



PARENT EXPRESS

Connecting Reading with Nutrition

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Reading with children and encouraging them to eat healthy can go hand-in-hand. Children benefit when parents, grandparents or caregivers read with them at least 20 minutes a day. Choosing a book that encourages good nutrition choices helps share a positive message about healthy eating with young children.

There are a wide range of book topics that are fun and encourage good health for children of all ages. There are children's books about fitness and nutrition that range from yoga to making good food choices. By selecting a book of interest to the child, the child will have a better chance of improving reading levels and learning about good health habits. It may encourage them to be more active and to eat a rainbow of foods daily.

Fun Children's Books

- *How Did That Get in My Lunch Box? The Story of Food* by Chris Butterworth
- *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World* by Chris Butterworth
- *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child
- *Gregory, The Terrible Eater* by Mitchell Sharmat
- *It's Disgusting and We Ate It!* by James Sholheim
- *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss

Activity for Picky Eaters

Picky Peggy is an entertaining story that includes scientific information. Peggy is a strong-willed child who makes her

own decisions, a quality that will resonate with other picky eaters. Peggy, who is known for being a picky eater, decides to become "Peggy the bold eater" after learning a lesson from her pet duckling.

Materials Needed:

- Book *Picky Peggy* by Jennifer Dussling (Contact your local library for a copy)
- Cup of water
- Sampling of bread crumbs and duck food (trail mix – dried fruit, nuts, dried cereal)
- Piece of paper and markers or crayons

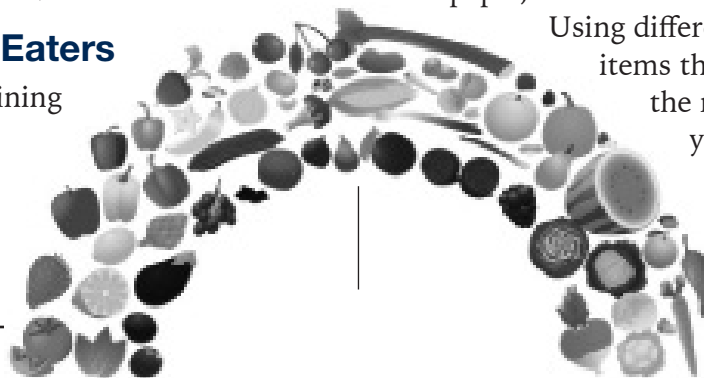
Read the book *Picky Peggy* with your child. Throughout the story there will be questions. This is a great time to interact with your child and build problem-solving skills.

Once the story is completed, select one or both of the following activities:

- **Taste Testing** – bread crumbs verses trail mix with water on the side. Which does your child select as the winner? Why did he/she select that one? Did they like the color, taste, texture of the bread crumbs and/or the duck food? Ask your child, "which do you think is healthier for us to eat?"
- **Create A Rainbow** – On the piece of paper, ask the child to create a rainbow.

Using different colors, draw or write items that match each color of the rainbow – red, orange, yellow, purple, dark green and light green (i.e., red tomatoes, orange cantaloupe, etc.).

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Discuss with your child the importance of eating as many different colored fruits and vegetables as you can. As, Picky Peggy says, “the trick to eating healthy is to think color!”

Family Activity

To ensure your child understands the importance of eating a wide variety of food daily, make an “Eat a Rainbow Every Day” chart to encourage the entire family to eat a variety of foods. Host a taste test of new foods once a week.

Eat a Rainbow Every Day
Keep track of the colors you eat each day!

	Blue & Purple 	Green 	White & Brown 	Yellow & Orange 	Red 
Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					
Saturday					
Sunday					

Fun Ways to Eat a RAINBOW:

Fruit Rainbow With Clouds – strawberries, cantaloupe, banana, kiwi, blueberries, purple grapes and whipped topping.

Veggie Rainbow With Ranch Dressing Clouds – tomatoes, carrots, yellow peppers, snap peas, broccoli and ranch dressing.

Make Your Own Pizza – refrigerator crust, sauce, cheese and a variety of vegetables. See how many different colored veggies you can add to your pizza.

Fruits As Toppings – add to cereal, yogurt, ice cream or sponge cake.

Grab and Go – keep fruits and veggies washed and ready to go in a bowl in the refrigerator for a quick snack.

Ants On A Log – a classic favorite with celery, raisins and peanut butter!

Create A Snack Mix – dried cereal, raisins, dried cranberries or cherries, mini marshmallows and chocolate chips.

Kabob It! – Provide a range of healthy food choices. There is something about putting food on a stick that makes it more fun!

“The best kind of parent you can be is to lead by example.” – Drew Barrymore

The most effective method is to role model both reading and positive eating habits.

Pushing healthy foods will create resistance. Simply make healthy food options available. Take the time to enjoy good food and a good book yourself!

Sources

PBS Parents Health Reading for Kids. <http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/sport-and-fitness/healthy-reading-for-kids/>.

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Satter, E. (2005). *Your Child's Weight: Helping without Harming, Birth through Adolescence*. Kelcy Press, Madison Wisconsin.

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11 Fantastically Fun Children's Books That Teach Healthy Eating Habits, We are Teachers: Ideas Information Inspiration. Retrieved November 22, 2016 from <http://www.weareteachers.com/11-fantastically-fun-childrens-books-that-teach-healthy-eating-habits/>.

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