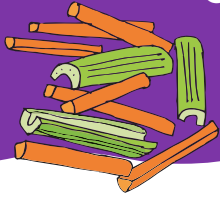


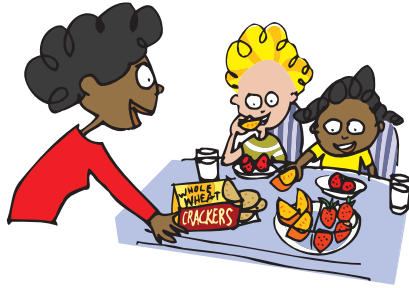
# Supplement C: Encourage Healthful Foods



## Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program

**Children's attitudes and preferences toward food and eating habits develop at a young age.**

**Good eating habits do not just happen—they are learned!**



Studies tell us that parents and other caregivers influence children's food preferences. Child care providers can encourage healthful foods by using easy, low-cost techniques, similar to those that schools use from the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement.

For more information on the Smarter Lunchrooms Movement, go to <http://smarterlunchrooms.org/homepage>.

### How can I spark children's interest in food?

► **Talk about food** throughout the day, as well as at mealtime.

- Discuss different foods with the children - where they come from and what foods children eat at home. Topics around food can be endless! For more information, see "Teach through talking" in Supplement E: Support Family Style Dining from *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children: Provider Handbook for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>
- Before the children sit down for meals, talk about the food that will be served, and ask them to notice the shapes and colors.
- Mix nutrition information with reading, storytelling, and other activities.
  - Get books and educational videos for the children. Select ones that send good messages about food. Some suggestions:



*Bread and Jam for Frances*, Russell Hoban

*Delicious! A Pumpkin Soup Story*, Helen Cooper

*Discover MyPlate Emergent Readers*, USDA Food and Nutrition Service

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-emergent-reader-mini-books>

*Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z*, Lois Ehlert

*Green Eggs and Ham*, Dr. Seuss

*I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato*, Lauren Child

*Rah Rah Radishes! A Vegetable Chant*, April Pulley Sayre

*The Beastly Feast*, Bruce Goldstone

*The Two-Bite Club*, USDA Food and Nutrition Service

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/two-bite-club>



- For more suggestions, see the USDA's Food and Nutrition Information Center's "Food and Nutrition Fun for Preschoolers." [http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/fun\\_preschool.pdf](http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/pubs/fun_preschool.pdf)



- ▶ **Use taste and texture words** to describe foods, such as sweet, sour, salty, tart, crunchy, chewy, creamy, and juicy.
- ▶ **Display colorful posters** and student artwork showing different foods.
  - Pictures help create a friendly, inviting atmosphere that promotes healthy eating behaviors.
  - Team Nutrition offers a wide variety of posters and graphics displaying fruits and vegetables in a fun, kid-friendly manner. <http://teamnutrition.usda.gov>
  - The Healthy Meals Resource System's Bulletin Board Resources Web page has many printable pictures, handouts, and other resources on different nutrition topics, such as breakfast, fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.  
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/resource-library/bulletin-board-resources>
- ▶ **Start a small outdoor** or container garden.
  - Children show more interest in food they have helped grow.
  - For ideas, check out *Grow It, Try It, Like It! Preschool Fun with Fruits and Vegetables*. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/grow-it-try-it-it>



## How can I get children to try new foods?

Keep these P's in mind: **POSITIVE ▶ PREPARE ▶ PATIENT ▶ PICTURES**

### ▶ Be positive

- Be positive when introducing a new food. When they see that you are excited to try a new food, they may be more likely to try it too!
- Let a child who is usually open toward trying new foods taste the new food first. Children will be more willing to try a food if another child has already tried and liked it.
- Expect that new foods will be liked. Don't assume that a child won't like a food because it's new or different.
- Praise children when they try a new food. Talk about how delicious it is!

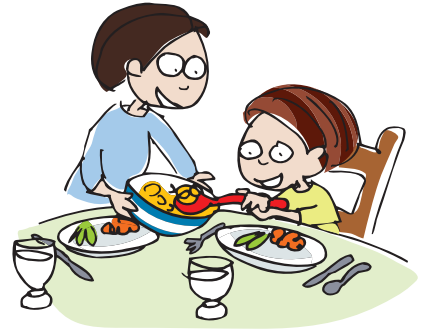
### ▶ Prepare



- Serve children all types of foods and not just foods traditionally served on the kids' menu. Most children are more adventurous than we give them credit for.
- Try different recipes or substitute new foods, like fruits or vegetables, into children's favorite recipes.
- Prepare a new weekly fruit or vegetable as part of the mealtime routine.
- Serve a new food along with a familiar food. Ask children to point out the similarities between the two foods.

► **Be patient**

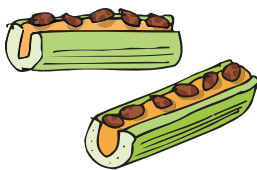
- Don't take food refusal personally – allow children to choose whether or not they want to try a new food.
- Offer new foods often. Children may need to be offered a new food many times before they will decide to try it.
- Introduce only one new food at a time to allow children to learn new flavors and textures.
- Teach children to not call foods names like “yucky” or “gross.” Tell them we may not like a new food the first time we try it, but might later on.
- Have children start with one or two bites at first. Don't expect children to eat a full portion of something new.
- If a food is not accepted after several tries, change the way it is prepared and/or served.
- If children accept a new food, serve it again soon so they get used to it.



► **Use pictures and phrases**

- Introduce new foods by showing children pictures of them first. They will be more open to trying new foods if they know something about them.
- Make trying new foods a positive experience by using the right words. Check out “Phrases that Help and Hinder” on the ChooseMyPlate.gov Web site.

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/healthy-habits/HelpAndHinderPhrases.pdf>



Do YOU  
LIKE that ?

“Phrases that Help”



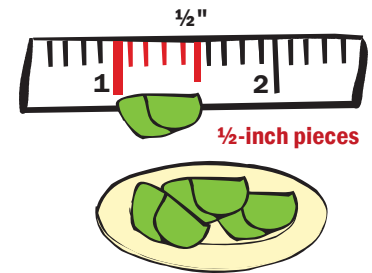
EVERYBODY likes  
different foods,  
don't they ?

Which one is  
your FAVORITE ?



## How can I get children to eat healthful foods?

- ▶ **Get creative!** Put fun food names on your menu.
  - Use fun and appealing names for fruits and vegetables to make it more likely young children will be willing to try them and eat more of them.
  - Invite children to come up with fun food names. You can even have a food naming contest!
- ▶ **“Nudge” healthy choices.**
  - Gently nudge children to try a fruit or vegetable by asking, “How about trying a kiwi today?”
  - For more ideas, see “Phrases that Help” on the previous page.
- ▶ **Bring in superheroes!**
  - When children are asked what superheroes would eat, they may be more likely to choose healthier foods for themselves.
  - Before offering fruits and vegetables to children, ask them, “What would your favorite superhero eat?”
- ▶ **Serve fruits and vegetables** in kid-friendly ways.
  - Slice and chop fruits and vegetables into smaller pieces to make them easier for children to chew and handle. For children younger than 4 years old, make sure pieces are no larger than one-half inch (1/2").
    - You can also use small cookie cutters to cut fruits, vegetables, and other foods, like sandwiches, into fun shapes.



### CACFP Crediting Tip:

- **When using fun shapes, make sure you still offer the full portion of food depending on the meal and age of the child.**
- For more ideas, check out this tip sheet on the ChooseMyPlate.gov Web site:  
<http://choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet11KidFriendlyVeggiesAndFruits.pdf>
- ▶ **Encourage physical activity** throughout the day – the more children move, the hungrier they will be at mealtime and the more likely they will eat what is served.

## Connect with Parents and Families

- ▶ **Provide families with handouts** and recipes that promote healthy eating.
- ▶ **Text or tell parents and caregivers** what foods their child is eating at child care. Send or display a photo of their child enjoying a new food!
- ▶ **Send the message home.** Share newsletters from *Nibbles for Health: Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children*.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/nibbles-health-nutrition-newsletters-parents-young-children>



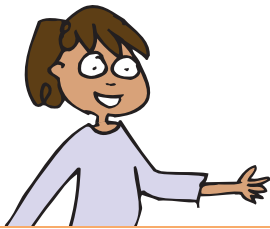
## Activities

How can I put this information into practice in my child care program?

1 Take a look at your daily schedule and use every opportunity to teach children about healthful foods.

Which of these fun ideas will you try next week? Mark your choices.

- ☐ Read a fun educational book about food.
- ☐ Put up a colorful poster of fruits and vegetables.
- ☐ Show children a picture of a new food they will be trying.
- ☐ Talk about what superheroes would eat.
- ☐ Start a container garden or plant a small vegetable garden outside.
- ☐ Take pictures of children enjoying a new food.
- ☐ Other ideas:



- 2 Take a look at your menu and find ways to include more healthful foods and make them more enticing. Start with one or two ideas per week.

**Which of these ideas will you try to encourage children in your care to eat healthful foods? Mark your choices.**

☐ **Include a new fruit or vegetable** on the menu.

☐ **Try a new recipe.**

☐ **Cut fresh fruits or vegetables** into fun shapes.

☐ **Use some of these** fun and catchy menu names from schools and child care centers around the country:

- |                                 |                           |                            |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| ★ X-Ray Vision Carrots          | ★ Bouncing Beans          | ★ Apple Crunchers          |
| ★ Cool Crunchy Carrots          | ★ Mixed Up Fruit Cup      | ★ Celery Swords            |
| ★ Sweet Carrot Coins            | ★ Monster Mashed Potatoes | ★ Mighty Melon             |
| ★ Power Peas                    | ★ Lean Mean Green Beans   | ★ Jumping Beans            |
| ★ Glow-in-the-Dark Greens       | ★ Wild Potato Wedges      | ★ Razzle Dazzle Berries    |
| ★ Dinosaur Broccoli Trees       | ★ Zesty Zucchini          | ★ Bandit Beans             |
| ★ Power Punch Broccoli          | ★ Super Hero Spinach      | ★ Kickin' Kiwi             |
| ★ Banana Ramas                  | ★ Fiesta Pinto Beans      | ★ Super Power Squash       |
| ★ Tomato Bursts                 | ★ Awesome Apples          | ★ Scrumptious Strawberries |
| ★ Golden Pirates Corn           | ★ Yummy Hummus            | ★ Go Wild Rice             |
| ★ Cream of the Crop Golden Corn | ★ Cool Cucumbers          | ★ _____                    |
|                                 |                           | _____                      |

☐ **Other Ideas:**

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