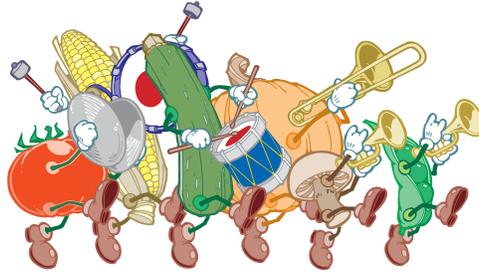


# Tips for Getting Kids to Eat Fruits and Vegetables



## PARENTS are in charge!

- As a parent it is your responsibility to buy healthy groceries and serve nutritious food to your growing child.
- Be consistent! Children need a meal routine, plan for 3 meals and 2 snacks each day.
  - Once on a schedule children will become hungry at regular times.

## SEEING is believing

- You are a role model! When it comes to eating fruits and vegetables the actions of older family members definitely influences how kids react to fruits and vegetables.
  - The next time salad (or any fruit/vegetable) is passed to you say, “I love salad.” Soon the kids around you will be eager to eat it.

## TRYING is believing

- It is important to keep offering new fruits and vegetables.
  - Despite repeated refusals, a child may suddenly decide to try a new food. It may take 2, 3, or even more times before a child gets used to the taste of a new item.
  - Ask kids to take one bite. If they don’t like it, that’s fine. Allowing them to stop at one bite makes trying new foods less scary.

## OFFER choices

- Offer 2 to 3 fruit or vegetable choices.
- Asking kids to pick the fruits and vegetables for a meal allows them to choose their favorites and make decisions.

## MAKE it easy

- Children will grab the most convenient item. Make fruits and vegetables convenient by placing them in spots where kids will see them first.
  - Put bottles or boxes of 100% fruit juice on lower shelves where kids will see them when they open the fridge looking for a cool drink.
  - Have “grab and go snacks” in small plastic bags (cut up raw vegetables, peeled and segmented oranges, seedless grapes, etc.) ready and waiting in the refrigerator.



## MAKE it fun

- Decorate dishes with fruit and vegetable garnishes.
- Top off a bowl of cereal with a smiling face featuring sliced bananas for eyes, raisins for a nose, and an orange slice for a mouth.
- Draw a picture! You can use broccoli florets for trees, carrots and celery for flowers, cauliflower for clouds, and a yellow squash for a sun.
- Eat dried fruit instead of candy.
- If your child dislikes certain fruits and vegetables, use your imagination by calling them something fun and memorable. For example, call peas “green balls” and broccoli “little trees.”
- Make frozen kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, and berries.
- Go shopping with your children and let them pick out new fruit and vegetables to try.

## KIDS like to eat what they make

- Kids are more likely to try something they helped prepare.
- At the grocery store have them pick out fruit and vegetables to eat.
- Here are some age appropriate activities for 4-5 year olds:
  - Wipe down table tops
  - Scrub and rinse fruit and vegetables
  - Wash and tear lettuce
  - Snap green beans
  - Bring ingredients from one place to another
  - Mix ingredients and pour liquids
  - Knead and shape yeast dough
  - Put things in the trash
  - Peel oranges
  - Mash bananas with a fork
  - Set a table
  - Measure ingredients
  - Use a whisk

## ADD fruits and vegetables to favorite foods

- Use your imagination the possibilities are endless!
  - Mix fruit pieces in yogurt
  - Make fruit smoothies in the blender
  - Make a fruit salad
  - Add chopped fruit to cereal
  - Mix in chopped fruit with jello
  - Try chopping and mixing vegetables in pasta sauces, lasagna, casseroles, soups, chili, or add vegetable toppings to pizzas
  - Serve vegetables in a stir-fry
  - Try serving raw vegetables with low fat dips

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