

Exploring We Will Go

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KIDS eat right.

<http://www.eatright.org/kids>

Do you struggle to get your grade-schooler to eat fruits and vegetables? If so, don't feel like you're alone.

Research published in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* revealed that the majority of children in the U.S. don't meet the daily recommended 2½ cups of vegetables and 1½ cups of fruit each day. Many children are picky eaters, and a study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* found that picky eaters tend to avoid vegetables.

Here are some suggestions to get your child to like and eat those fruits and veggies.

Let Your Child Explore

Plan a fun trip to a grocery store or farmer's market with your child. Academy Spokesperson Melinda Johnson, RD, says, "Allowing children to have a little ownership in what produce is picked can be very helpful in encouraging them to eat it once you are home." She suggests some creative activities:

- Beforehand, give your child cookbooks or cooking magazines and have them look for recipes they would like to try. For older children, you can even ask them to help plan a meal.
- While shopping, allow them to pick out the "best" apples, or whichever produce item interests them.
- Challenge your child to put one item of each color in the cart: white cauliflower, blue blueberries, orange carrots, green spinach, etc.

Use the experience to sharpen math skills. If oranges are four for a dollar, how much does it cost to buy six?

Let Your Child Choose

Once your child has explored all the produce, Johnson suggests that you allow them to pick out a vegetable or fruit to take home and try. Discuss how they would like it prepared. Younger children can bag up the produce, and older children can weigh it and calculate the cost.

Let Your Child Cook

Johnson says that kids are more likely to try a food that they have a hand in choosing and preparing. Depending on their age and skill level, children can participate in various meal preparation tasks such as:

- Washing vegetables
- Rinsing berries
- Tearing lettuce
- Cutting up fruits and vegetables
- Cooking with the microwave oven.



Finally, if you designate your child as the "official taster" while preparing the food, you just might have a convert!

Visit our website

www.fairfieldschools.org/parent_resources_food_services.htm