

CHILDREN'S HOME SOCIETY OF CALIFORNIA

Family Child Care Home Education Network (FCCHEN)

Parent and Provider Resource: Introduction to the Activities for Distance Learning

Learning about Healthy Foods

Living a healthy lifestyle begins in infancy. As children grow and learn about healthy foods and habits, they develop the ability to make healthy choices for themselves. Providing children with opportunities to learn about balanced meals and practice healthy habits builds a pattern of behavior that will last a lifetime.

As children begin to try new foods they will develop preferences. It is normal for young children to be hesitant about trying new foods, or to insist on eating the same food meal after meal. Choosing what to eat is one of the ways children express independence. Be patient and continue offering new foods. Model healthy eating and encourage your child to take a “tasting bite” just to try it. If your child takes a tasting bite and does not like the food, thank him for trying it and allow him to choose another item from his plate. The goal is to make trying new foods a positive experience, so it is best to avoid power struggles during meals. You can learn more about the healthy nutrition of children and meal planning on the choosemyplate.gov website.

Learning about healthy foods involves more than eating healthy meals. It also includes learning the vocabulary that labels and describes food and cooking. Children can learn a wide range of vocabulary to describe the color, size, shape, texture, and quantities associated with food items and meal preparation. Take advantage of meal times to talk about the food you are eating. Food also offers children the opportunity to practice math skills and explore science concepts. When slicing an apple for a snack, ask your child how many slices are needed, or count food items as you place them in your shopping cart at the store. Talk to children about where food comes from so that they can make the connection between gardens or [farms](#) and healthy eating.

In the month of November, Children's Home Society of California (CHS) will distribute weekly activities that are designed to support your child's understanding of nutrition. In the first week, parents and caregivers will receive an activity designed to introduce infants to bananas. We will also provide an activity for toddlers that helps them understand that some vegetables, such as carrots, grow in the ground. The following week, we will share an activity to help preschoolers practice building a healthy plate from the five food groups. In the last week of November, parents and caregivers will receive an activity designed to help school-age children practice deductive reasoning and increase their vocabulary.

CHS is here to support families, caregivers, and the communities we serve. Please contact your local CHS office if you have any questions or to share success stories with using the activities or resources we provide.

Source: *California Preschool Curriculum Framework, Volume II* by the California Department of Education (Sacramento, 2011).