



# Kids Say Yes to Fruits and Veggies: Tips for More Fun and Fewer Fights

## *30-minute lesson*

### GOAL

Encourage caregivers to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into family meals and snacks.

### OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Prepare meals and snacks that help kids eat more fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Discuss pros and cons of using different forms of fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Discuss ways to save time preparing fruits and vegetables.
- ✓ Share ideas for helping kids enjoy more fruits and vegetables.

### KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ Buying fruits and veggies in all their forms (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) can help save you money and time. There is no “best” form of fruits and vegetables – they all count!
- ✓ Kids learn by watching you! Be a role model by eating fruits and vegetables yourself.
- ✓ Patience works better than pressure. You decide what foods to serve – then let kids choose whether and how much to eat.
- ✓ Kids may need to see a new food on the table many times before they will try it or like it.

### MATERIALS

Flip chart or white board • Markers/pens • Name tags • Ingredients and equipment for your chosen recipes  
• Samples of different types (fresh, canned, frozen, dried) of fruit and vegetables (in addition to those you prepare together in class – optional) • Materials for kids’ activity (if using - optional)

### KIDS’ ACTIVITY OPTIONS

**We have provided a booklet of activities that can be used with kids.** The following are suggestions for specific activities that may be complementary to what caregivers are learning in this lesson. **You are not limited to this list** – feel free to use whatever activities are most appropriate for your situation.

Note that some activities are written for the whole family, but can be easily modified for an activity with only kids

- For younger kids:
  - We Eat Tops and Bottoms, page 18
  - Fruit and Vegetable Mystery Bag, page 10
  - Make a Fruit Clown Face, page 42
  - Any of the coloring sheets on pages 21-32
- For older kids:
  - Fruit Partner Games, page 57
  - Food Group Relay Race, page 54

## CAREGIVER HANDOUTS

We have provided a comprehensive set of handouts for each lesson that can be 1) used as references for the instructor to prepare for class 2) referenced verbally and/or visually during class to guide discussion 3) provided as take-homes for caregivers to reinforce what they learned in class and encourage further learning. **You are NOT required to provide all of these handouts as take-homes** (though you may if you wish). Feel free to pick and choose which you feel are most helpful and appropriate. However, we ask that **at a minimum you provide a printed copy of the recipe(s) you prepared in class, as well as the Making It Work at Home handout.**

Check off the handouts you plan to reference during class

- Fresh, Frozen, and Canned
- Seasonal Fruits and Vegetables
- MyPlate
- Raising a Healthy Eater
- Set a Healthy Example
- Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables
- Freezing Fruits and Veggies
- Fun with Fruits and Veggies
- Delicious Dips and Spreads
- Veggies Three Ways
- Snack Smart
- Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner
- Step-by-Step Stir-Fries
- Make Your Own Trail Mix
- Make Your Own Baby Food
- Making It Work at Home

## RECIPE OPTIONS

Choose **1 snack or 1 meal/side dish** (or as many as time allows) **for the hands-on cooking**. The following chart provides some ideas. You may use other recipes if you wish – see [CookingMatters.org/recipes](http://CookingMatters.org/recipes) for more ideas. If you are not using a Cooking Matters recipe, please be sure it contains only ingredients that are affordable and accessible for low-income caregivers, does not require fancy cooking tools, and follows healthy eating guidelines. If of interest and appropriate for your group, make your own homemade baby food in place of the snack.

To work within a 30-minute lesson, **please read the recipes carefully and determine whether you need to prepare any ingredients in advance (e.g., chopping veggies, pre-cooking grains or other ingredients) to fit within your timeframe.**

Snacks			
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Raw fruits or veggies paired with any dip from the Delicious Dips and Spreads handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Prepare veggies and fruit in advance.  Focus lesson on making dips and spreads.	“ Kids love to dip their foods. Particularly with picky kids, dips are a great way to add new flavors that will encourage kids to eat their fruits and vegetables.”  “ Dips can be made on the weekends, or when you have a little extra time, and used throughout the week. Get kids involved in the mixing and mashing!”

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Make Your Own Trail Mix (see handout)</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Create stations with ingredients in advance.  Let kids/parents make their own mix.	"Trail mix can satisfy those cravings for savory crunchy foods but with a serving of dried fruit thrown in."  "This one is perfect for beginning to get younger kids familiar with food prep. They can help measure and mix. They can also help divide and bag into servings for use throughout the week."
<a href="#">Yogurt Parfait</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	If making homemade granola, prepare in advance.	"Yogurt parfaits you buy pre-made often have lots of added sugar and cost as much as a whole tub of yogurt. Or, compare them to single- serving fruit-flavored yogurt cups or "smoothies" – which typically have little or no actual fruit! Make your own for a healthier, lower-cost treat."
<a href="#">Fruit Tarts</a>	Prep Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Prepare fruit in advance.  Preheat oven in advance.	"Works as a snack or healthier dessert."
<a href="#">Snack Smart handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 - 60 minutes depending on recipe chosen Cook Time: 0 minutes	If choosing to make frozen fruit snacks, prepare in advance and focus lesson on tasting.	"Planning is key – think about when you'll have some extra time to assemble the snacks and store for easy grabbing throughout the week."  "For older kids who can help themselves, make sure healthy snacks are easier to access than less healthy foods. Keep them pre-assembled and in plain sight."
<a href="#">Make Your Own Baby Food (see handout)</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Prepare in advance to allow to cool.	"Fruits and vegetables are a great first food for baby. Start with mild- tasting fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, avocados, sweet and white potatoes, peas, and winter squash."  "Making your own helps cut down on family food costs."

#### Meal or Side Dishes

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Black Bean and Vegetable Quesadillas</a>	Prep Time: 25 minutes Cook Time: 20 minutes	Drain and rinse beans in advance.  Wash and prepare vegetables.	"Substitute frozen spinach for fresh to save money, or if you won't use up the fresh spinach in other ways."  "Use any veggies you like. Quesadillas are great for throwing in leftover veggies too!"

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Veggies Three Ways handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 2- 35 minutes depending on cooking method and vegetable type	Choose a cooking method and vegetable type that can be prepared during lesson.  Prepare longer cooking vegetables in advance and focus lesson on tasting.	"Let your kids taste veggies in different ways until you find a style they like best."  "Once you have some great go-to veggie options, you can put them on the side of very simple meals (grilled cheese, ham sandwich) and always feel good knowing they're getting their veggies."
<a href="#">Step-by-Step Pasta Dinner</a>	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes	Cook pasta in advance. Prepare vegetables in advance. Prepare sauce in advance.	"Pasta dishes are great for throwing in leftover veggies, thawed frozen veggies, canned veggies – whatever you've got."  "These are great recipes to double and serve leftovers for lunch or dinner later in the week."
<a href="#">Step-by-Step Stir-Fries</a>	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 15 - 20 minutes	Cook grain in advance. Prepare vegetables in advance. Prepare sauce in advance. Focus lesson on assembling and tasking using framework.	"Stir-fries are a great way to get a colorful variety of vegetables into a single meal. Perfect for throwing in small amounts of leftovers or using up veggies that may soon go bad."  "Thawed frozen veggies work well in stir-fries, but be sure to drain excess water before adding."
<a href="#">Fall Vegetable Salad</a>	Prep Time: 20 minutes Cook Time: 10 - 50 minutes	Prepare grain in advance. Prepare vegetables in advance. Focus lesson on assembling recipe and making dressing.	"Substitute apples with dried fruit, and vary the vegetables according to what you have on hand and what's in season. Carrots, cabbage, and celery work nicely."  "Make it a meal – add leftover cooked chicken, roast beef, or beans for added protein. Canned tuna or salmon would also work well."

## CLASS TIME

### PAPERWORK (5 MINUTES):

As caregivers arrive, have them complete the demographics portion of the participant survey and sign a waiver.

### MAIN COURSE: LESSON TOPIC (22 MINUTES):

#### INTRODUCTION: (3 MINUTES)

1. **Welcome caregivers.** Introduce instructors and any other volunteers or helpers.
2. **Set expectations.** Explain participants will learn how to save money buying fruits and vegetables, how to save time in the kitchen, and ideas for getting kids to eat more fruits and vegetables.
3. **Get acquainted.**



*“Show of hands — Who has infants? Toddlers and preschoolers? School-aged children? Teenagers?”* Make note of this information so you can focus on sharing tips that are most relevant for the age groups represented.

Let caregivers know that we will dive right in so we have time for food preparation, but their questions and ideas are welcome throughout the lesson!

#### HANDS-ON COOKING AND DISCUSSION (19 MINUTES)

1. **Begin by having caregivers prepare the food together.**

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***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, pull the kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers prepare food and have a discussion. If not, identify a specific cooking task for kids or give them a designated area for independent play.*

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- Have caregivers wash hands using proper technique.
- Introduce the recipe(s) you have chosen and show caregivers the fresh, frozen, canned or dried produce you will use. Point out that most recipes can be used as a framework that can be adjusted to suit your family's budget and needs (such as using leftovers, things you have on hand, items you find on sale). If you are substituting any ingredients in the recipe due to cost, convenience, or other reasons, point that out.
- Delegate different recipe steps as needed. As caregivers work, introduce the idea of using fruits and vegetables in all their forms to save money while eating healthier. Have them brainstorm the pros and cons of different forms of fruits and vegetables. Prompt them to consider factors like cost, shelf life, taste, texture, nutrient content, and ease of preparation. Use the Fresh, Frozen, and Canned handout to facilitate your discussion as needed.

- Move on to discuss a common parenting challenge: helping kids get plenty of colorful fruits and vegetables. Tell parents that caregivers' modeling an enjoyment of fruits and vegetables has been proven to help kids develop good attitudes towards fruits and vegetables over the long term.



*"What does it mean to be a role model for your kids around fruits and veggies? How are you doing this already? How might you be modeling unhelpful attitudes or behaviors towards fruits and veggies? What's one modeling behavior you think you could try this week?"*

**2. If kids and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together for eating time.**

- As kids and caregivers eat:



*"What are some ways to interest your child in fruits and vegetables?"*

- Offer additional age-specific ideas for stimulating children's interest in fruits and vegetables from the table below.

<b>Getting Kids Interested in Fruits and Vegetables</b>	
<b>Age Range</b>	<b>Talking points</b>
Infants (ages 0 -1)	Check out Feeding in the First Year: Beyond Baby Food lesson
Toddlers (ages 1–3) and preschoolers (ages 3–5)	Play with shapes and colors to highlight the visual aspects of fruits and vegetables. Have "rainbow night" to see how many colors you can get on one plate (use leftovers to cut costs!). Color-code meals ("Rockstar Red Night") based on the fruit or veggie starring in the main dish. Use cookie cutters to arrange the meals' fruits and vegetables on the plate.
	Kids love to dip their foods. When old enough for small slices of raw fruits and veggies, whip up a quick veggie dip with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs. Or, fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.
	Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.
School-aged children and teenagers (ages 6–12; 13+)	Keep fruit and veggies washed, cut up, and in plain sight in the refrigerator.
	Make sure fruits and vegetables are easier to access than less healthy foods.
	Offer raisins or other unsweetened dried fruit instead of chewy fruit snacks or strips, which usually contain very little fruit.
	Rehab kids' favorites: spoon fresh, canned, or dried fruit over yogurt; mix dried fruit, applesauce or a mashed banana into oatmeal; add spinach to ground beef when making burgers, add vegetables to eggs or pizza, grate zucchini into tomato sauce.

## CLOSING (3 MINUTES):

- **ENCOURAGE:** Encourage caregivers to choose one thing they learned today that they will commit to trying at home this week. Have them share aloud if they are willing.
- **TAKE:** Share handouts for caregivers to take home, as well as any incentive items you are providing. **Caregivers must complete the participant survey questions and return the forms to you before receiving their take-home items.**

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