

Section 3: Newsletters

Power Panther Preschool At Home: Take-Home Newsletters

Newsletters for children to take home to their families provide an important link to Power Panther Preschool in the center. Newsletters inform parents what children are learning and reinforce the same important information about increasing fruit and vegetable consumption and the value of daily physical activity at home. In addition, newsletters provide family members with ideas for family snacks and activities.

Eight one-page (front and back) newsletters are provided in this chapter. Each newsletter is numbered to correspond to the lesson being taught. A “Dear Parent” letter is also included to introduce parents to and inform them about the forthcoming Power Panther Preschool lessons that will be taught.



Dear Parent:

Our child care is introducing new lessons and activities to the children in care. Entitled Power Panther Preschool, the activities will introduce children to Power Panther and his **EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.** message.

Who is Power Panther?

Power Panther is the mascot of the Food and Nutrition Service, United States Department of Agriculture. The Power Panther Preschool materials have been developed and provided through the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Team Nutrition, programs administered by the Kansas State Department of Education.

Power Panther Preschool encourages children to choose fruits and vegetables more often and emphasizes the importance of physical activity. YOU can help emphasize this important message by encouraging your child to eat fruits and vegetables. And while you're at it, be a good role model and enjoy those fruits and veggies yourself! Now is also a good time to engage in a physical activity with your child—choose one that you both enjoy! Take a walk, ride a bicycle, rake leaves, swim or jump rope!

For more information, go to www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhard

And remember...

EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about red fruits and vegetables.
Here is a picture of something I learned:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin orange border, intended for a child to draw a picture of a red fruit or vegetable.

Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

Healthy children usually eat when they are hungry and they stop when they are full. The adult's job is to decide what foods to offer and plan regular times to eat. The child's job is to pick from the foods offered and decide how much to eat.

Children don't grow as fast in their preschool years as they did as toddlers. So they may have a smaller appetite now. That's normal. If your child is not hungry, don't force him or her to eat.

Your child is probably eating enough if he or she is full of energy and is growing and seems healthy. If your child is losing weight or has special food needs, get help from a health professional.

Keep eating times relaxed so your child learns body signals for being hungry and feeling full. That's how your child can learn to eat in a normal way and not overeat. That's a good habit for lifelong health.



“Keep eating times relaxed so your child learns body signals for being hungry and feeling full.”

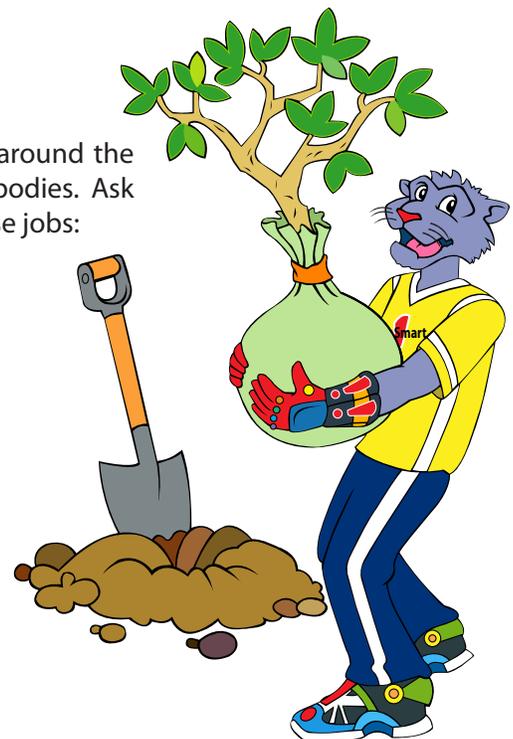
PLAY HARD

To be healthy, children must:

- Eat healthy food
- Be active

Be active at home! Many jobs around the house can help build strong bodies. Ask your child to help you with these jobs:

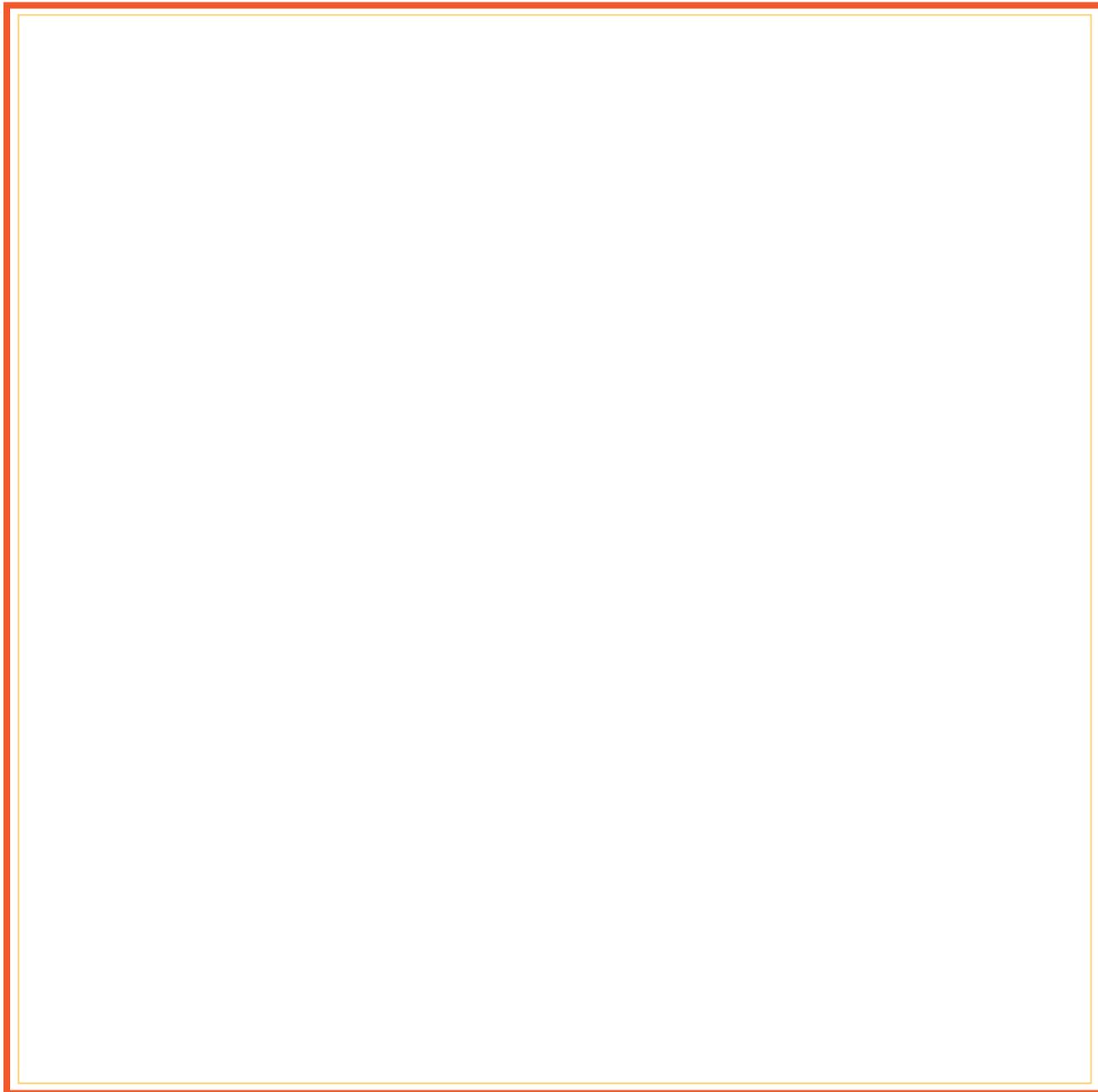
- Work in the garden
- Dust furniture
- Pick up toys
- Vacuum and sweep
- Wash the floor
- Set or clear the table





Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about orange fruits and vegetables.
Here is a picture of something I learned:



Ask me about my picture.



EAT SMART

Children have small stomachs, so they probably eat less at meals than you do. That is why snacks are an important consideration when feeding children. Most young children do best when they eat four to six times a day. Snacks should be offered to satisfy hunger, not quiet tears, calm the children, or reward behavior.

Time snacks so they are about two to three hours before meals. That way the child is ready to eat meals with the family. Choose snacks from a variety of foods that are nutritious and low in sugar. Remember to encourage children to brush their teeth after snacking.

Some quick snacks:

- Fresh fruit pieces
- Raw, cut up vegetables
- Graham crackers
- String cheese
- Cheese and saltines
- Yogurt

PLAY HARD

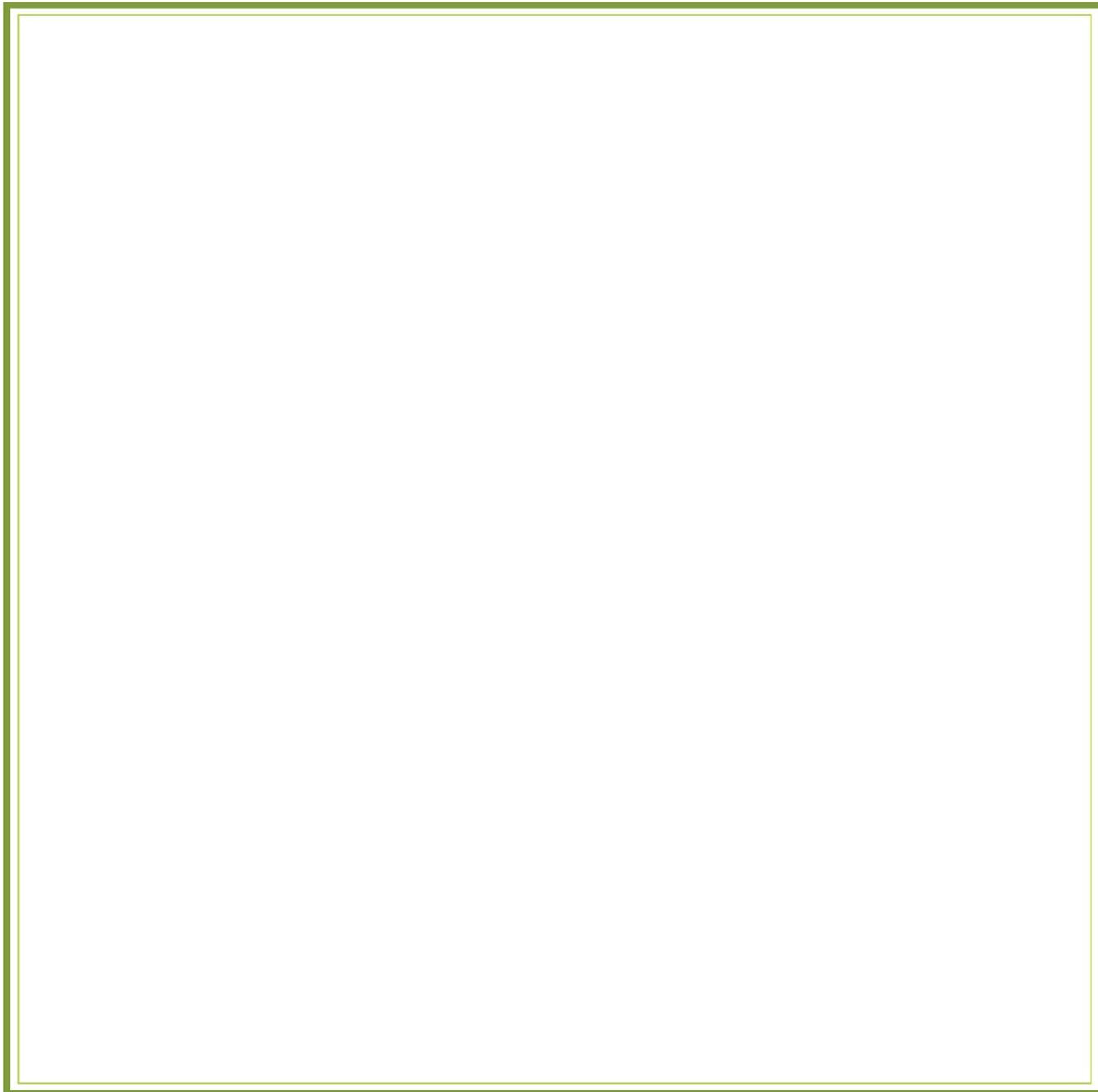
To have a strong body, your child needs to be active. Food gives your child the energy to move. Here are some good ways to get exercise with your child:

- **Dance with your child!** Just turn on the radio and dance. Also, play dancing games. Ask your child to dance like a cat, a bird, an elephant, or other animals.
- **Play running games!** Throw pillows on the floor and ask your child to run around them or over them. Take your child to a play area to run around with other children.
- **Do jumping jacks!** Jumping jacks are great exercise. Play music while you do them. Ask your child to help count the jumping jacks. Quit when you get tired.
- **Walk together in every season!** Look for tracks in the winter snow or new flowers and buds in spring. Find fun shadows in the summer sun. In the fall, collect leaves of different colors.



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about green fruits and vegetables.
Here is a picture of something I learned:



Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

Some fruits and vegetables contain vitamin A to help keep eyes and skin healthy. Try to eat a vitamin A food at least every other day. Choose from the list below:

Fruit Group

Apricots
Cantaloupe
Mangos
Nectarines
Papaya
Peaches



Vegetable Group

Asparagus
Broccoli
Carrots
Dark-green leafy vegetables
Pumpkin
Sweet potatoes
Winter squash

PLAY HARD

Your child is designed to move! Most kids like to climb, crawl, run, jump, swing, tumble, twist, stretch, and pedal. In fact, active play is the “work” of childhood. By moving more and sitting less, your child also learns to live in a healthful way.

Active play can promote:

- Cooperation and sharing as your child plays and learns to get along with others.
- Curiosity and creativity as your child explores his or her world.
- Confidence and independence as your child learns to make choices and control his or her actions.
- Learning as your child’s body and brain develop.

Active play can develop body skills:

- Strength, flexibility, and endurance to explore and experience the world safely.
- Coordination of small and large muscles, which helps with overall activity.
- Body awareness as your child learns what his or her changing body can do.

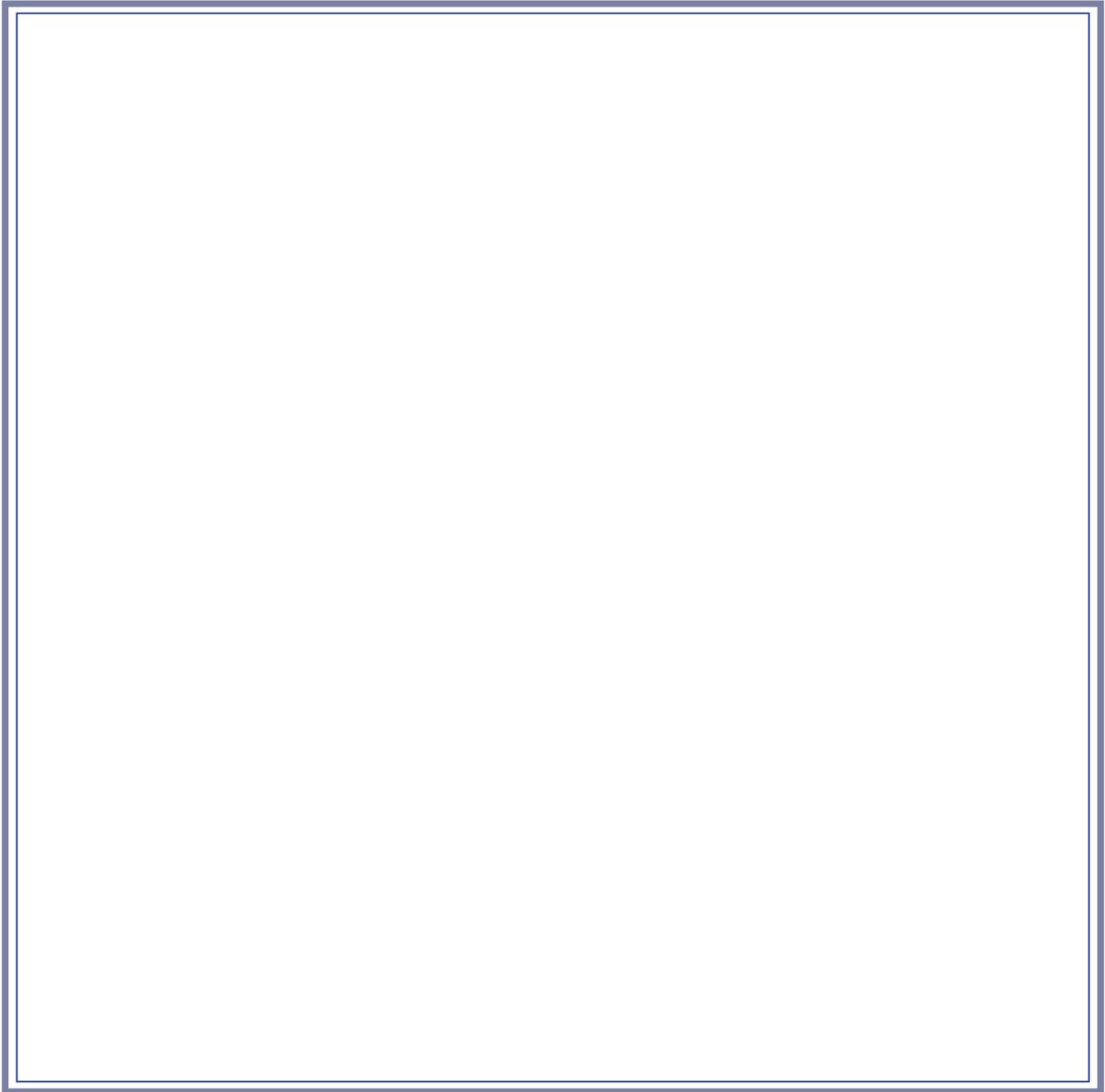


Active play is fun
for your child and you!



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about blue/purple fruits and vegetables. Here is a picture of something I learned:



Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

The next time you're at the grocery store with your child, look for foods that are examples of roots, stems, leaves, fruit, flowers and seeds. For example:

Roots: carrots, turnips, beets, radishes

Stems: celery, asparagus, cauliflower

Leaves: lettuce, spinach, cabbage, parsley

Fruits: tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, squash (a fruit is any seed-bearing food on a plant)

Flowers: broccoli, artichoke

Seeds: corn, peas, dry beans, rice, oats, nuts

Seedpods: green beans, snow peas



Power Panther says...

I PLAY HARD everyday. Because I am so active, I need to keep my energy level up. So I **EAT SMART**. One of my secrets is keeping a variety of fruits and vegetables handy. They make great snacks! I hope that boys and girls everywhere will make healthy food choices and be physically active like me!

PLAY HARD

Safety Alert! Always stay with your child.



Children don't have life experiences to foresee danger. They may not have body skills or strength to move away from trouble. When children play, they may not notice when they're cold, wet or overheated, or in possible danger either.

Bonus: By supervising, you also have to fun of playing together—and you stay active too!



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about yellow fruits and vegetables.
Here is a picture of something I learned:

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border and a thicker orange border, intended for a child to draw a picture of a yellow fruit or vegetable.

Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

Try to make good nutrition more convenient! Of course, it's easy to open a bag of chips to stop your growling stomach. High fat snack foods stop the growl, but do nothing to contribute to good health. So how can we make healthy eating more convenient?

- Wash and cut up veggies as soon as you bring them home from the store or in from the garden. Store veggies in easy to grab containers in the refrigerator.



- Have low-fat dip available to turn the veggies into an extra-easy snack.
- Make your own trail mix. Mix cereal and pretzels for a crunchy treat. Add a small amount of dried fruit like raisins, cranberries or peaches.
- Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the counter. It's easy to grab a healthy snack as you pass by!

Be a good role model!



PLAY HARD

Physical play is important for healthy growth of young children. It has a big impact on physical, intellectual and emotional development. Through active play children learn about their bodies, their capabilities and how to control their environment. A love for physical activity is one of the most important gifts parents can give to their children.

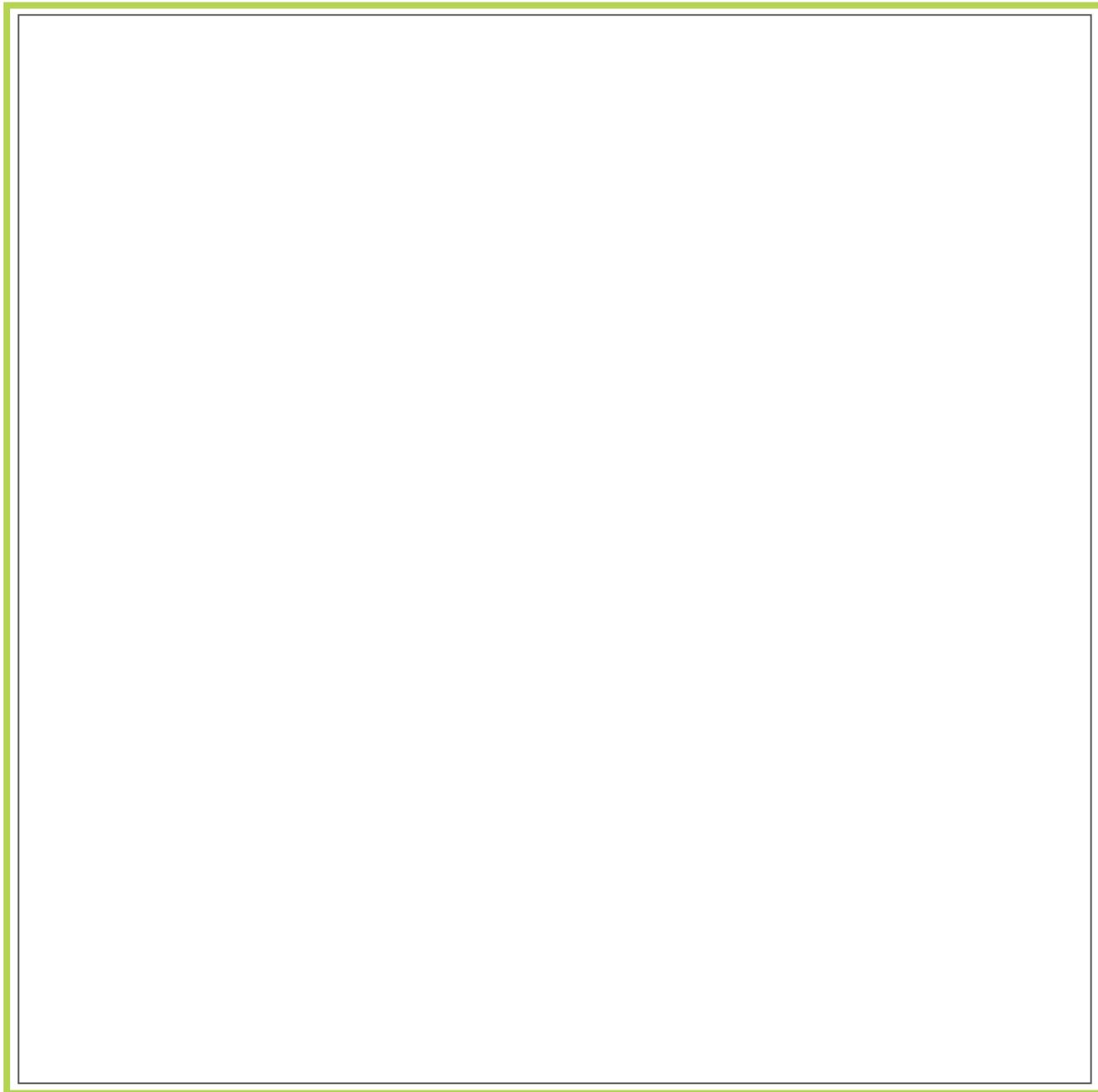
With your child, pretend you are different animals:

- Roll over like a dog
- Slither like a snake
- Hop like a bunny
- Gallop like a horse
- Walk like a duck
- Stretch like a cat
- Run like a deer
- Fly like a bird.



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about white fruits and vegetables.
Here is a picture of something I learned:



Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

Healthy choices that fit your lifestyle can help you do the things you want to do. Here are some easy steps you can take. Add your own ideas!

- **Be realistic:** Make small changes over time in what you eat. Small steps work better than giant leaps.
- **Be adventurous:** Expand your tastes to enjoy a variety of foods.
- **Be flexible:** Go ahead and balance what you eat with the physical activity you do over several days. There's no need to worry about just one meal or one day.
- **Be sensible:** Enjoy all foods—just don't overdo it!



PLAY HARD

Too much TV can lead to poor learning in school and to health problems like being overweight. Setting limits and keeping an eye on what your children watch can turn watching TV into a way for the whole family to learn together. Children who watch less TV are generally more physically active. Most doctors recommend no more than two hours of screen time per day for children.

Tips for Healthy TV Watching:

- Help your child to be active. Limit time watching TV and playing video games to two hours per day.
- Only turn on the TV when you are watching a program.
- Turn off the TV during meals.
- Help your child pick the programs he or she wants to watch.
- Talk with your child about what he or she watches on TV.
- Choose one day a week for your family to be "TV Free." Instead of watching TV, play games, read or go for a walk together.



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about brown foods. Here is a picture of something I learned:

A large, empty rectangular box with a light blue border. This box is intended for a child to draw a picture of a brown food item they have learned about.

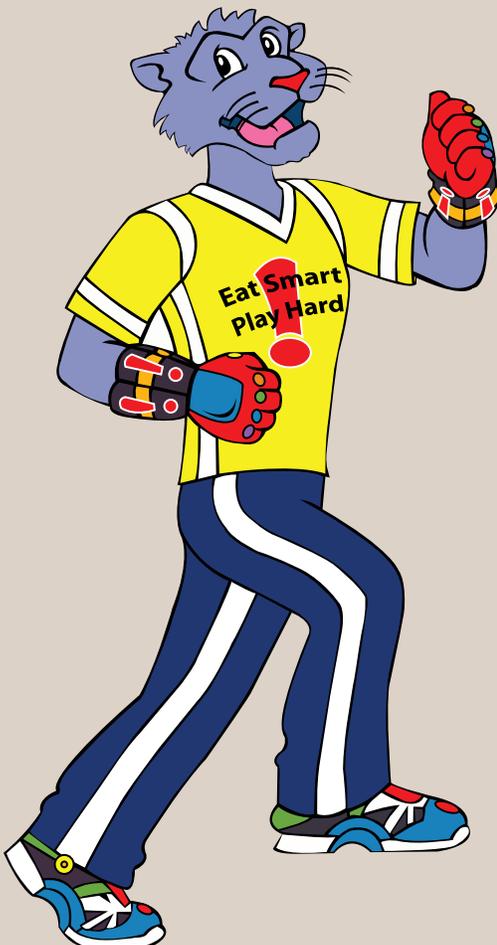
Ask me about my picture.

EAT SMART

Family meals are important. You create close bonds and lifelong memories around the family table. Family meals can teach your child about healthy eating. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to be a good role model. When you try new foods your child may be more adventurous with food, too.

Try these easy ways to make family meals a pleasant part of your family routine:

- **Set a regular family mealtime.** Regular mealtimes give everyone a better chance to eat a variety of foods.
- **Make it simple, make it quick!** Spend less time in the kitchen and more time at the family table.
- **Show that family meals are important.** Turn off the TV during meals and don't take phone calls.
- **Eat around a table and enjoy meal talk.** It's easier to talk and listen when family members face each other.



PLAY HARD

It's fun to enjoy active play both indoors and outside. Don't let the weather limit active time for your family. Adults need to move at least 30 minutes on most days. Your child needs at least 60 minutes of activity on most days.

Get moving indoors...

- Act out a story
- Create an obstacle course
- Turn up the music and dance
- Make bread, soft pretzels or pizza
- Start planning your garden

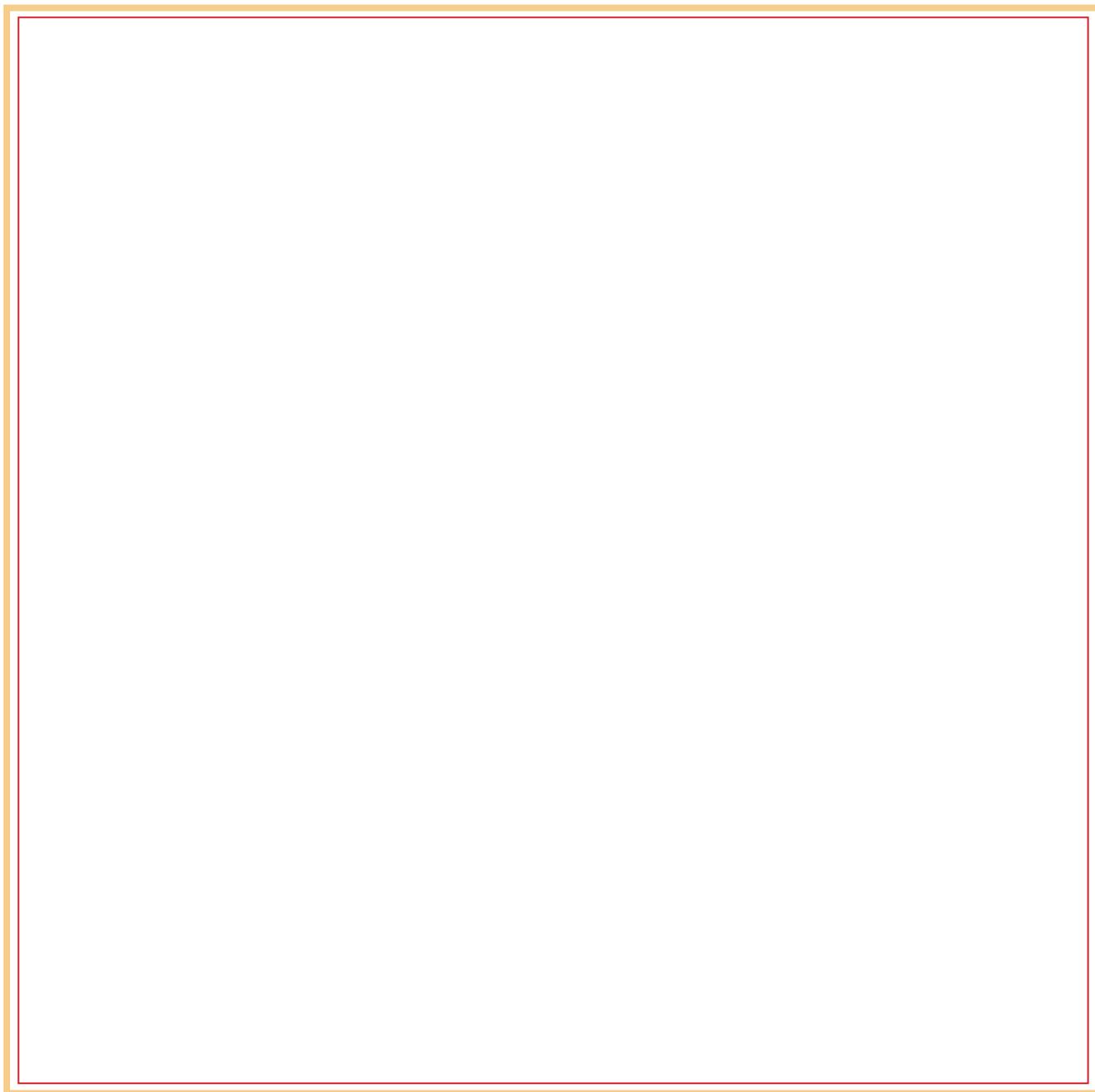
Get moving outside...

- Enjoy autumn leaves
- Bundle up for snow play
- Take a nature hike
- Walk in the zoo, mall or neighborhood
- Decorate an outdoor tree for the birds



Power Panther Preschool at Home

I have been learning about fruits and vegetables of all colors of the rainbow. Here is a picture of something I learned:



Ask me about my picture.

