

June



June's theme is *Fruits and Vegetables*. Try these fun activities to learn more about healthy foods:

Talk Together

- **For your baby:** Name the foods that your baby eats. During meals, ask your baby "Would you like some banana? How about more carrots?" Though she doesn't understand you yet, by talking about these objects over and over you are helping your baby understand that a word ("strawberry") stands for a thing (a sweet red fruit). When you are at the supermarket, you can also point out the fruits and vegetables that your baby likes to eat. Soon, your baby may be pointing out the ones she recognizes all by herself!
- **For your toddler:** June is when gardens begin growing and when early crops (like strawberries) are ready. During meals, talk about the different fruits and vegetables your child is eating. Ask her which she likes best. Talk about their colors and textures. When you are at the supermarket, talk about and show your baby the variety of fruits and vegetables in the produce section. Let her touch the spiny pineapple, the fuzzy kiwi, the smooth pepper, the bumpy broccoli. Let your toddler pick one new fruit

or vegetable to take home and try to eat. Does she like this new taste or not?

Read Together

- Read books about fruits and vegetables and all the yummy things we can make with them. For babies, try: *The Little Mouse, the Red Ripe Strawberry, and the Big Hungry Bear* by Don Wood, *Planting a Rainbow, Eating the Alphabet, and Growing Vegetable Soup*, all by Lois Ehlert, and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. For older toddlers, good choices include *Jamberry* by Bruce Degan, *Blueberries for Sal* by Robert McCloskey, *How Are You Peeling?* by Joost Elffers, and *Lunch* by Denise Fleming.

Play Together

- **For your baby:** For babies on solid foods, you can slice into bite-sized pieces several different fruits and vegetables (ask your health care provider before introducing new foods). Let your baby play with the food, touch it, and lick it. Maybe he will even taste it. Which ones does he like the best? You can also let your baby touch different fruits and vegetables so he can experience their very different textures and colors. Which ones does he like to touch? Which ones doesn't he like?
- **For your toddler:** Plant some seeds (carrot or bean seeds often work best) in a square of dirt outside or in a pot to keep inside. This is a fun project for toddlers who love to shovel dirt, pour water, and get messy! Watch your seed grow over the next few weeks (remember to water every few days). Have a garden snack when your plant has grown big enough to "harvest"! You can also have a "taste test" with your toddler as you lay slices of various fruits and/or vegetables out on a plate. Let your child

decide which to try, which to touch, and which to avoid. Talk about how each one looks and tastes. What fruits and vegetables are your child's favorites? Try doing a cooking project with your toddler by squeezing your own orange juice, making fruit salad (put your toddler in charge of dropping blueberries or pre-sliced fruit into the bowl) or by making a special summer drink together (blend vanilla yogurt with fruits like strawberries, blueberries, and/or bananas).