

# Improving Fruit & Vegetable Consumption

## How to get your site to serve a fruit or vegetable every day

Use the following questions and the corresponding “action steps” to identify new ways to overcome fruit and vegetable consumption challenges. The **ALL** symbols are tips and suggestions for everyone, no matter how you answer the question. Items in bolded caps with the word “**SEE**” in front refer to OSNAP resources to help you meet your goals.

### Questions

### Action Steps

Do you/your program decide what snacks to serve?

- NO** → Speak with whoever has control over ordering/food service decisions. See about increasing the frequency the fruits and vegetables are served. **SEE: WORKING WITH SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE**
- YES** → Ensure that a fruit or vegetable is listed for each day (fresh, frozen, dried and canned are all options.) see: sample menus
- YES** → Ask for feedback on which fruits and veggies the kids like and don't like so that you can cater to their preferences. **SEE: FOOD & FUN UNITS 1 & 7**
- ALL** → If your program continues through the summer and has outdoor space, consider starting a garden so that kids can help grow their own fruits and veggies!

Do you have enough storage space for fresh produce?

- NO** → Serve canned, dried or frozen fruits and vegetables for cheaper, space-saving alternatives.
- YES** → Make sure the menu is matched to your delivery/shipping schedule so that fruits and veggies don't go bad.
- ALL** → Many fruits (oranges, apples and bananas for example) are fine at room temperature.

Do children eat the fruits and vegetables you currently serve?

- NO** → Keep trying! It can take a while for kids to like new foods. Create a “Produce Passport” where kids collect stamps or stickers for each new food they try. Offer a healthy reward (more play time, a chance to design the menu for the day, etc.) once they collect a certain number. **SEE: PRODUCE PASSPORT**
- NO** → Offer taste tests to understand kids' preferences and identify new snacks. **SEE: FOOD & FUN UNITS 1 & 7**
- NO** → Cut and peel fruits and veggies to make eating easier—bite-size pieces often go fast!
- YES** → Involve the children in preparing their own snacks. **SEE: FOOD & FUN UNITS 1 & 7**

Do staff model healthy eating behaviors?

- NO** → Implement policies that limit staff from bringing in outside food and drink. **SEE: FAST MAP TO IMPROVING STAFF ENGAGEMENT, HEALTHY STAFF/HEALTHY KIDS TIP SHEET**
- YES** → Encourage staff to sit and eat healthy foods with kids at snack. **SEE: SNACKS - A BRIDGE**

Does your budget limit your ability to serve fruits and vegetables?

- NO** → Make sure that a fruit and/or vegetable is on the menu every; try to order favorite fruits and vegetables that you know your kids will eat. **SEE: SAMPLE MENUS**
- YES** → Serve tap water instead of juices; use the money saved to purchase fruits & veggies.
- YES** → Look into affordable frozen, canned—and even fresh—options. **SEE: SNACK SENSE**

Do you have a policy about serving a fruit or vegetable every day?

- NO** → Create a policy stating your program will serve a fruit or vegetable every day. Communicate this policy to staff and families, and put the policy in appropriate places, like family and staff handbooks. **SEE: POLICY WRITING GUIDE, SAMPLE LETTERS**
- YES** → Make sure that you communicate your policy to families. **SEE: SAMPLE LETTERS**