

Fruits & Vegetables



Real-Life Challenges... And how to overcome them

Fruits and vegetables are too expensive...

Serve canned, dried, or frozen fruits and veggies for cheaper alternatives.

We have limited storage and fridge space for produce...

Make purchases more often or request more frequent deliveries to keep food fresh.

Fruits and veggies take too long to eat...

Cut and peel before serving to make eating easier. Get kids involved for hands-on experience.

Kids don't like to eat fruit and veggies...

Use fun taste tests to better understand kids' preferences. Identify new items that kids enjoy to add to your regular menu (see the example below).

Getting kids to help with snack preparation takes too much time, especially washing hands, putting on gloves, and supervising...

Assign rotating helper jobs like snack set-up/clean-up, involve kids in menu planning, or plan grocery store visits.

Afterschool licensing requirements and food safety regulations don't allow kids to participate in food preparation...

Get creative with jobs for kids like setting tables, washing fruit, and helping with clean up.



Check out these real-life success stories!

Brainstorming with children about new ways to incorporate fruits and vegetables into snacks is a great way to get kids involved. One site urged children to think of creative ways to add either a fruit or vegetable to every snack. Some ideas are:

- Carrots, celery, bananas, or apples with peanut butter
- Whole grain crackers with an orange or sliced red peppers
- Trail mix with nuts, sunflower seeds, and dried fruit
- Yogurt with granola and berries

When one program started introducing different fruits and veggies, they designed a whiteboard near the snack area where children rated the new foods each day. The site director tallied the ratings and created new snack menus that matched the kids' favorites. The kids were eating foods that they loved and that were good for them too!

The Scoop on Fruits & Vegetables

Offer a fruit or vegetable option with every snack or meal served.

Fruits and vegetables are important foods to include in a healthy diet, but only about one in every five children (and fewer adults!) get the recommended 5 or more servings each day.

Fruits and vegetables are packed with nutrients, including vitamins A, B, and C, and minerals such as potassium and calcium. They help protect against heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer later in life.

Each type of fruit or vegetable has unique benefits, so it is important to eat different types to get all the nutrients for a strong body.

100% fruit juice isn't a substitute for whole fruit. When possible, serve whole fruit—it contains more nutrients and fiber and helps you fill up.

Even though canned and frozen foods can be an easy way to keep fruits and veggies handy, watch out for added sugar and salt.

Creative and Easy Snack Ideas

- Applesauce
- Tangerines/Clementines
- Apricots
- Canned fruit in water or juice
- Dried fruit like: apple rings, apricots, raisins, berries
- Colored pepper slices
- Raw broccoli and cauliflower
- Green and yellow string beans
- Celery

How much do kids really need?

Children should eat at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

So what's a serving?

- 1/4 cup of dried fruit
- 1/2 cup of cooked or raw vegetables
- 3/4 cup of 100% juice
- 1 cup of leafy greens—and remember that darker greens are more nutritious!
- 1 medium piece of fruit

Get creative with these recipe ideas!

- Baked apples • Fruit kebobs
Fruit salad • Ants on a log
Fruit smoothies • Veggie dipping sauce

Want to know more? Check out these other resources:

5aday.com

Tips on eating a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables, nutrition information and activity pages for children.

fruitsandveggies.org

The Foundation for Fresh Produce's "Have a Plant" Movement provides resources to help children and adults eat more fruits and vegetables.

nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu

Based at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health's Department of Nutrition, The Nutrition Source is a leading authority on food and nutrition knowledge, providing science-based guidance for healthy living.