

Introducing New Foods

Variety For Good Nutrition

A variety of foods, including vegetables, fruits, grain, and protein foods, is essential to make sure we get the full range of nutrients for good health.

For young children, familiarity provides comfort. We know that children need to expand their menu vocabularies beyond macaroni and French fries.



However, it is likely that young children will need encouragement to try new foods.

As care providers we balance the need for familiarity with the need for variety.

Tips For Introducing New Foods

Here are some pointers to remember when introducing new foods:

- Keep a relaxed attitude.
- Never insist that a child try a new food. Do not punish a child who refuses.
- Serve a new food several times so the children can become familiar with it.
- Start small. Serve a small portion of the new food.
- Serve a new food with a familiar food. Remember the balance between familiarity and variety.
- Eat the new food with them. Children will often eat foods they see familiar adults eating.

- Rather than ask if the children like a new food, ask them to describe how it tastes. Does it taste salty? sweet? sour?
- Get the children involved. Plan an activity around the new food.



Peter Rabbit Tasting Party

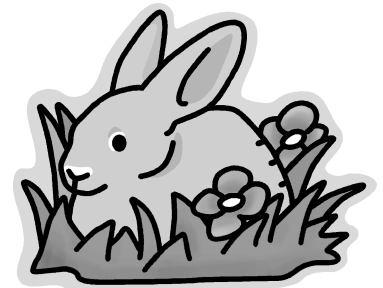
Take a head of cabbage, and cut a flat surface on the bottom.

Scoop out the inside to create a

bowl for vegetable dip. Decorate one end as a rabbit's face with fruits and vegetables. Remember floppy ears!

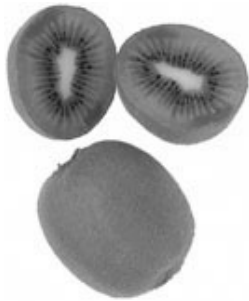
Serve an assortment of vegetables and fruits, with lowfat dips. For an easy dip for fresh vegetables, combine lowfat plain yogurt with salad dressing or mayonnaise and season to taste.

Read *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* by Beatrix Potter while the children enjoy the fruits and vegetables. Talk about how a variety of fresh vegetables and fruits help provide building blocks for a healthy body and energy to play.



Source: *More Than Mudpies*, p. 102.

Introduce A New Food Kiwi Fruit (or Chinese Gooseberry)



A fun and unusual fruit to share with children is the kiwi. Once exotic and expensive, the kiwi fruit or Chinese gooseberry is now grown in California as well as New Zealand. This makes it available year-round and less expensive.

The kiwi has fuzzy brown skin and bright green flesh. It is native to New Zealand and is named after that country's national bird. The kiwi is one of the most nutrient-dense fruits, comparable to papayas, mangoes, and oranges. It is high in vitamins C, B₆, and folic acid, and is a good low-fat source of vitamin E. It is high in magnesium and potassium, and low in sodium. The taste of the kiwi fruit has been described as a cross between strawberries and melons.

Kiwi fruit can be peeled with a vegetable peeler or sharp paring knife, and sliced thin or diced. When the soft fuzz is gently scrubbed away, it can be eaten skin and all like a peach or apricot. Cut the freshly scrubbed kiwi in half crosswise or lengthwise to eat the soft green flesh with a spoon.

Introduce kiwi with strawberries, bananas, and melons for breakfast, lunch, or snack. Layer sliced fruit with lowfat yogurt and top with a garnish of kiwi slices for a Mother's Day or Father's Day treat.
<http://www.kiwifruit.org/>.



Events for May and June

May	June
Family Wellness Month	Children's Awareness Month
Cinco de Mayo 5/5	Dairy Month
Mother's Day 5/14	National Hunger Awareness Day 6/6
	Father's Day 6/18
Memorial Day 5/29	First Day of Summer 6/21

Sources:

National Food Service Management Institute. (1997). *CARE Connection Training Program*. University, MS: Author.

National Food Service Management Institute. (2004). *More Than Mudpies: A Nutrition Curriculum Guide for Preschool Children* (4th ed.) University, MS: Author.

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