

## Comments from training participants:

“This was a **fabulous** training. Thank you!”

“I must say it was the  
**best nutrition training ever!**”

“I thought the program was  
**well done** and fun.”

“The games were **fun** and they reinforced  
what was taught throughout the day.”



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# FROM KITCHEN TO CLASSROOM!



## Kid-Friendly Fruit & Veggie Habits for Child Nutrition Staff

# USE KID-FRIENDLY FRUIT & VEGGIE HABITS

## More play, less fuss helps kids try healthy foods.

1. **Serve Fruits and Vegetables Over and Over.** Sometimes it takes at least 10 exposures to the same food for children to try and decide if they like it. Adults get bored with the same food over and over, but children learn to like a food with repeated servings.

2. **Watch Out for Trickster Foods.** Just because it says it is healthy, does not mean it is. Some foods claim to be healthy, while serving up unnecessary sugar and saturated fats. Check labels for ones that list items such as “whole grain” first. Look for recipes that offer healthier substitutes, for example, exchange sweet potatoes for white potatoes.

3. **Change-O Presto.** A raw tomato in a salad is very different from tomato sauce on pizza. Use different recipes to serve the same food in different ways. This allows children an opportunity to find one variation they like.



4. **Create a Physical Environment that Supports Healthy Habits.** Display food in ways that encourage children, parents, and visitors to choose healthy food options. For example, to make fruits and vegetables more appealing, try slicing them into fancy patterns. Another approach is to place the white milk in front of the flavored milk. You can also post your monthly menu with attractive pictures of healthy foods.

5. **Allow Kids to Decide If and How Much To Eat.** Help children listen to their bodies. It’s your responsibility to provide the meal for the children. It is the children’s responsibility to decide what to eat and how much. Use hunger cues (“Is your belly hungry or full?”) to support their choices. Children should never be forced, threatened, or bribed to eat.



6. **Do as I Do.** Your interactions with children may be limited but do not underestimate your impact. Children connect you with food, something that makes them happy. When you are with children for snacks or at mealtimes, eat the same foods they eat. Don’t eat junk food around them, including sugary soft drinks.



7. **Words Matter.** “Mmmm—broccoli is very yummy...I love crunchy carrots!” Your positive attitude toward healthier foods will encourage children to have one also!

8. **Sneak Food into Daily Interactions.** Take an active role. Talk with children about healthy foods anytime you are around them—in the hall or during visits to the classroom. Talk about the yummy vegetables you cooked for lunch or ask questions like “What color are peppers?” or “Which vegetable is your favorite?”.

9. **Connect with Teachers.** Your partnership with teachers reinforces healthy habits. Talk to the teacher about what foods are on the menu, why they are repeated, and ask which foods the kids enjoyed. Look for ways to connect the kitchen with the classroom, for example, schedule a kitchen tour!

10. **Connect with Families.** Sometimes nutrition staff arrive early and can/should use this opportunity to interact with parents and kids. You might also attend parent nights or conferences to get to know parents and discuss new menu items. Look for other ways to connect healthy food habits to parents like with newsletters to share healthy snack tips. When parents know that their child is learning to try a new food, they might be willing to try it at home.

