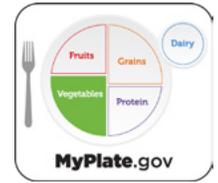


# VEGETABLES LESSON

**CREATE**  
FOOD, FUN & READING



Dear Parent,

Your child attended a Food, Fun, & Reading lesson today. Food, Fun, & Reading gets children excited about trying nutritious foods through reading and fun activities. Each lesson focuses on a different U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) MyPlate food group. Today, your child learned about “eating a rainbow” of vegetables in the Vegetable Group. Please see the attached handouts for more information, including MyPlate tips for parents, a kid’s activity sheet, and kid-friendly recipes to try at home.

USDA’s MyPlate recommends that children ages 3–7 years eat 1–2 cups of vegetables per day, depending on their age and calorie needs. Visit MyPlate ([www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)) for specific recommendations. MyPlate is a visual tool that you can use to plan your child’s meals. Imagine drawing a line down the center of your child’s plate; MyPlate recommends that one-half of the plate be fruits and vegetables. As your child learned today, vegetables of different colors contain different nutrients. Therefore, MyPlate recommends eating a variety of vegetables each week to get more nutrients. This includes dark green vegetables (i.e., spinach and broccoli); red-orange vegetables (i.e., sweet potatoes and carrots); starchy vegetables (i.e., white potatoes and corn); beans and peas (i.e., black beans and black-eyed peas); and other vegetables (i.e., green beans and mushrooms).

But what if your child is reluctant try new vegetables? Young children may hesitate to try vegetables because they often have a bitter, stronger flavor than other foods. However, if offered these foods repeatedly, many children will begin to like the taste. **Here are some tips to encourage your child to try a variety of foods:**

- Introduce new vegetables to your child by pairing them with familiar, favorite foods. Research indicates that children who have the opportunity to try more fruits and vegetables at a young age are more likely to eat them as they get older.
- Try, try, and try again. Many children do not like a new food on the first, second, or even third try. Studies show that it may take 10 to 16 times to offer a new food before a child likes it!
- Model healthy eating. Children learn by observing. If they see mom, dad, or older sister or brother enjoying their green beans, they are more likely to try them and enjoy eating them.
- Make mealtimes positive and fun rather than stressful. Offer foods in a relaxed, non-forceful way, and try to not react negatively if your child does not like them.
- Get children excited about vegetables! Try reading stories that feature vegetables or making a game out of naming fruits and vegetables that are a certain color.
- Involve your child in food selection and age-appropriate food preparation. Ask them to choose a new vegetable for a salad or soup at the grocery store. Young children can help with tasks such as tearing lettuce, washing fruits and vegetables, and mashing potatoes.

Sincerely,

*The Create Better Health Team*

