

# Meal Preparation with Your Children

## 6 Easy Tips

01

### Grocery Shopping

Let children help choose fruits and vegetables at the store or farmer's market.



02

### Cooking Together

Involve children in simple, safe, age-appropriate cooking tasks like washing produce, stirring, or arranging food on a plate.



03

### Recipe Selection

Allow your child to pick recipes to cook for one meal.



04

### Assign Duties

Assign age-appropriate kitchen tasks to foster a sense of responsibility.



05

### Creative Presentation

Let your child help with the final presentation of the meal.



06

### Kitchen

Teach basic kitchen safety rules and supervise closely.



Scan for Recipe Ideas!



# Incorporating Local Produce into Your Mealtime Routine

## 5 HELPFUL TIPS



### SEASONAL CHOICES

Choose seasonal local produce to ensure freshness and variety



### FAMILY FIELD TRIPS

Plan a visit to your local farmers market or farm to learn where the food on your plate come from



### LOCAL FOOD DAY

Choose specific days of the week to highlight and prepare local produce in meals



### RECIPE EXPLORATION

Experiment with new recipes that feature local produce, involving everyone in the process!



### LEARN TOGETHER

Use books or videos about local produce to learn about the benefits of choosing local



To find a farmer's market location closest to you, scan this QR code!



# TIPS FOR SELECTIVE EATERS

## 1 Set a schedule for meals and snacks



Scheduling times to eat can increase motivation of eating foods presented during meal and snack times because the child will have time to build up an appetite!

## 2 Minimize distractions

Eliminating any type of distraction (such as television, tablets, or toys) can help the child engage more interest with food.

## 3 Change the food perspective

Chopping or blending foods to change the texture might entice a selective eater.

Designing foods into faces and creating exploratory opportunities with ingredients may encourage eating!

## 4 Continue to offer new foods

Selective eaters may be afraid to try new foods. Sometimes, mixing the new food with a favorite one can help.

It may also be helpful to approach the new food together - try smelling and touching it together!

## 5 Encourage choice and control

When a child has options of which food they want to eat, they may be more likely to consume those foods instead of being told to eat what is on their plate.



HEALTH BENEFITS OF



# Eating A Rainbow



OF FRUITS AND VEGGIES

HELPS BLOOD  
PRESSURE!

HELPS KEEP  
YOUR HEART  
STRONG!

CAN HELP  
PROTECT  
YOUR EYES!

BOOSTS YOUR  
BRAIN!

STRENGTH TO  
FIGHT OFF  
COLDS AND  
ILLNESS!



EAT WIDE RANGE OF  
DIFFERENT FRUITS  
AND VEGETABLES!

LOOK LOCAL!

THIS CAN SUPPLY US  
WITH IMPORTANT  
VITAMINS, MINERALS,  
AND FIBER OUR BODIES  
NEED TO THRIVE.

STRONG  
TEETH AND  
BONES!

FARMERS MARKETS, CO-  
OPS, AND OTHER LOCAL  
FOOD ORGANIZATIONS  
ARE GREAT SOURCES OF  
FRESH PRODUCE.

# 6 Ways

## to Encourage Food Exploration with your Child

### Model Positive Behavior

Children learn by watching! Show excitement when trying new foods and talk about their taste and texture

### Grow Your Own Food

Start a small garden or grow herbs at home. Watching food grow from a seed to plate can make children more eager to try!

### Embrace the Mess!

Getting messy is part of the fun! Allow your child to explore the texture and feel of food with their hands - it's all part of the sensory process.

### Explore with Food-Related Activities

Incorporate food into playtime with activities like vegetable stamping, food-themed books, or making food art!

### Redefine "Try It"

Trying a food can mean more than just eating it - let your child smell, touch, or lick a new food as part of their exploration

### Involve Children in Food Prep

Invite your child to help with meal prep, like washing fruits, stirring ingredients, or setting the table



Make food fun and exciting for your child, both at the table and beyond.

# KITCHEN ACTIVITIES

## FOR YOUR CHILD

### At 2 Years:

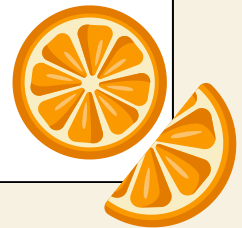
- Wipe tables
- Hand items to adult to put away
- Place items in trash
- Tear lettuce or greens
- Turn pages in cookbook
- Make 'faces' out of pieces of food
- Rinse fruits or vegetables
- Snap green beans



### At 3 Years:

All that a 2-year-old can do, plus:

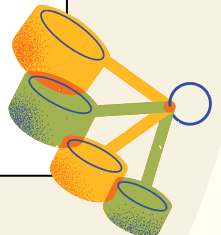
- Add ingredients
- Talk about cooking
- Scoop or mash potatoes
- Squeeze citrus fruits
- Stir pancake batter
- Knead or shape dough
- Name and count foods
- Help assemble a pizza



### At 4 Years:

All that a 3-year-old can do, plus:

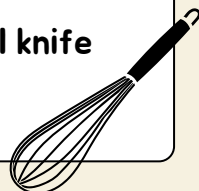
- Peel eggs and some fruits, such as oranges and bananas
- Set the table
- Crack eggs
- Help measure dry ingredients
- Help make sandwiches and salads



### At 5 Years:

All that a 4-year-old can do, plus:

- Measure liquids
- Cut soft fruits with a dull knife
- Whisk eggs



Encourage your child to try new foods by having them help you in the kitchen! Children are less likely to reject foods that they help make!

As your child grows, they are able to help out with different tasks in the kitchen.

# READING GUIDE

Explore a collection of children's books that spark curiosity about where food comes from, the joys of local produce, and the adventure of trying new foods. Perfect for reading together, these books make learning about food fun and engaging!



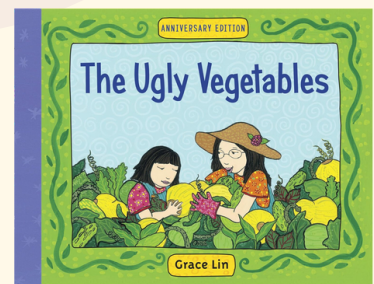
1

**Our Community Garden**  
Barbara Pollak



2

**A Day at the Market**  
Sara Anderson



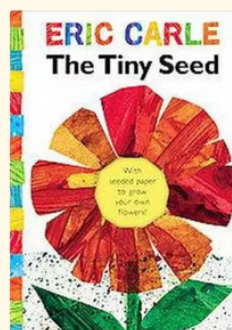
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**The Ugly Vegetables**  
Grace Lin



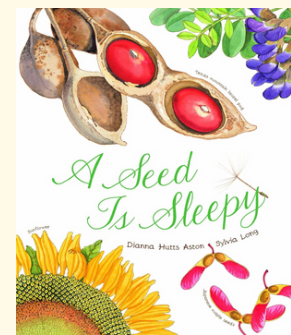
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**On the Farm, at the Market**  
G. Brian Karas



5

**The Tiny Seed**  
Eric Carle



6

**A Seed Is Sleepy**  
Dianna Aston



Looking for more books to read with your child?  
Visit [kidseatincolor.com](http://kidseatincolor.com) or scan the QR codes!



# SETTING UP YOUR

## MEALTIME ENVIRONMENT

### Establishing a Mealtime Space

Where do you want your child to eat?

- Consider your family mealtime style and make it consistent
- Create a calm mealtime environment by minimizing distractions (TV/screen, toys)

### Structure & Routine

- Develop a transition routine (e.g., having a placement out on the table)
- Schedule predictable mealtimes and snack times
- Give multiple cues that mealtime will begin soon

### Encourage Communication

Communicate about food preferences

- OK to teach ways to say no
- Help children notice and describe feelings of fullness, hunger, appetite

Provide multiple ways to communicate

- Visuals, sign language, gestures, words

Support engagement during mealtime

- Describing, talk about where food comes from

### Provide Choices

- Provide at least one option that your child likes at every meal
- Provide an option to say 'no thank you' (i.e., no thank you plate)
- Provide choices about how they can interact with food (5 senses)

### Modeling

- When possible, eat with your children
- Model trying new foods and different ways to respond to food
- Model words describing hunger and fullness

### Sitting Support

It's important for your child to have a supportive and comfortable sitting position during mealtime!

- Use child-sized chairs or boosters
- Elbows and knees at a 90 degree angle while eating
- Feet touching the floor/surface

# Division of Responsibility

Ellyn Satter's Division of Responsibility in feeding guides caregivers to decide what, when, and where children eat, while children decide how much and whether to eat, promoting autonomy and long-term balanced eating habits.

## Caregiver & Child

Caregivers are responsible for the **what, when,** and **where** of feeding

- ✓ **What:** offer a variety of food choices
- ✓ **When:** serve meals and snacks at regular intervals
- ✓ **Where:** provide a calm, comfortable mealtime environment

Children are responsible for the **how much** and **whether** to eat

- ✓ **How much:** Allow your child to decide how much they want to eat at each meal
- ✓ **Whether:** let your child choose whether to eat a particular food or not



**This approach fosters a healthy relationship with food by allowing children to listen to their own hunger and fullness cues.**

# FOOD CHAINING

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO EXPANDING YOUR CHILD'S DIET

Adapted by Food to Table RD

### What is food chaining?

Gradual process of introducing new foods that share similar characteristics with accepted foods

#### 1 Make a list

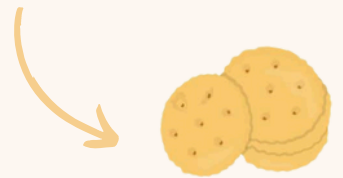
Make a list of your child's preferred foods.



**Goldfish Crackers**  
tan & crunchy, but **low** in fiber and protein

#### 2 Note similarities

Take note of similarities between their favorite foods. Are they similar in color? Texture? Flavor?



**Whole Grain Ritz Crackers**  
tan, **round**, grainy & crunchy (new shape, same color)

#### 3 Pick one goal food

Pick 1 goal food to work towards - consider what food groups are most important to work on.



**Whole Grain Peanut Butter Crackers**  
tan, round, crunchy & **creamy** (new texture, same color & shape)

#### 4 Change one sensory element

Focus on changing only one sensory element (i.e. shape, color, flavor, or texture) at a time.

#### 5 Go at your child's pace

Food chaining takes time! If they are resistant to the slightest change, you may need to focus on getting your child comfortable with the new food on a separate plate near their preferred food.



**Whole Grain Toast with Peanut Butter**  
tan, **chewy**, grainy, crunchy, & creamy **with fiber** and **protein**