

# Flavorful Fruit

# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

## Preparation Time

Activity 1: 10 min  
 Activity 2: 15 min  
 Activity 3: 20 min

## Duration of Lesson

Introduction: 5 min  
 Activity 1: 15 min  
 Activity 2: 10 min  
 Activity 3: 25 min  
 Closing: 5 min

## Goal

To increase knowledge of the importance of eating fruits and to increase the variety of fresh and colorful fruits on the child care center menu.


## Participant Objectives

Participants will:

1. Describe at least two benefits of eating a variety of fruits especially, fresh and colorful fruits.
2. List at least two ways to encourage children to try new fruits.
3. Name at least one way to include a wider variety of fruits in their child care center menu without increasing cost.
4. Describe how to purchase, store and safely prepare at least one new fruit on the child care center menu.





## Points to Cover/Trainer's Notes

Points to Cover	Trainer's Notes
<p>Benefits of eating a variety of colorful fruits</p> 	<p>Everyone knows that fruits are good for us, but few of us get the recommended amount of fruit each day. [The <i>5 A Day</i> program has been replaced with <i>Fruits and Veggies, More Matters</i>.] With fruits, more is better.</p> <p><i>MyPyramid for Preschoolers</i> recommends that children eat 1 to 1 ½ cups of fruit per day. Less than two percent of children consume this recommended amount. Fruit comes in a variety of colors.</p> <p>Children should eat as many colors as possible to get the all the health benefits of fruit. Consumption data for 2003 for fruits and vegetables: 24 % red; 24 % orange/yellow, 26% green, 23 % white, 3 % blue/purple. Many fruits, especially colorful fruits have phytochemicals, such as lycopene, which appear to provide many positive health benefits to us when we eat them. [tomato/lycopene/prostate cancer] Eating fruit may also help reduce the risk for heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain cancers.</p>
<p>Limit fruit juice</p>	<p>Only 100% fruit juice is CACFP creditable as a serving of fruit. However juice should be limited as a fruit serving to a maximum of 2 to 3 times per week. If juice is on the menu at breakfast, serve water as a beverage at snack. Juice has no fiber and often contains added sugar.</p>

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<p>Limit fruit juice (continued)</p>	<p>The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has reaffirmed its policy statement regarding fruit juice: Drinking too much juice can contribute to obesity, the development of cavities, diarrhea and other gastro-intestinal problems. Children 1 to 6 years of age should have only 4 to 6 ounces of juice per day.</p>
<p>Purchasing fruits</p> 	<p>Fresh is best. Fresh fruits have the best texture and can be very nutritious. Choose fresh fruits when they are in season. That's when they are less expensive, most flavorful, and most nutritious. New York State produces a variety of fruits and many of us have access to a farmers market or farm stand. Purchase fresh fruits locally whenever possible.</p> <p>When fresh fruits aren't available, consider canned or frozen fruit. Stock up when they are on sale. Use the Nutrition Facts label to compare the calories in fruits canned in water, 100% juice, light syrup and heavy syrup. Buying fruit canned in water, juice, or light syrup will limit added sugars.</p> <p>Serving frozen fruit still slightly frozen is a good way to get temperature contrast in a menu. Dried fruit is another option; however, use caution with dried fruit as some may pose a choking hazard in younger children.</p>
<p>Storing fruits</p>	<p>Great taste begins with proper storage. Use the First In, First Out (FIFO) rule. Use oldest inventory first and rotate stock to ensure freshness and reduce waste and costs. FIFO applies to all types of fruit; fresh, frozen, canned and dried. Fresh fruits are best used the day of purchase or within several days. However, there are no general rules because all fruits have different requirements. Refer to <i>Fruits and Vegetables Galore</i> for information on purchasing and storing different fresh fruits.</p>
<p>Increasing children's acceptance of new fruits</p> 	<p>Children form their taste preference at a young age. Daily exposure to new, fresh tastes will help children be willing to try new fruits. Any food you serve will be better accepted if you use 1-2 positive words to describe it. Setting a good example, letting children prepare their own fruit dishes, repeat exposure, and no forcing will increase a child's acceptance of new fruits.</p> <p>We eat with our eyes first...if food looks good, we expect that it will taste good.</p>

### Activities

Activity 1: Are We Eating Our Colors?

Activity 2: What's on the Outside?

Activity 3: New Fruits on the Menu

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## **Closing**

1. Review participant objectives.
2. Discuss the next class.

## **References**

[Fruits and Vegetables Galore](#)

[Produce for Better Health: Fruits and Veggies More Matters](#)

[Tickle Your Appetite](#)

[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org)

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)



# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

**Activity 1: Are We Eating Our Colors?**

**Preparation Time: 10 min**

**Activity Time: 15 min**

## Supplies

fruit rainbow poster  
paper food models  
photocopies of the child care center's menu for one month



## Preparation Prior to Class

1. Photocopy appropriate number of handouts and menus.
2. Post the fruit rainbow poster on the wall.

## Implementation

1. Review *MyPyramid for Preschoolers* recommendations for fruits and the benefits of eating a variety of colorful vegetables. (See: Benefits of eating a variety of colorful fruits\*)
2. Refer to the vegetable rainbow poster and review the color categories on the poster: red, orange/yellow, green, white, and purple/blue.
3. Distribute a copy of the child care center's menu to each participant.
4. Ask the group how many times per week juice is on the child care center menu. Review the AAP recommendations regarding juice. (See: Limit fruit juice)
5. Have the group name ways they could reduce the amount of juice served. Serve whole fruit as a snack instead. Serve water as the beverage.
6. Ask the group to call out the different fruits (including juice) currently served on the child care center menu.
7. Have a volunteer put a paper food model of those fruits on the appropriate color stripe on the rainbow. Continue until all the fruits on the menu are on the poster.
8. Share 2003 consumption data for fruits and vegetables. Discuss the health benefits of eating a variety of colorful fruits. (See: Benefits of eating a variety of colorful fruits)
9. Have the group identify those colors that are well represented on their fruit rainbow. Ask the group to identify those colors that are not well represented.
10. Ask each participant to give an example of a fruit for a color that is currently under-represented on the rainbow.
11. Discuss how to incorporate that fruit on the child care center's menu. For example; serve it plain, add it to yogurt or cottage cheese, make a fruit salad.
12. Ask each participant to name one way they could introduce a new, colorful fruit at the child care center.

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\* Underline denotes Points to Cover discussed in the Trainer's Notes in the lesson plan.

# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

**Activity 1: Are We Eating Our Colors?**

**Preparation Time: 10 min**

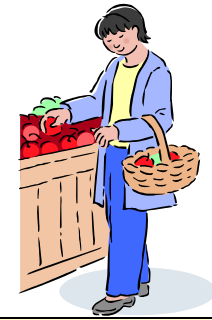
**Activity Time: 15 min**

## Additional Discussion during the Activity



- Remember that new food has to be offered repeatedly so children can become familiar with it.
- Get the children's input on what fruit to include on the menu.
- Buy local fresh produce in season for the best price and quality. (See: [Purchasing fruits](#))
- Shop early at the farmer's market for the best selection. Compare prices, selection and quality before purchasing.
- When fresh fruits aren't available, consider dried, canned, or frozen fruits. (See: [Purchasing fruits](#))
- Purchase fruit canned in water, juice or light syrup instead of heavy syrup to limit added sugar. (See: [Purchasing fruits](#))
- Review proper handling and storage of produce. (See: [Storing fruits](#))






## How to select, store, and use locally grown fruits



Remember to remove seeds and pits from fruit before serving to young children. In particular, whole grapes and cherries with pits are choking hazards for children up to age 4. Fruits are listed chronologically by harvest dates.

FRUIT	SELECTION	STORAGE	HOW TO USE
<b>Strawberries</b> - harvested and available in June and the first part of July.	Choose berries that are brightly colored, firm and have hulls attached. Avoid boxes that are leaking or show signs of mold.	Berries should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 2-3 days.	Wash berries and remove hulls just before using. Eat plain or add berries to cereal, yogurt, or fruit salad.
<b>Cherries</b> - harvested and available mid June until the end of July.	Choose cherries that are colorful, firm, and shiny. 	Cherries should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 2-3 days.	Wash and <b>remove pits</b> before giving cherries to young children. Eat cherries plain or add cherries to fruit salads, chop and add to yogurt or use in your favorite recipe.
<b>Raspberries</b> - harvested and available the first 3 weeks of July and all of September and October.	Choose berries that are bright, uncrushed and free of mold. Make sure the box is not stained or leaking.	Raspberries should be stored in the refrigerator in the box they come in, and are best if used within 1-2 days.	Wash the berries just before using them. Remove stem caps. Eat plain or add to cereal or yogurt.
<b>Blueberries</b> - harvested and available mid July until the end of September. 	Choose berries that appear plump, unwrinkled, and are completely blue. They should be nearly free of leaves and stems. The box should not be stained or have any signs of mold.	Store in the refrigerator in the original container. Blueberries are best if used within a week.	Wash well when ready to use. Add blueberries to cereal, yogurt, pancakes, muffins, or fruit salad. Or just pop them in your mouth.

FRUIT	SELECTION	STORAGE	HOW TO USE
<p><b>Peaches</b>- harvested and available mid July until mid September.</p>	<p>Choose peaches with reddish velvety skins.</p> 	<p>Refrigerate ripe peaches up to 5 days.</p>	<p>Wash peaches, removing fuzz. Eat whole or add slices to cereal or yogurt or use in your favorite recipe. <b>Remove pits</b> before giving peaches to young children.</p>
<p><b>Apples</b>- some varieties can be harvested as early as mid July. The harvest time can continue until the end of November. Apples can be put in cold storage and are available from mid July until mid June.</p>	<p>Choose firm, blemish free apples with no soft spots or wrinkled skin.</p>	<p>Apples should be stored in the refrigerator and are best if used within 2 weeks, although they can be kept for longer periods of time.</p>	<p>Wash well and eat plain or put in cereal or yogurt or use in your favorite recipe.</p>
<p><b>Cantaloupe</b>- harvested and available from the beginning of August until mid October.</p>	<p>Choose a well rounded melon with sweet melon odor and a slight softness when pressed with your thumb. The skin should be creamy yellow or tan. Do not choose those that are dented or have soft spots or an overripe odor.</p>	<p>Ripened melons should be stored in the refrigerator and used within 3-5 days.</p> 	<p>Wash the outside of the melon well. Scrape the seeds out of the center. Cut into slices, wedges or cubes and serve or add to cereal, yogurt or fruit salad.</p>

FRUIT	SELECTION	STORAGE	HOW TO USE
<p><b>Watermelon</b>- harvested and available from the beginning of August until mid October.</p> 	<p>Choose a well-rounded melon with a smooth surface with a dullish sheen. The underside should be creamy yellow in color. To test ripeness, try slapping the melon – if the sound is flat and dull, it may be under-ripe, and if it sounds hollow, it may be too ripe.</p>	<p>Cut melon should be stored in the refrigerator and covered with plastic wrap. Whole melons do best there also, if they fit. If they don't fit, keep whole melons in the coolest part of the house. Use watermelon within a few days.</p>	<p>Wash outside of melon well. Cut into wedges or slices and serve after <b>removing seeds</b>. Makes a nice addition to a fruit salad.</p>
<p><b>Pears</b>- harvested mid August until mid October although available until the end of November.</p>	<p>Choose firm, well shaped pears that do not have any bruises. They are ready to eat when they are slightly soft.</p>	<p>Pears should be stored in the refrigerator or at room temperature and are best if used within 1 week.</p>	<p>Wash well, eat plain or use in your favorite recipe.</p>
<p><b>Grapes</b>- harvested and available mid August until the end of October.</p>	<p>Choose grapes that are firm and attached to the stem.</p>	<p>Store grapes in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.</p>	<p>Wash grapes and remove from stem. <b>Remove any seeds. Cut into small pieces before giving to young children.</b></p>
<p><b>Plums</b>- harvested and available from the beginning of September until late October.</p>	<p>Choose slightly soft plums that do not have bruised or shriveled skin. Underripe fruit will ripen at room temperature.</p>	<p>Ripe plums should be stored in the refrigerator in a plastic bag and used within several days.</p>	<p>Wash well prior to eating. Eat plain or use in your favorite recipe. <b>Remove pits</b> before giving plums to young children.</p>

Adapted from The Market Basket Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Guide

# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

## Activity 2: What's On the Outside

**Preparation Time: 15 min**

**Activity Time: 10 min**

### Ingredients

select 2 or 3 fresh fruits, such as:

- kiwi
- starfruit
- pineapple
- melon
- mango



### Supplies

- cutting board
- knife
- serving bowls
- serving spoons
- small cups
- teaspoons
- napkins

### Preparation Prior to Class

1. Select 2 or 3 fruits that have an unusual outside appearance and look different when prepared. Have one sample of each fruit that you can keep intact for participants to hold and touch.
2. Prepare bite sized pieces of the selected fruits to share with participants. Place in serving bowls and refrigerate.
3. Be prepared with information on preparation, growing season, use and storage for each fruit you choose for sampling.

### Implementation

1. Ask the participants to wash their hands.
2. Explain that today they will be sampling fruits that look different when they are whole than when they are cut up. Discuss how showing children what fruit looks like before it is prepared and letting them watch or even participate in its preparation may make them more interested in tasting it. (See: Increasing children's acceptance of new fruits\*)
3. Pass around the whole fruit that the group will be sampling.
4. Ask the participants to describe what the fruit looks and feels like. Explain that this is something they can have the children do in the classroom.
5. Demonstrate how to prepare the selected fruits: peeling, removing pit or stem, slicing, cubing, etc. Review information on the proper handling and storage of fruit. (See: Storing fruits)
6. Present each participant with a sample of each fruit, a napkin and a teaspoon.
7. Encourage, but do not force, participants to taste each fruit.
8. Ask the participants if any of these fruits are new to them. Did the fruits taste the way they expected them to?
9. Ask the participants to name other ways they can encourage children to try new fruits.

\* Underline denotes Points to Cover discussed in the Trainer's Notes in the lesson plan.

# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

**Activity 2: What's On the Outside**

**Preparation Time: 15 min**

**Activity Time: 10 min**

## **Additional Discussion during the Activity**

- Buy local fresh fruit in season for the best price and quality.
- Get the children's input on what locally grown fruits and vegetables to include on the menu.
- Wash all fresh produce with cold, running water. Wash regardless of whether the produce will be served whole, peeled or cooked.



# Flavorful Fruit

**Audience: Teachers, Cooks & Administrators**

## **Activity 3: New Fruits on the Menu**

**Preparation Time: 5 min**

**Activity Time: 15 min**

### **Supplies**

photocopies of the current child care menu  
easel pad  
markers

### **Preparation Prior to Class**

1. Assemble the easel.
2. Place a pad on the easel.

### **Implementation**

1. Review the information from activity one (if it was done). Have the group decide which color(s) of fruits were underrepresented on the current menu.
2. Introduce the purpose of the brainstorm, which is to generate ideas for colorful fruits that will appeal to children.
3. Review brainstorming rules:
  - Any idea is fine – no comments on the ideas of other.
  - It is okay to build on someone else's idea.
  - Yell out your ideas.
  - We will discuss ideas later.
4. Start with an icebreaker: Which color fruit would you be most likely to try?
5. Then move into the brainstorming questions. Use prompts, if necessary, to move the conversation along.

### **Additional Discussion during the Activity**

- Have a list of all the different colors of fruits to help if the group gets stuck.
- Use the paper food models of fruits that are not currently on the menu and build on those ideas.

