

FAMILY CONNECTION

Keeping you informed and engaged

MARCH 2026

Family Engagement Event

Children's Oral Health and Tobacco Prevention

TUESDAY, MARCH 24, 2026
5:00 PM

Discover simple, effective habits to keep children and adolescents smiling bright, including proper brushing, flossing, and regular dental visits. Learn how everyday foods and drinks impact oral health, and how tobacco use harms individuals and families. Also, get clear guidance on Medi-Cal Dental Services, including covered benefits.

Presenter: Sayra Soriano, Program Coordinator, Oral Health Program / Tobacco Prevention Program, County of Marin



Link: Zoom meeting ID 81069385353

Education

School Readiness Goal: Early Math & Counting Skills
DRDP Alignment: COG 9 – Number Sense of Quantity

Help children build early math skills through number and counting comprehension. All of our preschool classrooms use counting games in their curriculum to support children in recognizing numbers, counting with accuracy, and understanding "how many." Providing children with regular opportunities to practice counting through songs, movement, hands-on activities, and everyday classroom routines helps them achieve these goals.



Try These at Home:

- Count steps as you walk together.
- Count snacks, toys, or groceries as you put them away.
- Sing counting songs like "Five Little Ducks."
- Ask, "How many do we have?" during daily routines.

Tips for Families:

Make counting part of everyday moments: in the car, at the store, or during playtime. Keep it fun and playful! Repetition helps children build confidence and number sense.

Reminder: Please stay connected to Brightwheel, our main communication tool.



Calendar

- **MARCH 6, 2026 1:00 PM**
Early Dismissal for all programs except School Age
- **SATURDAY, MARCH 21, 2026**
10:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Spring Faire At Mill Valley Community Center Community festival featuring crafts, activities for children, and interactive games.
Mill Valley Community Center, 180 Camino Alto, Mill Valley, CA
- **FRIDAYS FROM FEBRUARY 6-APRIL 10, 2026 9 AM – 3 PM**
Community Action Marin FREE Tax Return Preparation (VITA Program) Free, bilingual (English & Spanish) California and Federal tax preparation for eligible households who earn \$69,000 or less and have a social security number or ITIN. First come, first served. No appointment required.
Community Action Marin 7665 Redwood Blvd, Novato, CA 94945

- **PG&E BILL HELP & ENERGY SAVINGS PROGRAMS**
PG&E offers programs to help families lower energy bills and save money. You may qualify for more than one program.

Programs Include:

- **CARE:** 20%+ discount on gas & electricity
- **FERA:** 18% discount for households of 3+
- **ESA:** Free energy-efficient home upgrades
- **Medical Baseline:** Extra support for qualifying medical needs

Apply at pge.com/billhelp or call us at (415) 526-7550 for assistance.

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Health & Safety

March is Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month!

Developmental Disabilities Awareness Month celebrates inclusion and recognizes the strengths and abilities of children of all developmental levels. Every child grows and learns at their own pace. Early support identifies the developmental needs of a child, providing services that support learning, communication, social skills, and overall well-being.



Community Action Marin regularly monitors children's development and partners with families to ensure every child receives the support they need to thrive.

Tips for Home:

- Talk, read, and sing together every day.
- Encourage play that builds communication and problem-solving skills.
- Share any developmental questions with your child's teacher or pediatrician.
- Celebrate your child's unique strengths and progress.

Nutrition

Calcium builds strong bones and teeth. During the early years, children's bones are growing quickly, and consuming calcium supports healthy development. Calcium also plays a vital role in muscle movement and heart function. Set the foundation for lifelong bone health through daily consumption of calcium-rich foods. Good sources of calcium include milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified plant-based milks, tofu, and leafy green vegetables. Some cereals and orange juice are also fortified with calcium.



Easy Ways to Offer Calcium-Rich Foods:

- Serve milk with meals or snacks.
- Offer yogurt with fruit.
- Add cheese to eggs, beans, or vegetables.
- Blend fortified milk into smoothies.

Encourage children to try small amounts and keep offering foods regularly.

Harvest of the Month



Network for a Healthy California

The *Harvest of the Month* featured vegetable is **carrots**



Health and Learning Success Go Hand-in-Hand

Help your child do better on tests by serving a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day. With *Harvest of the Month*, your family can explore, taste, and learn about eating more fruits and vegetables and being active every day.

Produce Tips

- Carrots are always in season. You can find them fresh, frozen, or canned.
- Look for smooth, firm, and well-shaped carrots with an even color.
- Avoid carrots that feel soft, limp, or wilted.
- Refrigerate carrots in a plastic bag for up to two weeks.
- If you buy fresh carrots with the green tops, break off the tops before refrigerating. You can add the chopped green tops to soups for extra flavor.
- Look for low-sodium varieties of frozen or canned carrots.

Healthy Serving Ideas

- Carrots can be eaten whole, sliced into sticks, cut into rounds, chopped, shredded, and cooked.
- Add shredded carrots to salads and soups for a crunchy, sweet flavor.
- Have your child think of other ways to include carrots in family meals.
- Ask your child to tell you why eating fruits and vegetables is important.

SUPREME MASHED POTATOES

Makes 10 servings. $\frac{3}{4}$ cup per serving.
Total time: 55 minutes

Ingredients:

- 6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
 - 2 large carrots, peeled and chopped
 - 3 large cloves garlic, finely chopped
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-sodium chicken broth
 - 1 tablespoon butter
1. Combine potatoes and carrots in large pot. Fill with cold water. Bring to a boil and cook for 5 minutes.
 2. Add garlic and reduce heat to simmer until vegetables are tender, about 35 minutes.
 3. Drain pot and keep 1 cup of the cooking liquid.
 4. Mash potatoes, carrots, and garlic with a hand masher.
 5. In a small pan, heat chicken broth and butter over medium heat until butter melts.
 6. Slowly stir broth mixture into the mashed potatoes.
 7. If necessary, add the reserved cooking liquid until potatoes reach the desired thickness. Serve hot.

Nutrition information per serving:
Calories 104, Carbohydrate 22 g, Dietary Fiber 2 g, Protein 2 g, Total Fat 1 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 3 mg, Sodium 51 mg

Adapted from: *Soulful Recipes: Building Healthy Traditions*, Network for a Healthy California, 2008.

Let's Get Physical!

- With spring testing, it is important that your child gets outside. Daily physical activity may help improve your child's focus and test performance.
- Take your child on a scavenger hunt at a local park. See how many different types of plants and trees your child can find.

For more ideas, visit:

www.cachampionsforchange.net

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup carrots, sliced (61g)	
Calories 25	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 45mg	2%
Total Carbohydrate 6g	2%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 204%	Calcium 2%
Vitamin C 6%	Iron 1%

How Much Do I Need?

- A $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sliced carrots is about the same as one medium carrot or four baby carrots. This is about one cupped handful.
- A $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carrots (fresh or cooked) provides more than 200% of the recommended Daily Value for vitamin A.
- Vitamin A is important because it helps keep your vision good and your skin healthy. It also helps your body fight infections.
- Frozen, canned, and cooked carrots are just as nutritious as fresh.

The amount of fruits and vegetables that is right for you depends on your age, gender, and physical activity level. Find out how much each person in your family needs. Help your family eat the recommended amount by serving a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables in meals and snacks throughout the day. It will help keep your family healthy.

Recommended Daily Amount of Fruits and Vegetables*

	Kids, Ages 5-12	Teens and Adults, Ages 13 and up
Males	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 5 cups per day	4 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups per day
Females	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 5 cups per day	3 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 5 cups per day

*If you are active, eat the higher number of cups per day. Visit www.mypyramid.gov to learn more.