

# LET'S MAKE A FRUIT'N'VEG RAINBOW

Oral health activity



We know that reducing the frequency and amount of sugar we eat and drink is vital to prevent tooth decay. Fruits and vegetables are the perfect snacks – low in free sugars and good for our whole bodies – but getting children to eat them is one of the most common challenges that families face.

Focussing on colours can help kids break out of their comfort zones and encourages them to explore new foods.

## What you need

- *My food rainbow* template (or a large sheet of plain paper to draw your own for a whole group activity)
- Painting, drawing or collage materials (including glue sticks) for children to illustrate colourful fruits and vegetables



## What to do

- Use the “Talking to Children” talking points to start a discussion with children about how fruits and vegetables look good AND taste good.
- Talk about how eating a variety of fruits and vegetables keeps our whole body strong and feeling good. Talk about the different colours, textures, smells and tastes of fruits and vegetables.
- Work together to create a food rainbow. Invite children to draw or cut out pictures and place them on the food rainbow.
- Ask them which unfamiliar fruits or vegetables they would like to try.

## Talking with children

- “Fruits and vegetables are foods that come from plants.”
- “Fruits and vegetables can be eaten *everyday* because they help you grow, play and learn. They taste good and are good for your teeth too.”
- “Fruits and vegetables come in so many colours, all the colours of the rainbow!”
- “What is your favourite vegetable?”



## What children are learning (links to the VEYLDF)

### Outcome 3: Wellbeing

Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

# MORE ACTIVITY IDEAS

## Let's read a book

- **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** by Eric Carle
- **Handa's Surprise** by Eileen Browne
- **I Do Not Like the Colour Green** by Lynnee Rickards
- **Green Eggs & Ham** by Dr. Seuss



## Let's sing along (videos)

- **I Ate a Rainbow** by Teeny Tiny Stevies
- **If you like apples and you know it, eat a cherry** (etc) - to the tune of If You're Happy and You Know It
- **Apples and Bananas** by Raffi
- **A-P-P-L-E** (sing to the tune of Bingo was his name-o)



## More activities for home

- Make a rainbow on a plate with fresh fruit or fresh/stir-fried vegetables
- Keep a rainbow template on the fridge that a child can color in a section every time they eat a vegetable of that colour.

## Talking with families about how to encourage healthy eating at home

- Eating a variety of foods is a skill a child can learn - just like reading or riding a bike.
- Always talk positively about food and eating. Focus on the enjoyment of eating.
- Talk about the characteristics of vegetables – not the health benefits. Children are motivated by appearance, flavour and texture.
- Avoid labeling foods as 'good' or 'bad', instead using descriptive words like 'crisp', 'juicy' or 'sour'.
- Encourage children to be 'food explorers', using all 5 senses (sight, smell, touch, sound, taste) to explore new foods. Ask them to describe the colour, shape, texture, smell and flavour of new foods.
- Children become familiar with a food by seeing, touching and smelling it frequently. It may take as many as 10-15 tries with a food before a child is willing to accept a new food.
- There's no need to give up if children express dislike for a food. Try cutting (or grating), cooking, or presenting it differently next time. Keep trying!
- Nearly all our food preferences are learned. We can learn to like foods, but it takes practice, time and patience.

