


# HEALTHY

## Handfuls

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AN EARLY CHILDHOOD NUTRITION & FITNESS NEWSLETTER \* JANUARY 2010



**FIRST 5 INYO**  
 F. amilies  
 U. nderstanding  
 N. utrition & Fitness

### Free Family Swim



The First 5 F.U.N. Team is sponsoring a pilot free swim program at Keough's January 9th, 23rd, and 30th. There is still room for families to sign up if you could use some splash time, so call us to claim one of the remaining slots ASAP!



### Funding Bonus

Also, clubs, churches, community organizations, and businesses looking to sponsor 0 to 5 family activities should be aware that they are welcome to attend First 5's free *Meaningful Measures* seminar on Jan. 20 and 21st. Attendees will receive bonus points for any 2010-2011 Strategic or Special Grant applications they turn in, so whether you want to access \$250 or \$60,000 it's worth your time! Call or email Jody as listed above to RSVP.

## Advances in Early Autism Intervention Highlight Importance of Toddler Screening & Diagnosis

For the first time, researchers have been able to prove that children diagnosed with autism at an early age made significant gains in language, developmental skills, and in IQ when their parents engaged in an intensive play therapy program with them. Since 2007 pediatricians have known the importance of screening children as early as 18 months for autism, but until now there was not a specific model with proven results that they could recommend for children diagnosed with autistic tendencies.

Now a new study published in the journal *Pediatrics* by Geraldine Dawson of Autism Speaks and Sally Rogers of the UC Davis M.I.N.D. Institute has been able to prove that autistic toddlers whose parents engaged in 20 hours of weekly play intervention with them averaged an 18 point IQ gain, when their autistic peers in the control group merely gained an average of 8 points. Listening skills, motor skills, and self-care skills also increased significantly for the 48 children in the therapy group.

The Early Start Denver Model is the therapy program Rogers & Dawson used, and it is based around child directed play in a natural setting - usually on the floor of the child's home - so that children and therapists build a fun, positive relationship. Dawson told CNN in November that within 6 to 8 hours of working with therapists, most parents can learn the ESDM therapy methods, so they can drastically reduce the cost of therapy, and reap the benefits of building a more engaged relationship with their child directly through these exercises as well.

Rogers and Dawson are quick to point out that this therapy is not a cure for autism. The children involved in the study still are autistic, though as their therapy continues, hopefully their symptoms will evolve into increasingly milder forms of this complex neurological disorder.

"It makes sense to promote positive brain activities with autistic children during the years when their brains are experiencing the most growth and development," Rogers told CBS. "But this is only the first step. Not only does this study need to be replicated before it becomes given fact, but also more studies need to be done with autistic children 2 1/2 and younger. This was really the first one."

Parents concerned about autism screening should contact their pediatrician, but a free online test to help you think about symptoms and behaviors is available at <http://parenting.preschoolrock.com/quiz/autism-quiz.htm> as well.



# GREAT GAME!

## Supplies:

Whistle or music  
Examples of statues/poses

## Objective:

Get your kids hopping and bopping, but tell them when you blow a whistle or turn off the music they have to freeze. After the kids stay frozen for a few seconds, tell them to melt. They should do this slowly, maybe begin by wiggling toes or fingers and then imagining their arms and legs slowly being able to bend again. In seconds everyone should be powered up to high energy movement, so you can call freeze again!

## Quick Picks

*Easy to Prepare Meals  
That Are Good For You!*

This month's selections,  
available at our website,  
[www.inyocounty.us/first5](http://www.inyocounty.us/first5) are:

Green Grilled Enchiladas



Crazy, Glazy Carrots

Tuna Stuffed Tomatoes

Chicken Cordon Bleu

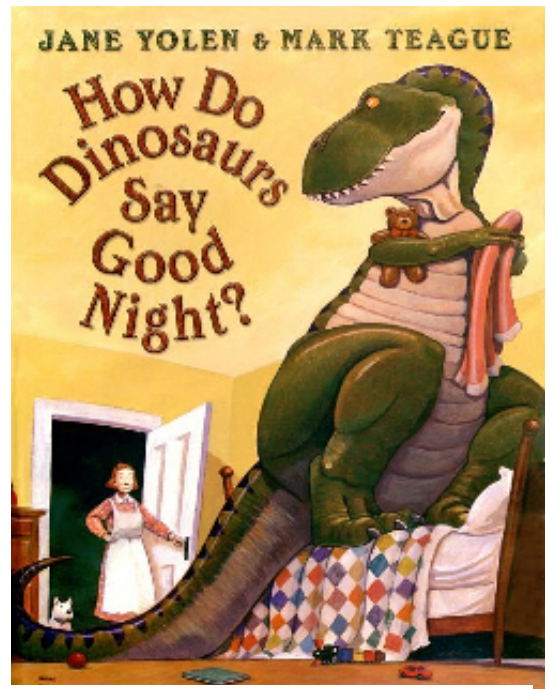
Great Garlic Shrimp & Grits



## Dino-mite Pajama Party & Story Hour!

[www.inyocounty.us/first5](http://www.inyocounty.us/first5)

Saturday, January 23rd  
10:00 to 11:00 AM  
St. Timothy's Hall  
700 Hobson Street



Join Altrusa and First 5 for a Rocking Pajama Party featuring your favorite dinosaur characters and their bedtime routines! Free toys, books, games and door prizes make this one story hour you can not afford to miss! Wear your pj's, sweats, whatever—just come ready to play! Also access dino snack and activity ideas at home by visiting [www.inyocounty.us/first5](http://www.inyocounty.us/first5) on your computer!



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## Healthy Whole Grains Complete Dinner Plans

One of the fastest and simplest ways to put a hearty meal on the table is to employ some lesser known, but fiber-filled whole grains. Staples in many middle eastern cultures, quinoa, Israeli cous cous, and bulgar wheat — like you find in tabouleh — are easy-to-serve, time-conscious alternatives to white rice and potatoes. Can you recognize any of these great grains?



ANSWERS: A)Cous Cous B)Quinoa C)Bulgar Wheat

