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Fun, silly .. genius!

FOODPLAY can take the heat off parents when trying to explain healthy eating habits

FAMILY-FRIENDLY RECIPES

Brown Sugar Streusel Pie was the Junior Chef Division Best of Show winner in the 2008 American Pie Council-Crisco National Pie Championships. Get the recipe at thestate.com/family.

IF YOU GO

- **What:** FOODPLAY, a dramatic touring show about healthy eating and living
- **Where:** EdVenture Children's Museum, 211 Gervais St.
- **When:** Saturday, May 24, 10:30 a.m., 1:30 and 2:30 p.m.
- **Cost:** There is no extra charge for the show after paying admission to the museum.

Do you dread trips to the grocery store with your children, knowing there will be a battle over some sort of junk food?

Or what about a simple stop at Target? You can barely make your way out of the place without requests for gum or candy or slushies.

Like many of you, it makes me crazy, and my children will be the first to tell you so.

They find my commentary about healthy eating habits excruciating.

But here's another way to get the message across that won't make parents the heavy.

EdVenture is hosting three showings of the Emmy Award-winning traveling theater show FOODPLAY at 10:30 a.m., and 1:30 and 2:30 p.m. Saturday, May 24, at the museum. You'll need to pay regular admission to get into the museum, but there is no additional cost to attend the shows.

"We want lots of kids to come," said Katherine Williams, EdVenture's health education programs manager.

The program involves skits about the Food Pyramid, eating fruits and vegetables, the importance of physical activity and how to read food labels as well as tips on developing a healthy body image.

And all in a fun, silly way.

The drama productions are the finale to a 12-week wellness program that EdVenture has offered this year through an initiative to address the issue of childhood obesity.

The program, called the Big Ed Health Team, involved groups of children and their parents who were taught new ways of eating healthy and getting more exercise — from kayaking to nature walks. (Big Ed is the giant boy who sits in the center of the museum. Children learn about their bodies — from brains to internal organs — by exploring Big Ed.)

The Big Ed Health Team lasted 12 weeks because "it takes you at least that long to change a habit," Williams explained. The results of the program will be measured by an independent adviser to determine future activities.

Amy Sabin of Columbia was among the participants with her husband and children.

"Some events were ones we could have done on our own, but we had not made the time. Other events would not have been available to us without this program," said Sabin, who writes in an e-mail that she would definitely take part again if given the chance.

Among the activities they have enjoyed: jumping and climbing at the Plex; adult health screenings; nature walks along the canal; and kayaking and canoeing at Heathwood Hall Episcopal School, which was among the family's favorite activities.

Williams said EdVenture hopes to offer the Big Ed program again next year because of the overwhelming response they've had this year.

And even though that part of the program has come to a close, ongoing efforts related to healthy eating and exercising will continue. Keep up with museum events at their Web site, edventure.org, and don't miss the FOODPLAY shows. More than 3 million children have seen the shows in the 25 years they have been touring the country.

Maybe you'll even pick up a fun line or two to combat those pleas for candy in the checkout line.

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