**Welcome to Power Panther Pals!**

Your child is participating in the Intermediate Level of Power Panther Pals, an eight-week health education program for third, fourth, and fifth grade students. Power Panther Pals incorporates activities from K-State Research and Extension’s *Kids a Cookin’* program; a program that encourages kids and adults to work together to prepare healthy meals and snacks.

Power Panther Pals encourages children to eat more fruits, vegetables and whole grains; to eat lower-fat foods more often; to eat calcium-rich foods; and to eat a variety of healthy foods. Students also learn about the benefits of daily physical activity, and there are activities that go along with each lesson.

This program is based on the United States Department of Agriculture’s (USDA’s) *EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.* campaign. The *EAT SMART. PLAY HARD.* campaign is about making our nation’s children healthier. Power Panther is the campaign’s official spokes-character.

Each week, your child will learn about nutrition and physical activity through interactive, behavior-based activities. Students will also set personal goals and work together as a team.

You are invited to participate in your child’s Power Panther Pals experience. Take time to talk with your child about what he or she learned in Pals, try the *Kids a Cookin’* recipes at home, and make physical activity a priority for your family.

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**Be a Healthy Role Model**

Parents are the most important role models in their children’s lives. To help kids get off to a healthy start, model healthy behaviors like:

- Never skip meals
- Take moderate portions of food
- Turn the television off while eating
- Be willing to try new foods
- Eat fruit for dessert
- Limit the amount of “junk food” that is kept (and eaten!) in your home
- Eat your vegetables too!
- Have a glass of low-fat milk or water with your dinner
- Eat breakfast every morning
There are a lot of choices out there when it comes to juices to give to your family. The next time you’re grocery shopping, look for juices made from 100% fruit juice. Be sure to also check for added sweeteners. Unsweetened 100% juices contain significantly less added sweeteners and artificial flavors.

Try some of the new juices that include both fruit and vegetable juices; they may become your secret weapon for getting the nutrients from vegetables into your youngster’s tummy!
Families seem to be busier than ever and sometimes there just doesn’t seem to be enough time to get everything done. Get your family up and moving and cross something off your to-do list at the same time! Try some of these ideas to get your chores done and your kids away from the TV.

Wash the family car
Turn on some music and give everyone a specific task. Kids can run the hose, scrub with a sponge or cloth, vacuum the interior, “hunt” for garbage on the floor and between the seats of the car, etc. A water fight will get everyone moving too. Just make sure you’re the one holding the garden hose!

Family garden projects
Youngsters should steer clear of tools like lawnmowers and trimmers, but there are still a lot of ways to get them involved in your yard maintenance. Kids can sweep the walkway and porch, pull weeds, spread mulch, help plant flowers, and water flower pots and plantings. Just don’t forget that sunscreen and insect repellent!

Clean out those closets!
Kids outgrow clothes at lightning-speed, and often adults’ closets are full of things that they don’t wear or don’t fit. Have a family fashion show to help keep those closets clutter-free! Make it extra-fun by having a dress-up relay race, a dance competition, or just be silly as you try on last year’s outfits. Clothes that no longer fit can be passed down to the next child, swapped with other families, or donated to charity.

Make grocery shopping interactive
Grocery shopping can sometimes be a tedious and time-consuming task. Get your family involved and make shopping time a family time.

Write your shopping list together at home and try to include items to make a "Kids a Cookin’" recipe. Let your child choose one or two new foods for the family to try, encourage them to include fruits or vegetable or whole grains in their choice.

When you get to the store, talk about how the foods are organized as you go through the aisles. Many food groups are displayed together, and in different forms (fresh, frozen, canned, dried, etc.).

After your shopping trip, unpack the groceries together. Re-cap what you talked about at the grocery store, and show how to safely handle and store food. Use re-usable bags at the grocery store and you can talk about taking care of the environment too!
Serve this homemade applesauce as a dessert or for a snack. The applesauce is great warm when you first make it, and the leftovers (if there are any) will taste great right from the fridge too. Tart apples, such as Granny Smith and Jonathan, make the best applesauce.

**Homemade Applesauce**

_It’s yummy either hot or cold!_  
Makes 4 cups

**Ingredients:**

- 3 pounds (about 12) cooking apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- ½ to ¾ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

**Directions:**

1. In a large microwave-safe bowl, combine all ingredients, stirring well.
2. Cover bowl with wax paper, microwave 9 minutes, then stir.
3. Cover and continue microwaving 5 to 8 minutes or until apples are soft.
4. Mash apples and serve warm or cold.

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**Kitchen Corner: Know Your Knives**

One of the best ways to help your family to **EAT SMART** is to cook healthy meals at home. Often home-cooked meals are healthier and less-expensive than the meals you find in restaurants. Cooking for a family can be an intimidating undertaking, but the right kitchen equipment can make all the difference.

Often overlooked, a good knife is one of the most important kitchen tools you can have. There are dozens of different knives out there, each with its own specific purpose. Whether you decide to have a whole drawer full of knives, or prefer to own just a few, a well-equipped kitchen should have the following four knives to make meal preparation easier:

- A paring knife to trim and peel foods (usually fruits and vegetables)
- A serrated knife to cut breads and cakes
- A small chef’s knife, an all-purpose knife used for chopping and slicing
- A medium-sized chef’s knife, a larger version of the small chef’s knife that can handle bigger chopping and slicing jobs.

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Kids a Cookin’: Homemade Applesauce

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**Nutrition Facts:** One ½ cup serving provides 150 calories, 0g total fat, 0mg cholesterol, 0mg sodium, 38g total carbohydrate

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