

# Tips for Providers: Eating More Fruits and Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some diseases like cancer, heart disease, diabetes and may protect against excess weight gain. Start the habit of eating fruits and vegetables daily at a young age. Children will carry this habit through life. Use these ideas to help the children eat more fruits and vegetables in your center or home.



## 1 All Fruits and Veggies Count.

Try fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables and fruits without added sugars, sauces, syrup, and salt. They all count and can be used different ways. Children may prefer one kind over the other so try them all.

## 2 Be a Role Model.

Children watch and learn from others. Everyone in the center or home should eat fruits and vegetables daily. The children are watching you eat squash and enjoy it, which may make them want to try the squash, too.

## 3 Color Your Plate.

Everyone eats with their eyes first. Use colorful vegetables to make meals look tasty to children. If every food on the plate is yellow, try adding some green vegetables to add more color to the plate.

## 4 Put More into Meals.

Add veggies to meals every chance you get. Add veggies to sauces, soups, pizza, lasagna, and casseroles. The more veggies the children get the better nutrition they get daily.

## 5 Try Different Ways.

Children are still building their taste buds. The more ways you can make the same food, the better. Try grilling, baking, roasting, boiling, steaming, or serving raw vegetables. You could turn it into a game. Have the children guess which vegetable you are making.

## 6 Feature a Veggie.

Choose a weekly vegetable and feature it in several meals over the week. Tell the children about where it grows, how we cook it, and why it is healthy. It may take children up to 10 times of trying a food before they decide they like it.

## 7 Explore the Five Senses.

Talk about the taste, texture, smell, crunch, and color of vegetables in meals. Talking about the five senses may interest children in eating vegetables.

## 8 Grow a Garden.

It can be a small garden. Try a few tomato plants in pots or green beans in the flower bed. Children can help take care of the garden. It helps them feel important and teaches them where vegetables are grown.



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