



Parent Tips - Making Fruits and Veggies Fun for Kids

By Barbara Storper, MS, RD, Executive Director, FoodPlay Productions

- ☆ Kids often prefer the crunch of raw vegetables to cooked ones, especially if they're cut up into fun shapes and called neat names such as "carrot coins," "broccoli trees," "red pepper pinwheels," and "celery pick-up sticks." Serve along with a dip such as hummus, salad dressing, or balsamic vinegar.
- ☆ Make healthy foods easy to eat and easy to grab for kid-friendly snacking. Cut up fruit such as apples, oranges, and bananas into slices instead of leaving them whole. Keep cut-up carrots and celery sticks with a dip within easy reach in the fridge.
- ☆ Try to buy fruits and veggies in season. They're fresher, cheaper, and more nutritious and delicious! If you can, grow a vegetable garden, visit a farmer's market, or grow herbs on your windowsill!
- ☆ Sautee or stir-fry veggies in olive oil with garlic and soy sauce to make them irresistible to your children, or sneak them into sauces and soups for more resistant children.
- ☆ Parents often find great success by giving children healthy foods, such as cut-up raw veggies with dip or cut-up fruit with cheese and crackers, when they're at their hungriest such as right after school or just before dinner.
- ☆ Create a family tradition such as "Veggie of the Week Club" in which children can choose a new vegetable from the supermarket each week to try. They can experiment with ways to prepare it by looking in cookbooks, on TV cooking shows, or online.
- ☆ Serve 100% fruit juice, such as vitamin C-rich orange and grapefruit juice, or low-fat milk instead of soda and sugary "fruit drinks." For a lower cost soda alternative, have kids make fruit juice spritzers—half 100% fruit juice, half seltzer.
- ☆ Involve your children in snack and meal preparation. The more they participate in the cooking and prep themselves, the more likely they'll want to try their creations!
- ☆ Read *Janey Junkfood's Fresh Adventure!* (my new children's book) with your kids to extend the FOODPLAY themes. Have fun with your children preparing the snacks from colorful recipe cards found in the book and on our website. You could also ask your library to get a copy.
- ☆ Keep some "Veggie Grab Bags" available—just pack up small plastic bags with baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, snow peas, red pepper chunks, or whatever is in season. Keep the bags ready to go and invite the family to grab a few on their way out.

For more tips
and fun-filled resources:
www.foodplay.com