

Healthy Snacks for Healthy Children

By
Cheryl Abbott and Suzanne Blokzyl



This book is dedicated to the students and families at
Lake Windward Elementary School in Alpharetta, Georgia

Healthy Foods for Healthy Children -

Introduction #1 by Cheryl Abbott

We teach our children that sugar and fatty foods are at the top of the food pyramid and should be eaten “sparingly”. Then we give them “treats” for being good, for birthdays, for holidays, for snacks when they get home, for snacks at school, and (for many people), breakfast, lunch and dinner. The result of all this is an increase in childhood obesity, diabetes, tooth decay, and a host of other health problems linked to too much junk food.

As adults we have all been taught that we should be eating more fruits and vegetables, but for most of us they are eaten in order to get to dessert. Children follow our lead. Often we accept that children don’t like fruits and vegetables, when in fact, we don’t know how to prepare them so that they are appealing.

This year I decided that I would “walk the walk” and insist that the children in my classroom be offered healthy foods. I had good reason to do this. First, the health curriculum teaches healthy eating and I have felt like a hypocrite for teaching it and not doing it. Second, this year there were three children in my class with critical allergies and it was important to change what the children ate so that those three children would not be exposed to air born allergens. In order to encourage a sense of community in the classroom, I wanted everyone to be able to eat and enjoy the same foods. Suzanne Blokzyl, and I planned the snacks together and then on Wednesday, she came into the classroom to make the special snacks with the children. Suzanne gave a mini nutritional lesson along with the foods each week and read a theme related book.

I have developed several rules for my Special Snacks. First, children do not have to eat anything at all. They are free to pick and choose whatever they want. This is most



***By reading this little booklet, we hope
you have been inspired to share some
new recipes with your child and have
fun!***

All the best,

Cheryl Abbott



This is Suzanne with the kids at the Snack Table. Every Wednesday she talked to the children about nutrition and then read them a theme related book. She couldn't have been better in the classroom.

My deep heartfelt gratitude for all of her help.

important because children who are “picky eaters” often get lots of attention from saying “I don’t like that”. Their parents rush in to say, “Eat a few and then you can have dessert.” I say to the kids, “I don’t care, it’s your business, but I don’t want to hear about it.” I’ve found that by taking this position, there are no emotional pay-offs for the child and they are much more likely to eat the food.

Second, children may not say, “I don’t like that”, make a face, or make noise like they are being asked to eat bugs. They may say, “No thank you.” This is important for the same reason as rule #1. It takes the power away from the child’s reaction to the food.

Third, nothing is given to substitute for the food that is presented. Again children are free to eat or not eat the food, but we don’t cater to the child’s eccentricities.

Many parents have told me that their child does not eat _____ (fill in the blank) so they are surprised to see pictures of them eating it on my website. Why are they eating it at school, when they don’t eat it at home? Peer pressure does play a big part. When a child sees other children enjoying the food (and there is no pay-off for not eating it) they say, “I changed my mind” and try the food.

This year after I decided that my classroom would be a “Junk free Zone” I made a list of all the fruits and vegetables I could think of in ABC order. Here is the list:

A – Apple, Arrugula, Artichoke, Asparagus, Avocado, Apricot. B – Banana, Beans, Beet, Blackberry, Blueberry, Bok Choy, Broccoli, Brussels Sprouts. C – Cabbage, Cantaloupes, Carrot, Cauliflower, Celery, Chard, Chives, Coconut, Corn, Cucumber. D – Daikon, Dill, Dill pickle, Dates. E – Eggplant, Endive, Edaname,

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F – Fennel, Fig, Fuji Apples G – Garbanzo, Grapes, Guava, Grapefruit, Golden Apples H – Huckleberry, Honeydew Melon I – Iceberg lettuce, J – Jicama, Jackfruit K – Kale, Kohlrabi, Kiwi L – Leek, Lentils, Lettuce, Lemon, Lime. M – Muskmelons, Mushrooms N – Nasturtium, Nectarine O – Onions, Okra, Oranges, Olives. P – Papaya, Parsley, Peach, Peas, Pear, Plum, Pumpkin, Pineapple, Pomegranate R – Radish, Raspberry Rhubarb, Romaine, Raisin S – Saffron, Soybeans, Squash, Strawberries, Sweet Potato, Swiss Chard T – Tomato U – Ugli Fruit V – Vanilla W – Water chestnut, Watercress, Watermelon Y – Yams Z - Zucchini

After I had my list, I had to figure out how to make these foods fit into our classroom themes and make them delicious and fun. That is where Suzanne came in with some wonderful ideas. We brainstormed and collaborated on food lists for our weekly snacks. We decided that 99% junk food free would be the mark to shoot for during the course of the year, since 100% might not be possible.

The surprising thing is that the children all looked forward to the snacks – just as if they were getting sugary treats. They really loved the special snacks they were given and I did not hear any complaints. The only time it seemed to bother the kids was if another class was eating cake, ice-cream and/or cookies and the kids in my class saw them eating it, but they never said anything to me.

For daily snacks, parents sent in apples, whole grain rice cakes, and baby carrots. I also asked them to not send in sugary snacks because, I was trying to

Rabbit Salad

1 large carrot per child

1 box raisins

1 can unsweetened, crushed pineapple

½ apple per child – cut into chunks

1 potato peeler per child



From Suzanne: The kids peeled their own carrots and had a great time!. They added apple chunks, pineapple, and raisins to the salad. Some kids added honey too. Cleo (the bunny) got a carrot salad of her own and was quite happy about that. This was our last snack of the year and I know the kids enjoyed it. We talked about what we had learned this year and all of the new foods we tried.





Oysters

Learning about the Ocean

2 rice cakes per child

Cream cheese

Green grapes

Plastic knives

Directions: Children spread cream cheese on the crackers and put a grape in the middle for the “oyster”.



teach healthy eating habits. Also many snack foods have nut products that would be health hazards in my classroom. If a child was eating candy, cookies, or other sugary treat, I asked the child to eat it at home, and then offered them an apple, rice cake, or carrot.

For birthdays I asked the parents to send in one of their child’s favorite books instead of a snack. Then I read the book in class. The child also got a birthday hat, and the class sang a birthday song. A few parents sent in their child’s favorite fruit to share with the class for a birthday treat. For most children reading the book and singing the song were all that was needed to honor them during their birthday.

Suzanne and I decided that our two yearly parties went under the “sparingly” umbrella and could include a sugary treat. Suzanne made cookies that were gluten, egg, and nut free. The children decorated them with my assistant during the party. She also found some candies to put on top of the cookies that the children could all eat. Suzanne will tell you about that.

A few notes about our “recipes”. They are not like recipes you might find in a cook book. They are meant to lead to a creative experience for you and your child. I have presented the ingredients so that you can figure out how much of each food to buy depending on how many children will be making the recipe. I also have included pictures of children in the process of creating their snacks so that you can see how the recipe might (or might not) look.

Healthy Foods for Healthy Children

Introduction #2 by Suzanne Blokzyl, A Nutritionist and Mom

I am a nutritionist and personal trainer and I am always surprised at the amount of unhealthy food that is being served to children in our schools and classrooms. Children spend a majority of their life at school. Why not implement healthy habits right from the start? When I first heard that the children made a “special snack” every week in kindergarten, I was a bit worried. My son has celiac and cannot have gluten (wheat, rye, oats, barley or malt). Once I met and talked with Mrs. Abbott I was not only relieved, but excited about the opportunity of becoming the “special snack mom” for her classroom. I wanted to have a positive influence on the children while making healthy snacks with them each Wednesday. There were also some children in the classroom with other allergies, so the snacks would have to be gluten free, nut free, egg free, and healthy. How exciting that all the kids could be included. I was pleased to hear that Mrs. Abbott wanted to aim toward having a junk free classroom. Wow! It made me wonder why this policy wasn’t enforced in all schools? Since the health curriculum encourages children to eat more fruits and vegetables, shouldn’t the teacher be showing the students how to do that instead of encouraging sugar and processed foods?

I have to admit I was a little worried some of the kids would not like our healthy choices but was pleasantly surprised! The children were not only willing to try new fruits and vegetables but were enjoying them. We had a good time and presented the snacks in a fun way that really got the kids interested and involved. Each snack was tied in to the theme of the week. During our snack talk I gave the kids a little mini nutrition lesson. Some of the topics we touched upon were calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, protein, fiber, and the roles these play in our health and what foods provide these important vitamins and minerals.



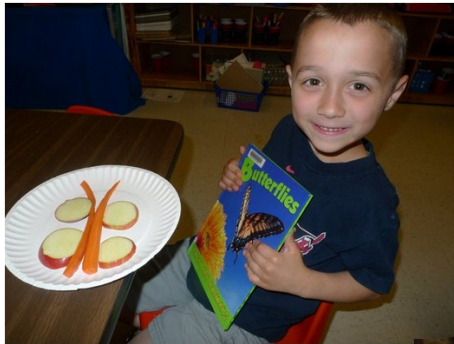
Field Day Power Kabobs

(Food to make you run faster, leap higher and have more energy!)

Sweet potatoes, cooked and cut into chunks
Cherry tomatoes,
Garbanzo beans,
Broccoli
Cucumbers,
Cheese, cubed
Grapes
Strawberries
Toothpicks



Directions: Children build “Kabobs” with all of the various fruits and vegetables. Eat and enjoy!



Butterflies

Apples – sliced

Carrots, cut lengthwise

Soy nut butter or peanut butter

Directions: Spread the “nut” butter on one slice of the apple and cover it with another slice. Use the apples for wings. The carrots are the butterfly’s body, legs, and antenna.

Some of the children chose not to use the nut butter, but many liked it and asked for more to dip their apple slices.

To keep the kids on their toes I told them we would have a quiz at the end. At this age the students seem to love quizzes! While the children ate their special snack I usually read a book. It was great to see the kids love for books.

We learned about the different tastes, smells and textures of food. We had a taste test of our favorite fruits and vegetables and made fun snacks with our food.

One of my favorite snack days was our vegetable taste test. Mrs. Abbott brought in some wonderful vegetables from her garden. We sampled butternut squash, snow peas, summer squash, kale, green beans, green peppers, yellow peppers and red peppers and then graphed our favorite. Butternut squash won and snow peas came in a close second. I have to say I was surprised! The kids were excited to try new vegetables and I kept hearing “more please”. It was wonderful. We ate the vegetables plain, without salt or butter. One little girl said the butternut squash tasted like sugar. It was a success!

I have talked to many parents who were so glad we decided to go the healthy route. I received many, many comments. I remember one e-mail in particular, the mom wrote, “Okay I have to ask because I don’t know if I believe it. My son said he ate butternut squash and loved it! Is this true?” Her son indeed tried the squash and even asked her to buy it. I heard this time and time again as children asked their parents to buy kale, snow peas, edamame and many more. Even my picky son was trying new things at home. Over dinner one night he told his little brother “Just try one bite of the green bean. It’s really sweet.” Parents kept saying it a great idea to make the healthy snacks and that their children were always excited for Wednesdays, our special snack day.



Early Americans~Thanksgiving

Corn on the Cob with Home Made butter

1 pint of heavy whipping cream

Small jar (like a jelly jar)

Cooked corn on the cob.

To Make Butter~ Take one pint of whipping cream and pour into a jar. Put the lid on tight. Shake the jar until the cream is knocked into butter.

Serve with hot corn on the cob.



Flowers

1 stalk of celery per child – cut in half

1 can of mandarin oranges - drained.

1 dried apricot – cut in half per child

1 box raisins

Plastic knives

Directions: Use one half of the celery for the stem of the flower. The children cut the bottom of the celery into long leaves. Arrange the oranges for the petals and put the apricot in the middle of the flower. Then put one raisin on top of the apricot for the center of the flower.

Birds Nests

Honey

Kale

1 box of quinoa (can use brown rice)

Hard boiled or candy eggs (we had children allergic to eggs – so we went for the candy eggs)

Directions: Cook the quinoa according to the directions on the box. Mix with the honey (about ½ cup) until the grain sticks together. Put the kale on the plate (for the leaves). Have the children form the quinoa into “nests” and put the eggs inside. (The children tried (and some liked) the kale.



Native American Banana Canoes

Honey

Shredded carrots

Dried Cranberries

Raisins

Directions: Spread honey on the banana. Make designs on the banana with the carrots, cranberries and raisins. Eat!

When I shared my snack pictures with my friends. They all loved it. Not once did I hear anyone comment that they wished their child ate more junk or sweets. Why would they? Everyone wants their children to be the best they can be. To be healthy, our children need the right kind of food. Parents are always looking for new ways to incorporate healthy snacks into their children's meals. Why not introduce new fruits and vegetables in the school setting? One mom I spoke with said she was going to take these snack ideas to her school.

I even fell in the junk trap a few years ago. When my son started preschool he needed a daily snack. At first I sent in carrots or apples. Most of the other children had highly processed food and sweets for their snack. My son who had always loved his healthy snack was now complaining about it and wanted sweets like the rest of the children. Soon I was sending in gluten free sugary snacks so my son wouldn't feel left out. Why not eliminate this pressure? I loved Mrs. Abbott's rule of no junk. As far as birthdays were concerned most children celebrate with cake at home and many have a second cake at a party outside of the home too. So skipping a birthday treat at school won't hurt anyone. I know my son thinks it's fun and cool when someone gets to wear a birthday hat in school and have their favorite book read to the whole class.

I also think Mrs. Abbott's rule about not having to try anything they don't want is brilliant! Saying "No thank you" was always an option. But as weeks passed and the children saw their classmates eating new foods I got less "No thank you" and was hearing "More please!"

Wow, it's working I thought! Positive peer pressure!



Note: There are real caterpillars in the cage next to Nikki's plate.



A Very Hungry Caterpillar

1 Banana, cut into rounds.

1 bag of shredded carrots

1 box of raisins

Directions: Assemble and have fun!



Planting Peas

A sure fire way to encourage a child to try a new vegetable is to have him/her plant it! Watching the plant come up is an exciting process. It charges the children up and they can't wait to eat what they planted.

Fall Recipes



Suzanne and I want to thank the parents in our class for letting us try this experiment in healthy eating with their children. They were very supportive and encouraging throughout the year. We also want to thank the children in our class for being so adventurous with the various foods we presented.

A huge "Thank you" to the children pictured in this booklet. They are:

Doc Rush
Phoenix Kelly
Ryan Blokzyl
Andy Davis
Shaivi Sharma
Anish Nayak
Eva Thomas
Vinod Ruppa-Kasani
Tasia Hubbard
Connor McGuire
Nikki Majudar
Anna Van Haveren



I Am Special!

1 Rice cake per child
Shredded carrots
Raisins
Green Grapes
Whipped Cream Cheese
Sliced Bananas

Directions: Child spreads cream cheese on the rice cake and then makes a face using the carrots for hair, raisins for the mouth, bananas for the eyes, and grapes for the cheeks.



Learning About Money

Fruit Stand

Suzanne set up a Fruit Stand in the classroom for the snack, in order to extend our unit on money. She made little signs that said how much each fruit cost. The signs read, "1 apple slice 20 cents, 2 apple slices 25 cents, 4 blueberries 10 cents, 6 blueberries 15 cents, etc. The children could buy whatever fruit they wanted using classroom money. She had green and red grapes, strawberries, blueberries, and apples. The children loved using money to buy their food.



Vegetable Taste Test!

Suzanne writes:

I was so proud of the kids. We had a taste test of different vegetables. We had butternut squash, summer squash, kale, snow peas, green beans, yellow pepper, red pepper and orange pepper. I was pleasantly surprised at how many kids wanted more of all the veggies to try and really got in to the different tastes, colors and textures. The butternut squash came from Mrs. Abbott's garden and was quite sweet. A few children thought that sugar had been added to it!!! We looked at the insides of the vegetables and talked about the different parts of a plant and looked at seeds. We graphed everyone's favorite vegetable. Butternut squash won and snow peas came in second. It was wonderful to see the kids trying new veggies. A few of the kids said they would ask their mom to buy their favorite. I know peer pressure played a role, but this time it was good peer pressure...to try a new vegetable!

Cheryl writes:

The kids were surprised by how much they liked the vegetables. All of the veggies were raw except for the butternut squash. If you are having problems getting your child to eat vegetables, try serving them raw and see if that helps.

Special Strawberries!! (Ss snack)

Three kinds of fruit yogurt
Strawberries cut in half
Paper plates

Directions: Put one tablespoon of each type of yogurt on the child's plate. The child dips the strawberries into the yogurt to decide which flavor is his or her favorite.





Cut them

and

Eat them

Apple Sauce

Johnny Appleseed Day

½ apple per child (core removed)

Water

Cinnamon

Crockpot

Directions: Children chop apples with plastic knives and put in a crock pot with 3 tablespoons of water. Let it cook six hours on high or overnight on low. Add cinnamon to taste. Cool before eating.



A Very Green Snack St Patty's Day

1 small container vanilla yogurt per child

1 drop of green food coloring

A few mini marshmallows

Directions: Mix everything together and enjoy!

Spring Snacks



Apple Taste Test

Graphing for Johnny Appleseed Day

Buy one of each kind of apple in the store.
(at least six different types).

Small paper plates

Directions: Cut the apples in to small pieces. Put each apple on it's own plate. After the students taste each apple they "vote" on their favorite.



Chicka Chicka Boom Boom!

1/2 Stalk of celery per child
 Green or yellow apples (cut into sections
 with an apple cutter)
 Red grapes

Directions: Put celery half on the plate.
 Cut the apples the with the apple cutter
 (that makes sections). Arrange the apples
 for the leaves and the grapes for the coco-
 nuts so that they are placed among the ap-
 ple slices.



Tooth Brush Snack **For Dental Health Month**

1/2 Celery stalk per child
 Whipped plain cream cheese
 Carrots, coarsely shredded or cut into bris-
 tle length strips.

Directions: Spread cream cheese on the
 celery. Put the carrot bristles into the
 cream cheese. Try to brush your teeth with
 it before eating.



President's Day—American Flag

1 Full size graham cracker
Whipped cream cheese
Strawberries cut into strips
Blueberries, cut in half

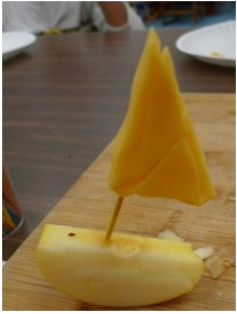
Directions: Assemble the flag as the picture shows. Spread the cream cheese first on the cracker and then put on the strawberries and blueberries. Eat your red, white, and blue flag.



I Like Fruit! **(Graphing Activity)**

Blueberries
Apples
Kiwi
Bananas

Each child is given four pieces of fruit on their plates to decide their favorite. After everyone has “voted,” A graph is made of the results.



Columbus Day Boat

1/2 apple per child, sliced into wedges

Toothpicks

Cheese slices

Directions: Fold the cheese slices over the toothpick. Put the toothpick into the apple slice. Eat!



Groundhog Day Snack

1 banana cut in half, each with an inserted popsicle stick and frozen. (Each child gets 1/2 banana.)

1 Small paper cup

Chocolate syrup

Alfalfa

Directions: Cut a small hole in the bottom of the cup and insert the popsicle stick with attached banana. Pack alfalfa around the bottom of the cup (for grass). Pour syrup over the banana and eat.



Martin Luther King Friendship Snacks

Put trail mix ingredients (several kinds of dried fruit, cereal, pretzels etc.) in individual bowls. Give each child an empty ice cream cone.

The children ask their partner what they want in their cone and then make the snack just the way their partner likes it!



How Are You Feeling?

One rice cake per child
Whipped cream cheese
Slices of cheese
Alfalfa Sprouts
Grapes

Directions: Spread cream cheese on the rice cake, use sprouts for hair, grapes for eyes, and cheese for the mouth. Give your face any emotion you want.

-p.s. Everyone tried at least a taste of the sprouts.



Creepy Halloween Snacks

Mozzarella Cheese Sticks

Green peppers (cut into small nail shapes)

Carrots (cut into rounds)

Raisins

Cream Cheese

The “fingers” are made with mozzarella cheese sticks with green pepper nails. The “eyes” are made with carrot rounds, cream cheese and raisins. They loved it and ate it

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Winter Fun! **Snowmen**

3 mini rice cakes

Whipped cream cheese

Raisins

Carrots, shredded

Directions: Line up the three rice cakes on the paper plate. Spread cream cheese over the cakes. Add raisins for eyes, nose and mouth. Use carrots for the hair, legs, and arms.

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Learning About England

Taking Tea

Chamomile leaves
A tea pot
Warm water
Tea Strainer
Honey

Directions: Put 1 tablespoon of chamomile leaves in the bottom of a tea pot. Heat water and pour over the chamomile leaves. Let sit for two minutes. Serve with honey.



Pumpkin, Pumpkin

1 Rice cake per child
1 can of plain pumpkin
Fruit leather
Cinnamon

Directions: Spread the rice cake with pumpkin. Cut the fruit leather into shapes with a plastic knife. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Have fun!

Winter Recipes



Learning about Asia

Chopstick Snack

2 types of low sugar dry cereals

Directions: Show the students how to use chopsticks.

Put the cereals on flat paper plates. Give the students the chopsticks. Stand back!