



BCDI

Black Child
Development Institute

ATLANTA

AGES 6-8

HEALTHY EATING

NOVEMBER 2024



ACTIVITY GUIDE

FOR PARENTS & EARLY EDUCATORS

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Healthy Eating Activity Guide (Ages 6-8)

As children grow, their understanding of the world expands, making it an ideal time to teach them about the importance of good nutrition and healthy eating habits. Children ages 6 to 8 are curious, eager to learn, and capable of making more informed choices about what they eat. This activity guide is designed to help parents and caregivers engage their children in fun, educational activities that promote a love for fresh fruits and vegetables while fostering an appreciation for diverse cultural food traditions. Each activity in this guide encourages healthy eating and allows one to explore and celebrate cultural heritage. By integrating culturally responsive elements, we can help children see how food is vital to our identities and communities, making the lessons learned meaningful and memorable.

- 1) 6 Year Olds**
- 2) 7 Year Olds**
- 3) 8 Year Olds**
- 4) Cultural Stories & Practices**

6 Year Olds

1 Create a Healthy Plate

- **Goal:** Have your child create a "healthy plate" using pictures of fruits, vegetables, grains, and proteins cut out from magazines or drawn by hand.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Culturally responsive tip: Include culturally significant foods, discussing how they fit into a balanced diet.

2 Fruit and Veggie Taste Test

- **Goal:** Organize a taste test where your child samples a variety of fruits and vegetables, ranking them from favorite to least favorite.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include fruits and vegetables from different cultures, encouraging them to try new flavors.

3 Cooking a Simple Recipe

- **Goal:** Teach your child to prepare a simple dish with fresh fruits and vegetables, such as a fruit salad or stir-fry.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Choose a recipe from your cultural background and explain its significance and how it's traditionally made.

4 Grocery Store Adventure

- **Goal:** Take your child to the grocery store to help pick fresh fruits and vegetables for the week's meals.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Explore the international aisle together, identifying and purchasing produce from different cultures.

5 Plant a Mini-Garden

- **Goal:** Plant a small garden or grow herbs in pots, teaching your child how to care for plants and the importance of fresh produce.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Grow herbs or vegetables commonly used in your cultural dishes and explain their uses.

7 Year Olds

1 Cultural Food Map

- **Goal:** Create a map of the world and have your child place pictures of fruits and vegetables in the countries where they are commonly grown.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Focus on the countries your family is connected to and discuss how these foods are used in traditional dishes.

2 Healthy Recipe Book

- **Goal:** Help your child create a personalized recipe book with healthy recipes featuring fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include family recipes and encourage them to ask older family members about traditional dishes.

3 Nutrition Label Reading

- **Goal:** Teach your child how to read nutrition labels, focusing on understanding the importance of fruits and vegetables in their diet.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Compare the labels of traditional foods from your culture with those of other foods and discuss the differences.

4 Cooking Class at Home

- **Goal:** Take your child to the grocery store to help pick fresh fruits and vegetables for the week's meals.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Explore the international aisle together, identifying and purchasing produce from different cultures.

5 Fruit and Veggie Art

- **Goal:** Use fruits and vegetables to create art, such as stamping with cut vegetables or arranging them into creative designs on a plate.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Incorporate designs or symbols that are meaningful in your culture, discussing their significance.

8 Year Olds

1 Cultural Food Exploration

- **Goal:** Explore different cultures' cuisines by trying a new fruit or vegetable each week and discussing its cultural significance.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Start with foods from your culture, then explore others, comparing flavors and preparation methods.

2 Host a Healthy Cooking Show

- **Goal:** Encourage your child to "host" a cooking show where they demonstrate how to prepare a healthy dish using fresh fruits and vegetables.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Focus on a traditional dish and have them explain its cultural significance during the "show."

3 Visit a Farmers' Market

- **Goal:** Take a trip to a local farmers' market, allowing your child to choose fresh fruits and vegetables to incorporate into meals.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Look for vendors selling produce that is significant in your culture, and discuss how it's grown and used.

4 Create a Weekly Meal Plan

- **Goal:** Work with your child to create a healthy weekly meal plan that includes a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** Include dishes from your cultural background and discuss how these meals contribute to a balanced diet.

5 Cultural Cooking Competition

- **Goal:** Organize a friendly cooking competition where your child creates a dish featuring fruits and vegetables, possibly competing with family members.
- **Culturally Responsive Tip:** The challenge can be to prepare a traditional dish from your culture, judging based on taste, presentation, and cultural accuracy.

Cultural Stories & Practices

Here are some ideas for cultural stories and practices that can be particularly meaningful and relevant for Black families and children, emphasizing safety and community awareness:

Cultural Stories

African Folktales About Food
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The History of Soul Food
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Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad
.....

Kwanzaa and the Harvest
.....

The Story of George Washington Carver

Cultural Practices

Cooking Soul Food Together
.....

Gardening with a Focus on Heritage Crops
.....

Attending or Hosting a Kwanzaa Celebration
.....

Exploring African and Caribbean Markets
.....

Storytelling Sessions with Elders

Cultural Stories

1 African Folktales About Food

- Share traditional African folktales that involve food, such as the story of "Anansi and the Yam Hills." Anansi, a trickster spider, often features in West African and Caribbean folklore, teaching lessons through his cleverness. These stories can introduce children to the importance of food in African cultures, highlighting crops like yams, plantains, and beans.

2 The History of Soul Food

- Discuss the origins of soul food, which has deep roots in the African American experience. Share how enslaved Africans brought their culinary knowledge to America, using the limited ingredients available to create dishes that have become staples in Black communities, like collard greens, black-eyed peas, and sweet potatoes.

3 Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad

- Tell stories about Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad, emphasizing how she and others relied on their knowledge of wild plants and herbs for survival. Discuss how certain foods, like okra and corn, were essential during this time and have continued to be important in African American cuisine.

4 Kwanzaa and the Harvest

- Explain the significance of Kwanzaa, a week-long celebration of African heritage, unity, and culture. The holiday includes a feast called Karamu, where families gather to enjoy foods from the African diaspora. Discuss how fruits and vegetables play a central role in this celebration, symbolizing abundance and gratitude.

5 The Story of George Washington Carver

- Share the story of George Washington Carver, an African American scientist and inventor who promoted the importance of crop rotation and introduced the widespread use of peanuts, sweet potatoes, and other crops. His work not only improved the health and sustainability of farming in the South but also enriched the nutritional content of the food consumed by Black families.

Cultural Practices

1 **Cooking Soul Food Together**

- Involve children in preparing traditional soul food dishes, emphasizing the importance of fresh ingredients like greens, beans, and sweet potatoes. While cooking, discuss the cultural and historical significance of these foods, and how they have been adapted over generations.

2 **Gardening with a Focus on Heritage Crops**

- Start a garden that includes crops with roots in African and African American traditions, such as okra, collard greens, sweet potatoes, and watermelon. Teach children about the history and uses of these plants, connecting gardening to ancestral practices and self-sufficiency.

3 **Attending or Hosting a Kwanzaa Celebration**

- Participate in or host a Kwanzaa celebration, where children can learn about the seven principles (Nguzo Saba) and their connections to family, community, and food. Use the celebration as an opportunity to introduce fruits and vegetables that are significant in African cultures.

4 **Exploring African and Caribbean Markets**

- Visit African or Caribbean markets together, exploring the variety of fruits, vegetables, and spices available. Encourage children to ask vendors about the origins and traditional uses of the foods they see, making it a hands-on learning experience.

5 **Storytelling Sessions with Elders**

- Arrange for children to spend time with elders in the community, listening to stories about traditional foods, family recipes, and cultural practices related to nutrition and health. This not only preserves oral history but also strengthens intergenerational bonds.

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**



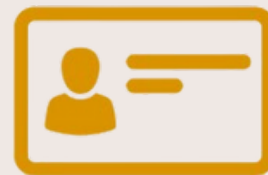
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