

When we introduce Read a Recipe for Literacy (RRL) to new friends and partners, of course, food comes to mind. Some RRL themes naturally point to activities around food that support our discussions about the community. Improving our communication skills is what Read a Recipe is all about; these skills help us as we choose and eat healthy foods. RRL is committed to supporting the health and wellness of students by including a healthy snack as a part of each lesson. Facilitators may plan activities that give students opportunities to communicate about their own food experiences, as well as acquire new knowledge and skills related to food.

See [Tools](#) for recipe ideas or search one of our recommended recipe sources:

- ChopChop Family – <https://www.chopchopfamily.org/learn-to-cook/recipe>
- Fruits & Veggies: More Matters – www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/foodchampsorg

Here are some guidelines to follow when selecting snacks:

- Choose fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Try including a plant protein source, such as beans, nuts* or seeds.
- Avoid
 - o candies, sugary fruit snacks, pastries
 - o fried foods and baked goods, such as chips, doughnuts, pies and cakes
 - o sodium – processed, packaged foods can be high in sodium look for low- sodium versions of crackers and other snack foods.
- Avoid
 - o sugar-sweetened beverages, including soda pop, iced tea, sports drinks, and fruit flavored drinks. Choose water, sparkling water, 100% juices or low fat milk.
- Look for citrus, herbs and spices as flavor enhancers
- Keep it simple – Don't bother with snacks that require a lot of ingredients or special equipment.
- Be inspired, but not limited by your unit theme – e.g. we prepared potatoes during our unit on potato farming; during a unit on birds that eat seeds, we would consider a snack that includes seeds.

Preparing snacks with students:

- Review steps carefully to plan how students will participate. Measuring, mixing, mashing, and shaping are all possible tasks for students.
- Introduce ingredients one-by-one and consider saving ingredients to taste separately.
- Present new vocabulary in written form and review it throughout the session.
- Review local food-handling guidelines and teach students to safely handle foods.
- Have the children wash their hands as they sing "Happy Birthday". They then wash their hands for the appropriate amount of time in an engaging way.

*Always gather information about students' cultural practices, allergies and intolerances in order to determine food restrictions prior to conducting an activity that includes food.

Tasting New Foods

- Create a positive atmosphere
- Communicate before, during and after
 - o Tasting is encouraged but not required
 - o First make visual observations
 - o Smell next
 - o A small bite is still a bite
 - o “Please don’t yuck my yum.”

Teach students that dramatic displays of disgust may hurt their classmates’ feelings. It’s okay to dislike the taste. However, we respect others’ right to enjoy their food. The important thing is that each of us gets to decide.
- Liking a new food may take multiple exposures
Don’t be discouraged if students don’t enjoy something. Food preferences are complicated and personal. Research shows that it can take many exposures to accept a food.
- Have additional ingredients on hand.
Some students may enjoy tasting individual ingredients separately, even though they are reluctant to taste the finished dish.
- Include time for discussion and reflection.

Easy Snacks

- Hummus with sliced carrots or cucumbers
- Bananas and plain yogurt sprinkled with granola
- Sliced apples and mozzarella sticks
- Low-sugar whole grain cereal (shredded wheat, o’s, puffed oat squares) and blueberries or grapes
- Orange sections and whole grain crackers

Learning More –

If you plan to discuss healthy eating in your lessons, be sure to review current and evidence-based nutrition education:

- Food Day – www.tc.columbia.edu/tisch/resources-overview/curricula
Food Day is an annual celebration (October 24th) sponsored by the Center for Science in the Public Interest. This free curriculum was created by the Tisch Center for Food, Education and Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University.
- In Defense of Food – www.tc.columbia.edu/tisch/resources-overview/curricula/
This free middle school curriculum is a companion to Michael Pollan’s book and documentary of the same title, and was created by the Tisch Center for Food, Education and Policy at Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Edible Schoolyard Resource Library – <https://edibleschoolyard.org/resource-search>
Edible Schoolyard was started as a partnership between the Chez Panisse Foundation and the Berkley Unified School District in California and now includes a worldwide network of programs.

- [MyPlate](https://www.choosemyplate.gov/) – <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>
The U.S. Department of Agriculture MyPlate model is based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Numerous free resources are available, including lessons, posters, songs and games

Food Preference/Acceptance References:

Appleton KM, Hemingway A, Rajska J, Hartwell H. *Repeated exposure and conditioning strategies for increasing vegetable liking and intake: systematic review and meta-analyses of the published literature.* Am J Clin Nutr. 2018 Oct 1;108(4):842-856. doi: 10.1093/ajcn/nqy143. PubMed PMID: 30321277; PubMed Central PMCID: PMC6186211.

Keller, KL. *The Use of Repeated Exposure and Associative Conditioning to Increase Vegetable Acceptance in Children: Explaining the Variability Across Studies.* Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2014 Jun 10; Volume 114, Issue 8, 1169 - 1173