



BCDI

Black Child
Development Institute

ATLANTA

AGES 0-5

HEALTHY EATING

NOVEMBER 2024



ACTIVITY GUIDE

FOR PARENTS & EARLY EDUCATORS

bcdiatlanta.org



BCDI
Black Child
Development Institute
ATLANTA

AGES 0-5

HEALTHY EATING

NOVEMBER 2024

Healthy Eating Activity Guide (Ages 0-5)

As parents and caregivers, we play a crucial role in shaping our children's understanding of good nutrition and healthy eating habits from an early age. The foundation for a lifetime of healthy eating starts in these formative years, and it's essential to introduce children to a variety of fruits and vegetables, helping them to develop a love for these nutritious foods. This activity guide is designed to support you in this journey, offering a range of fun and engaging activities tailored to each developmental stage from birth to five years old.

These activities encourage your child's curiosity and enjoyment of fresh produce and provide opportunities to connect with your cultural heritage. By incorporating meaningful fruits and vegetables into your family's traditions and introducing children to the flavors, colors, and stories behind them, you can create a richer, more meaningful experience that fosters a deep appreciation for healthy eating and cultural diversity.

- 1) 0-1 Year Olds**
- 2) 1-2 Year Olds**
- 3) 2-3 Year Olds**
- 4) 3-4 Year Olds**
- 5) 4-5 Year Olds**

0-1 Year Olds

In the earliest stages of life, infants experience new tastes and textures. The activities for this age group focus on introducing your baby to fresh fruits and vegetables in simple, sensory ways. Through exploring colors, smells, and textures, you can begin laying the foundation for healthy eating habits that will grow as your child does. These activities are also an excellent opportunity to incorporate culturally significant foods, connecting your child to their heritage.

1 Sensory Fruit Exploration

- **Goal:** Introduce babies to the textures, smells, and colors of soft fruits like bananas, avocados, or mangoes.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use fruits that are significant in your culture, such as mangoes or plantains, and explain their importance in traditional meals while the baby explores.

2 Fruit and Veggie Purees

- **Goal:** Introduce new flavors by making simple purees from fresh fruits and vegetables like sweet potatoes, carrots, or apples.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Incorporate ingredients like sweet potatoes or yams and share stories of how your family has used these foods for generations.

3 Picture Book Storytime

- **Goal:** Show babies different fruits and vegetables through picture books to familiarize them with healthy foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Choose picture books featuring foods from your culture or create a custom book with images of fruits and vegetables important to your heritage.

4 Fruit and Veggie Mobile

- **Goal:** Create a mobile featuring colorful fruit and vegetable shapes to stimulate visual development and familiarity with healthy foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Incorporate foods from your culture, such as papaya or yams, and share their significance as your baby watches the mobile.

5 Baby's First Taste

- **Goal:** Offer small tastes of mashed fruits or vegetables to encourage the exploration of new flavors.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Choose traditional foods from your culture, like mashed plantains or sweet potatoes, and explain how these foods are an important part of your heritage.

1-2 Year Olds

As toddlers become more curious and active, they start exploring the world of food more enthusiastically. Activities for this age group emphasize playful interaction with fruits and vegetables, encouraging hands-on experiences that make learning about healthy foods fun. Whether through simple games, tasting new foods, or helping in the kitchen, these activities help toddlers develop a love for fresh produce. By introducing culturally relevant foods, you also create meaningful connections to family traditions and cultural identity.

1 Fruit & Veggie Rainbow

- **Goal:** Create a colorful plate of fruits and vegetables to help toddlers learn about different colors while encouraging them to try new foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include colorful fruits and vegetables from your culture, like red peppers, papaya, or okra, and explain their traditional uses in family meals.

2 Veggie Stamping

- **Goal:** Use cut vegetables like potatoes or bell peppers to make stamps, turning them into a creative sensory experience
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Choose vegetables with cultural significance, such as sweet potatoes or cassava, and share how they're used in traditional cooking while creating art.

3 Play with Pretend Food

- **Goal:** Use toy fruits and vegetables to introduce healthy food recognition and early vocabulary development through play.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include toy versions of culturally important foods like plantains or collard greens, and use the traditional names of these foods in your language.

4 Fruit Smoothie Fun

- **Goal:** Help your toddler make a fruit smoothie, letting them add ingredients and observe the process.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use fruits that are common in your culture, like guava or coconut, and talk about how similar drinks are prepared in your family's cuisine.

5 Finger Foods Tasting

- **Goal:** Offer small pieces of soft fruits and vegetables for toddlers to taste, helping them explore different textures and flavors.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include culturally important foods, like mango or sweet potato, and explain how these are prepared and enjoyed in your culture.

2-3 Year Olds

At this stage, children are gaining independence and a growing curiosity about the world around them. The activities for 2—to 3-year-olds focus on fostering this independence through hands-on experiences with fresh fruits and vegetables. Whether helping with simple tasks in the kitchen, exploring different textures, or engaging in pretend play, these activities are designed to make nutrition fun. Incorporating culturally significant foods and stories deepens their connection to healthy eating and family heritage.

1 Cooking Together

- **Goal:** Let your child help with simple tasks like washing fruits or stirring a bowl to introduce basic cooking skills.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Prepare a simple dish from your culture, like mashed yams or plantains, and explain its significance in family traditions while cooking together.

2 Fruit and Veggie Scavenger Hunt

- **Goal:** Hide toy fruits and vegetables around the house for your child to find, helping them recognize a variety of foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include culturally relevant items like cassava or okra, and explain how these foods are used in traditional meals.

3 Color Sorting with Fruits

- **Goal:** Encourage your child to sort fruits and vegetables by color, reinforcing both color recognition and healthy food knowledge.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use a mix of culturally significant foods, like papaya or plantains, and share their cultural importance as your child sorts.

4 Make a Fruit Necklace

- **Goal:** Help your child string soft fruits like grapes or bananas onto a necklace, enhancing motor skills and making healthy eating fun.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Share stories about fruits from your culture and explain how these foods are used in special treats or traditions while making the necklace.

5 Veggie Water Painting

- **Goal:** Use cut vegetables dipped in water or natural juices to “paint,” allowing your child to create art with healthy foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Select vegetables with cultural significance, like yams or collard greens, and tell stories about their cultural uses while painting.

3-4 Year Olds

Three- and four-year-olds are at a prime age for learning through play and exploration. The activities for this age group focus on building their knowledge of healthy foods through engaging, playful experiences. Whether learning about the nutritional benefits of fruits and vegetables, planting a garden, or helping prepare meals, these activities offer hands-on opportunities to make healthy eating enjoyable. Including culturally relevant foods and stories helps them understand food's critical role in family and cultural traditions.

1 Create a Family Recipe

- **Goal:** Help your child prepare a simple dish using fresh fruits or vegetables, teaching them about cooking and healthy eating.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use a traditional family recipe, like sweet potato pie or stewed greens, and explain how the dish connects to your family's heritage.

2 Storytime with Food

- **Goal:** Read a story about fruits and vegetables, then share a snack of the foods mentioned to reinforce the learning.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Choose stories that include culturally important foods or tell personal stories about how your family prepares and enjoys these foods.

3 Fruit and Veggie Faces

- **Goal:** Let your child arrange fruits and vegetables to create fun faces on a plate, sparking creativity and encouraging healthy food choices.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use produce like plantains or avocados, and discuss their cultural importance as your child makes their design.

4 Plant a Seed Together

- **Goal:** Plant a seed from a fruit or vegetable and teach your child how to care for it, helping them understand where food comes from.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Plant something culturally significant, like okra or collard greens, and explain how your family has grown or prepared this plant for generations.

5 Shopping for Fruits and Veggies

- **Goal:** Take your child to a grocery store or market and let them help pick out fresh fruits and vegetables, teaching them to make healthy choices.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Visit markets that sell culturally relevant produce, like Caribbean or African foods, and explain how these foods are traditionally used in your family's cuisine.

4-5 Year Olds

Children ages 4 and 5 are ready to learn more about where food comes from and why eating healthily is essential. These activities focus on helping them understand the benefits of fresh fruits and vegetables while giving them opportunities to take a more active role in preparing and choosing healthy foods. By integrating culturally significant dishes and stories, you can teach children how food connects them to their cultural heritage, fostering healthy eating habits and a sense of pride in their identity.

1 Create a Healthy Plate

- **Goal:** Guide your child in creating a balanced plate of fruits and vegetables, teaching them about nutrition and healthy eating habits.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include foods from your cultural background, such as cassava or yams, and explain how your family traditionally prepares and enjoys them.

2 Fruit Salad Party

- **Goal:** Have your child help make a colorful fruit salad, encouraging them to try new fruits while learning about nutrition.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use fruits from your culture, like guava or pineapple, and explain how similar dishes are enjoyed during cultural celebrations or family gatherings.

3 Vegetable Soup Creation

- **Goal:** Work with your child to make a simple vegetable soup, letting them help pick ingredients to foster a love for healthy eating.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Use a traditional family soup recipe, such as gumbo or callaloo, and explain the history and cultural significance of the dish while cooking together.

4 Visit a Farm or Garden

- **Goal:** Take your child to a local farm or garden to show them how fruits and vegetables are grown and teach them about where food comes from.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** If possible, visit a farm that grows culturally significant crops, like okra or sweet potatoes, and discuss how these foods are traditionally grown and prepared.

5 Make a Food Collage

- **Goal:** Let your child cut out pictures of fruits and vegetables from magazines and glue them into a colorful collage, reinforcing their knowledge of healthy foods.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Encourage your child to include pictures of important fruits and vegetables in your culture and discuss their significance in family meals or traditions.

Conclusion

Teaching children about good nutrition and healthy eating is investing in their long-term health and well-being. The activities in this guide are designed to make this learning process enjoyable, practical, and culturally enriching. As you explore these activities with your child, you'll be helping them develop a positive relationship with food rooted in an understanding of the nutritional value of fresh fruits and vegetables and the cultural significance of the foods we eat.

By connecting healthy eating with cultural traditions, you are educating your child about the importance of nutrition and instilling a deep respect for the diversity of foods and traditions that enrich our lives. These early lessons will empower your child to make healthier choices and appreciate the rich tapestry of cultures that shape our world.

**SHARE YOUR
STORY**



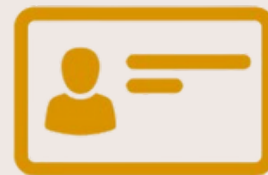
bcdiatlanta.org/impact

**GIVE
TODAY**



bcdiatlanta.org/donate

**BECOME A
MEMBER**



bcdiatlanta.org/members