Do your children or grandchildren come home after school hungry and ready to eat anything in sight? Rather than let them fill up on chips and cookies, use this hunger as an opportunity to serve them the fruits, vegetables and milk-based foods so often lacking in the diets of today's children.

Here are some quick and easy snack ideas to help your children fight the after-school snack attack nutritiously. They are healthful, fun to make and, depending on the age of your child, require very little adult supervision.

Fruit shake-ups: Combine 1/2-cup low-fat fruit yogurt with 1/2-cup cold fruit juice in a non-breakable container with a lid. Check to make sure the lid is on tight. Shake the mixture vigorously, then pour into a cup.

Pudding shakes: Use the same techniques described above for making fruit shake-ups, but mix 1/2-cup low-fat or skim milk with 3 tablespoons of instant pudding instead.

Snack kabobs: Cut a variety of vegetables or fruit into small chunks. Skewer them onto thin pretzel sticks. To keep cut apples, bananas or pears from becoming discolored, dip them in orange or lemon juice before placing them onto the pretzels.

Sticks and dip: Cut carrots, celery, or cucumbers into sticks, then dip them into salsa, low-fat salad dressing or low-fat dip.

Edible food faces: Spread peanut butter on a rice or popcorn cake. Create a happy face using dry cereal, raisins, or other dried fruits.

Banana pops: Peel a banana. Dip it in plain or fruit yogurt. Roll the banana in crushed breakfast cereal, then freeze.

Ants on a Log: Cut celery sticks about 3 inches long. Fill with peanut butter. Arrange raisins on top.

Fish in the River: Fill celery sticks with cream cheese (dyed blue with food coloring if you're feeling creative). Arrange goldfish-type crackers along the top.

A note of caution: Small, hard, sticky or gel-like foods that don't dissolve easily can lodge in the throat and become a choking hazard. Such foods should be given only to children younger than four years of age if care is taken to minimize the risk. Foods on which small children are most likely to choke include hot dogs, hard and gel candies, nuts, whole grapes, popcorn, peanut butter and carrot or apple chunks. To minimize the risk of choking, make sure that foods are cut at angles rather than squares and in small enough pieces to easily slide down a throat.
Also, it's important that children sit down to enjoy their snacks and meals. Eating while lying down, crying, laughing, running or playing hard increases the risk of choking.

Source: Colorado Cooperative Extension

Cajun Pork Roast
2 pounds boneless pork loin roast
2 teaspoons olive oil
3 tablespoons paprika
2 tablespoons dried oregano
2 tablespoons dried thyme
1 tablespoon garlic powder
⅛ teaspoon each salt, crushed red pepper flakes, ground cumin and white pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Rub pork roast with oil. Combine remaining ingredients and rub over roast. Cover and refrigerate for 1-3 hours. Bake, uncovered, at 325 degrees, for 1 1/4 - 1 ½ hours, or until a meat thermometer reads 160 degrees. Transfer to a serving platter. Let stand for 10-15 minutes before slicing.