

## Fitting in Fruits and Vegetables



Today we talked to your child's class about why it is important to eat fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables are full of essential vitamins and minerals that keep our bodies healthy and strong. For many families, fitting in the proper amount is challenging.

The MyPlate guidelines recommend you **fill half of your plate with fruits and vegetables**. For children, aim for a minimum of 3 servings of vegetables and 2 servings of fruit per day.

### “My children like fruit, but how do I get them to eat more vegetables?”

- **Start with sweeter or mild tasting vegetables** such as carrots, zucchini, lettuce, or squash.
  - Add a touch a lemon or orange juice to more bitter veggies.
  - Roasting vegetables helps bring out their natural sweetness: coat with a little olive oil and roast carrots, parsnips, and diced sweet potatoes in the oven.
- **Pair vegetables with foods you know your child likes:** Try mac and cheese with broccoli, peanut butter with celery, and broccoli with ranch dip.
- **Give your child a choice:** “Would you like cucumber or carrots?” Research shows that when children are given a choice, the more likely they are to consume vegetables.
- **Add shredded or diced veggies to favorites:** burritos, pizza, sandwiches, eggs, chili and soups and rice/pasta casseroles.



### When fresh produce is expensive, frozen fruits and vegetables are a great alternative.

They have the same nutrients as fresh produce and are usually budget friendly. Canned fruits and vegetables typically contain added sugar and/or salt, so read labels carefully when selecting canned vegetables.

Here's a fun snack idea to try with your child:

#### Snowmen on a Stick

- Bananas (body)
- Apple pieces and grape (hat)
- Carrot (nose)
- Pretzel Sticks (arms)
- Mini chocolate chips (eyes and buttons)
- Bamboo skewers or Coffee stirrers (sticks)



Slice the bananas with a butter knife. Have an adult help to pre-cut carrots and apples. (Poke a hole through the apple with a bamboo skewer or coffee stirrer first to make assembly easier.) Be creative and enjoy!