meals or at the grocery store, take turns calling out a food. The other person has to say which group it belongs to: fruits and vegetables; dairy; grains (bread, cereal, pasta, rice); or meat and meat alternatives (beef, pork, lamb, poultry, fish, eggs, beans, nuts).



What's in the box? Help your child cover four empty cereal or cracker boxes (tops removed) with construction paper. Then, have her write the name of a food group on each box. Let her cut out pictures of foods from old magazines and sort them into the right boxes.

Make placemats. Cut poster board into placemat-sized pieces. Ask your youngster to draw pictures of foods from every food group on each placemat and label the groups with a marker. Cover the placemats with clear contact paper, or wrap them tightly with plastic wrap. Put the placemats at each person's spot at the table. Your child will be proud when her placemats help everyone remember the food groups. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Kick it!

Your child can get a great workout, have fun, and improve her soccer skills with these games.

Soccer tennis. Lay a long piece of rope on the grass. One player stands on each side. The players kick the ball back and forth to each other over the rope—letting it bounce only once or not at all before returning it.

Slalom course. Set up obstacles (cones, upside-down buckets) in a zigzag pattern in your yard or at a park. Each person kicks a soccer ball, weaving in and out of the obstacles, from the start to the finish and back—without hitting the obstacles. If a player's ball hits one, she goes back to the start line.



Target practice. Balance a soccer ball on top of a cone. Players take turns kicking another soccer ball at it. One point is scored each time the goal is toppled. ♥

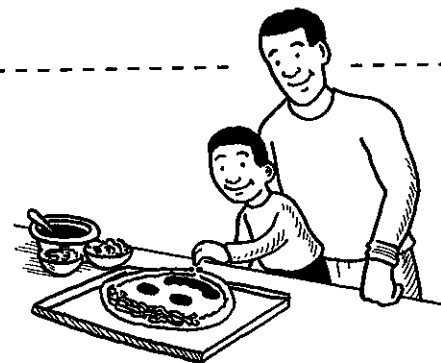


IN THE KITCHEN

Tasty art

With healthy ingredients and a little imagination, your youngster can make a craft project that's creative and delicious! Here are two ideas:

- Have him spread low-fat refried beans on a corn tortilla and make a design like a face or a house. Give him supplies such as grape tomatoes, black olives, grated low-fat cheddar cheese, shredded lettuce, and salsa. *Tip:* For a hot tortilla, microwave for one minute.
- Thaw frozen whole-wheat bread dough. Let your child roll it flat with



a rolling pin. Then, he can form the dough into letters, numbers, or animals. Have him place the pieces on a cookie sheet lined with parchment paper for 15–20 minutes so the dough can rise. Bake at 375° until golden brown. ♥

Q & A Watching children outside

Q: I want my kids to play outside. But between housework and the work I bring home from my job, sometimes it's hard to find time to watch them. What can I do?

A: This is a problem shared by many busy parents. Why not try sharing the solution with other parents, too? Talk to neighbors who have children around the same age to see if they would be willing to swap "play duty."

You could work out a schedule where you each take an afternoon

to supervise the kids outside. It's a good idea to set guidelines so your rules are consistent. For example, you could agree that kids will always wear helmets, knee pads, and wrist guards when they're on scooters. Or you might decide that they must stay in the backyard at all times. Explain the rules to the children—and let them begin enjoying their active time outdoors! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

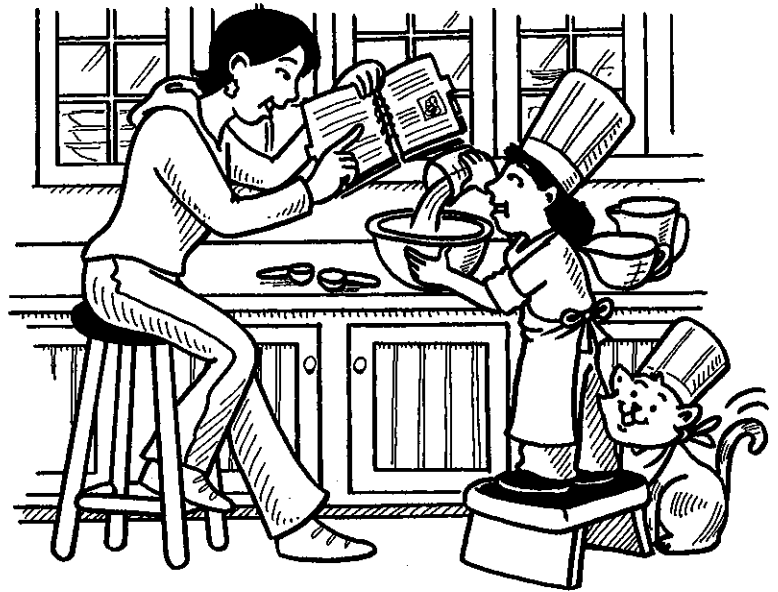
To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

Nutrition Nuggets is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.
ISSN 1935-4630

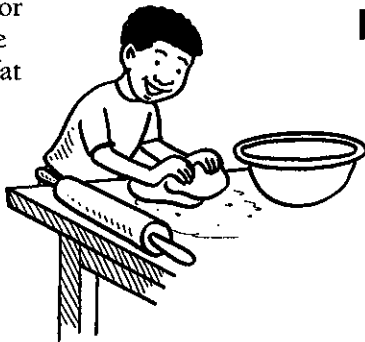
Kids in the Kitchen

Step into the kitchen and prepare your youngster for a lifetime of good eating habits by helping her learn to enjoy cooking. She'll find that homemade foods are fun to prepare, can taste better than packaged foods, and are healthier. Use these tips and recipes to get started.



Be creative

Let your child use his imagination in the kitchen. Point out healthy foods in your pantry or refrigerator (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, low-fat dairy products). Then, encourage him to make something he likes using different combinations. For instance, he might create a sandwich with whole-wheat bread, apple slices, and



gouda cheese. Or he could toss a salad of spinach leaves, tomatoes, leftover chicken, and low-fat french dressing.

Find recipes

Look through recipes together, and let your youngster choose one to try (see *In the Kitchen with Kids* by Barbara Hughston or <http://kids.health.org/kid/recipes>).

Discuss things to consider when deciding what to make. *Examples:* What

ingredients do we already have? What would we need at the store? How much time will the recipe take?

Pitch in

To help your child get comfortable in the kitchen, look for jobs she can do alone or with just a little help. Use these examples as a guide:

- **Children who are 3–4 can...** tear lettuce for salads, mash soft foods with a fork or potato masher, pour liquids, stir batters, use cookie cutters, and sprinkle cheese on pizza.
- **Children who are 5–8 can...** do any of the above, plus... cut soft foods with a dinner knife, scrub vegetables and fruits, sift, crack eggs, knead dough, use a rolling pin, gather and measure ingredients, spray or grease baking dishes, spread peanut butter on a sandwich, and use the microwave with adult supervision.
- **Children who are 9–12 can...** do any of the above jobs, plus... peel carrots, open cans, peel hard-boiled eggs, and use small appliances like a blender or mixer with adult supervision. If you think she's ready, you can teach her to cut or chop vegetables with a knife.

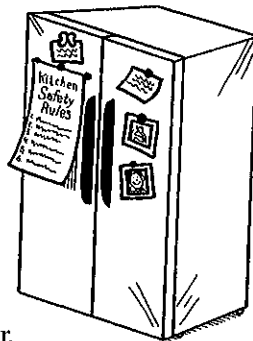
Tip: Give your youngster different jobs when you cook together. That way, she'll learn new skills and become more confident in the kitchen.

Safety first

Prevent accidents in the kitchen and be sure your young cook is safe by teaching her basic kitchen safety rules like these:

- To keep floors from becoming slippery, clean up any spills when they happen.
- Turn pan handles in so they face away from the edge of the stove or countertop.
- Never leave cooking food unattended, even in the microwave.
- Use sharp knives only with adult supervision.
- Never turn on the stove or oven without asking an adult first.
- To stay healthy, always wash hands before preparing food or eating.

Tip: Post safety rules on your refrigerator as a reminder.



continued

Nutrition Nuggets

My recipe file

Encourage your child to collect recipes he likes. He can write each one on a recipe card and store it in a small box. Or he might start his own cookbook by typing the recipes on a computer. Here are some kid-friendly recipes—with just a little help, he can make them himself.



Fruity Yogurt

You'll need: 1 tangerine, 1 can pineapple chunks (packed in their own juice), low-fat vanilla yogurt

Peel the tangerine, divide it into sections, and throw away the seeds. Put the tangerine pieces in a bowl, and stir in the pineapple chunks. Spoon yogurt on top.

Pizza Flower

You'll need: a whole-grain English muffin, marinara sauce, provolone slices, olives, green pepper, mushrooms

Have a parent slice the green pepper and mushrooms. Then, use a fork to split the English muffin in half. Spoon marinara sauce on each half, and top with a slice of cheese. Decorate it like a flower by putting an olive in the center, green pepper slices for the stem, and mushrooms for the petals. Ask an adult to broil the muffin for you.

Banana Man

You'll need: 1 banana, peanut butter, dried fruit (raisins, cherries, mango), pretzel sticks

Peel the banana. Use peanut butter to "glue" dried fruit on the banana for the eyes, nose, and mouth. Put the pretzel sticks in the sides for arms.



Sandwich on a Stick

You'll need: deli meat, cubes of cheese (cheddar or swiss), grape tomatoes, mustard, toothpick

Fold your favorite sandwich meat into quarters. Thread the meat and cheese and a grape tomato onto a toothpick. Dip in mustard.

Pocket Tacos

You'll need: 2 whole-grain pitas, ½ cup salsa, lettuce, shredded cheddar cheese, low-sodium taco sauce

Cut the pitas in half, and put the salsa inside. Tear lettuce into bite-sized pieces, and divide among the pitas. Add the cheese and taco sauce. *Idea:* To make a meat taco, ask a grown-up to brown some ground beef or turkey for you.

Orange Slushies

You'll need: 2 cups fat-free milk, 1 cup water, 1 cup ice cubes, 1 tbsp. sugar, 1 6-oz. can frozen orange juice concentrate

Put all the ingredients in a blender and, with an adult's help, blend until slushy.

Cucumber Crunch

You'll need: 1 medium cucumber, 1 large carrot, 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar, 1 tbsp. olive oil, ½ tsp. honey

Ask a grown-up to dice the cucumber and slice the peeled carrot into thin circles. Make a dressing by stirring together the apple cider vinegar, olive oil, and honey. Mix the vegetables with the dressing.

Cheesy Peas and Carrots

You'll need: 2 tbsp. fat-free milk, ½ cup cottage cheese, ½ cup low-fat cream cheese, 2 tbsp. shredded mild cheddar cheese, 1 cup cooked peas, 1 cup cooked carrots, Parmesan cheese

In a blender, mix the milk, cottage cheese, cream cheese, and cheddar cheese until smooth. Pour into a bowl, and stir in the peas and carrots. Sprinkle a little Parmesan cheese on top.

Editor's Note: Nutrition Nuggets is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

Nutrition Nuggets

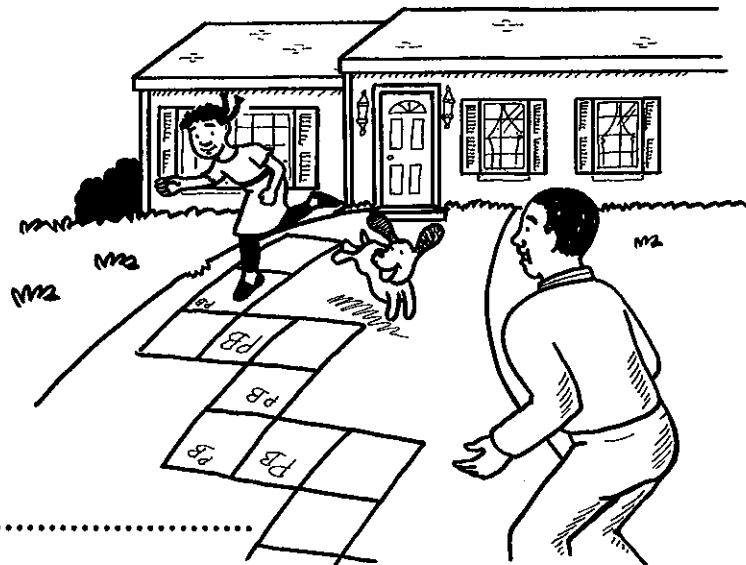
Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc. ■ 128 N. Royal Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630 ■ 540-636-4280

© 2010 Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.

NW10x322E

ACTIVE FUN

Being active helps your children build strong muscles and stay fit—plus it's fun! Encourage them to get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity every day by thinking of new ways to play. Try these ideas to get them up and moving.



ZIGZAG HOPSCOTCH

Have your child use sidewalk chalk to draw a staircase-shaped hopscotch board on a sidewalk, driveway, or blacktop. She can hop on one foot from one end to the other, landing on one square at a time. If she makes it without putting her other foot down, she writes her initials in any square. On your turn, you must hop over the square she initialed. If you make it, you initial any empty square. Keep taking turns, hopping only on empty squares or ones with your own initials, until every square is claimed or no one can hop across. The player with initials in the most squares wins.

MALLET-FREE CROQUET

Map out a path through a playground (under the slide, around a tree, through the jungle gym). Take turns rolling a tennis ball through the course. Each time you roll the ball through an obstacle, move on to the next one. If you miss, it's the next player's turn. Whoever gets the ball through all the obstacles and back first is the winner and gets to lay out the next course.

SLOW-MOTION RACE

When you take a walk, try this race where the slowpoke wins. Challenge your family to walk in *s-l-o-w m-o-t-i-o-n* from one end of a block to the other. Your children will build balance and muscle control as they try to make each step last as long as possible. There's only one rule to follow: everyone must keep moving—no stopping allowed. The last person to get to the end wins.

PENNY HUNT

Count out 15 pennies. Have your youngster cover her eyes while you hide them around the house. Set a timer for two minutes, and let her race to find the pennies before the time runs out. Next game, have her hide the pennies, and you hunt. You can help each other find the pennies faster by saying "you're hot" when one of you gets close to a hiding place and "you're cold" when you're moving away from one. *Idea:* Move the game outdoors and hide pennies in bushes, under rocks, or in sidewalk cracks.



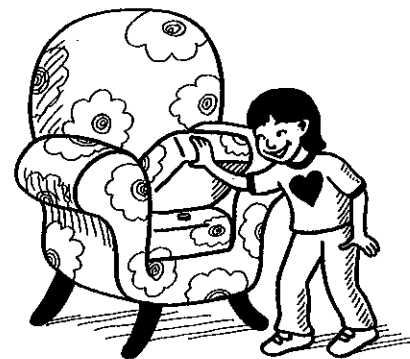
KICK AND BLOCK

Make a large circle using a garden hose, and place a soccer ball in the center. Both players stand in the circle. One person is the "kicker," and the other person is the "blocker." The

kicker tries to kick the ball out of the circle (*note:* he has to kick in the direction of the blocker). The blocker uses his feet to try to keep the ball in. When the ball goes out of the circle, swap roles and play again.

FISH OR FOWL

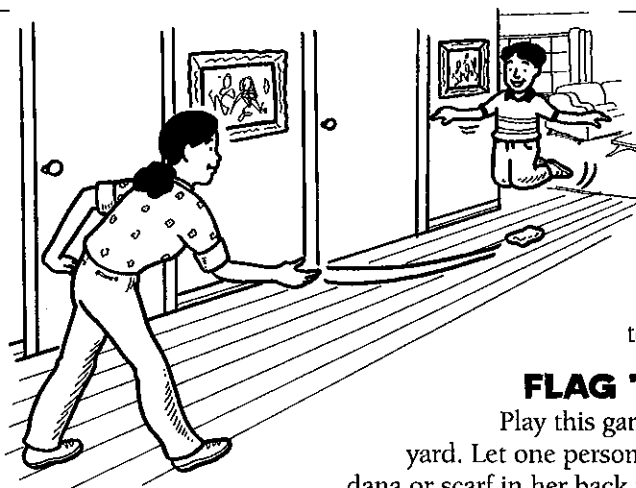
You can play this game on sidewalks or grass. One player is the caller. If the caller names a fish (bass, perch, tuna), the other players jump backward. If he names a bird (robin, woodpecker, seagull), players jump forward. The caller keeps naming fish or fowl, trying to trick the jumpers. If you jump in the wrong direction, you're out. The last person in the game becomes the new caller. Play until everyone has had a turn being the caller.



continued

BEAN BAG TAG

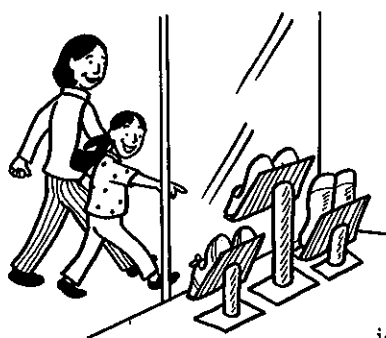
The object of this game is to tag the other person's feet with a bean bag. Choose a place with a wood or tile floor such as a hall, kitchen, or basement. Have your child stand at one end of the room while you stand at the other. To play, take turns sliding the bean bag across the floor at each other's feet. Try to dodge the bean bag by jumping over it. Score a point each time you're successful. Play until someone scores 10 points. *Variation:* To make the game more challenging, toss the bean bags toward each other's feet at the same time.



can pretend to wade through the stream, balance on the bridge, and use the stepping stones to jump across a make-believe swamp. When he finishes, it's your turn to take the island challenge.

RAINBOW WALK

Walk laps up and down a shopping strip or around a mall until you've spotted one item for every color of the rainbow. For example, you might find red shoes, an orange safety cone, a yellow sundress, green shampoo, blue jeans, indigo earrings, and a violet rug. Or take a rainbow walk



in the neighborhood, and see who can find a red flag on a mailbox, an orange flower, and so on.

FITNESS ISLAND

Turn the sidewalk or driveway into an island. With sidewalk chalk, draw a landscape full of fitness challenges. Your child might draw a stream, a bridge, and stepping stones. Then, he

FLAG TAG

Play this game at a park or in a backyard. Let one person be "it" and tuck a bandana or scarf in her back pocket with a tail hanging out. Other players chase "it" and try to steal the bandana. The person who grabs the bandana tucks it into her own pocket and tries to keep other players from stealing it.

COME ACROSS

How many ways can you cross a playground? Let your youngster start the game by saying, "Come across the playground like this..." and then crossing the playground in a funny way (spin like a top, walk on his heels). All the other players must cross in the same way. Then, the next person says, "No, no, no. Come across like this..." and leads players across the playground a different way (walking sideways). How many ways can you think of?

BEACH-BALL VOLLEYBALL

Two or more people can play this version of volleyball. Lay a jump rope or clothesline in a straight line to mark the center of your court. *Tip:* The court can be big or small, but it works best with at least six feet on each side of the line. Divide into two teams and stand on opposite sides of the line. The first team tosses a beach ball into the air and hits it over the line. The other team hits it back. Teams score a point each time the ball lands on their opponent's side of the line. The first team to score 15 points wins.

FIVE-MINUTE IDEAS

Suggest short bursts of activities with these everyday ideas.

INSIDE

- Put on music, and lip-synch while doing your best dance moves.
- Play with a pet.
- Do a "routine": five forward rolls, five pushups, and five backward rolls.
- Set up a row of stuffed animals. Roll a ball toward them, and score a point for each object knocked down.

- Line up and have each person put his hands on the waist of the person in front of him. See how fast you can snake your way through the house without breaking the chain.

OUTSIDE

- Practice basketball free throws.
- Play a game of catch.
- Take turns throwing a Frisbee and measuring the distance you tossed it.
- Skate around the block together.



- Pick a starting point and a finish line. Have a relay race.

Editor's Note: Nutrition Nuggets is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

Nutrition Nuggets

Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc. ■ 128 N. Royal Avenue, Front Royal, VA 22630 ■ 540-636-4280

© 2010 Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.