

WISE Words from **WISE** Educators:

“I like this year’s approach [with **WISE**] better because of the actual vegetables not just a picture or telling them about it...[children] understand it more when they get to see an actual vegetable or fruit.”

“I would do [**WISE** food experiences] again. I like the healthier choices that were given....”

“I like ...the lesson plans that are set out, it helps with the lessons...I can use [them] in different centers.”

“Some of the parents would be there, and they’d say ‘there’s no way my kid will eat that.’ “I’d go ‘be quiet and watch’ and they would see their kids try it and go “oh my gosh I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it”

“We have [gotten] so much positive feedback from the parents and we’ve never had that before”

“The salsa with the tomatoes was one of my favorite [**WISE** recipes] the children really got involved!”

“The one thing in the **WISE** curriculum that is working for me is that all of my children in the class are tasting the different foods that we have weekly. When they see me try the foods, they try it.”

“ Today we made roasted carrots and they were a hit with most students. We decided the next time next time we go camping instead of roasting marshmallows let’s roast carrots!”

“...we taste and eat the same things the kids are served and them watching us try makes them try the new item.”



Recommendations approved by:



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USE KID-FRIENDLY FRUIT & VEGGIE HABITS

More play, less teacher fuss helps kids try healthy foods.

1. **Do as I do.** You are a valuable role model. Sit with kids and eat the same foods they eat for meals and snacks. Don't eat junk food around children.
2. **Slow down, please.** Some children eat slower than others or need more time to get used to new foods. Never rush children through meals using threats, like no recess, or promises of reward, like earlier recess. Build enough time into daily schedules to make eating relaxed.
3. **Allow kids to decide if and how much to eat.** An adult's job is to serve a variety of healthy foods. The child's job is to decide if and how much to eat. Asking children to "clean their plates" or to "make happy plates" teaches them to eat when they are not hungry.
4. **Play with your food.** Children have less anxiety over trying new food when they can touch it with their hands. Smelling and licking are also natural behaviors for young children as they experiment. Avoid calling out children for using "poor manners." It may not be how you were raised, but encourage kids to play with their food!
5. **Give food experiences at least once per week.** Prepare and taste fruits and veggies with your class. These experiences can double as lessons in language, math, and science concepts. It may take up to 15 exposures to the same food for children to be ready to try. Emphasize "trying" new foods without pressuring kids to "like" new foods.
6. **Change-o, Presto!** Let children see the same foods in various forms. Children are more comfortable trying new foods if they watch them transform. Bring small appliances to your class and guide children in their use. They can press the blender start button or add ingredients to a crock-pot. When kids feel invested in a meal, they are more likely to try healthy foods. Assign each child a job, like washing produce, stirring, or setting the table.



7. **Use small groups.** Increase hands-on experiences and decrease behavior problems by introducing new foods in small groups. If your class is big, offer food experiences during free-play or in centers. A teacher can run a food experience with four children while aides or volunteers monitor children in other zones.
8. **Sneak food talk into daily routines.** Teach kids to identify healthy foods throughout the day. Discuss the lunch menu or make up games that include healthy foods. *"Let's pretend we are squirrels eating yummy peaches off this tree,"* or, *"Let's pretend to open a restaurant. What's our vegetable today, chef?"* Be aware and limit expressing preferences for unhealthy foods like, *"I can't wait for the birthday cake this afternoon!"*
9. **Watch out for trickster foods!** Some junk foods will lure you with labels that say "Fruit and Veggie Flavored." Foods like fruit gummies, fruit punch, or veggie-flavored chips often contain lots of sugar, fat, and salt. Read food labels before you buy. If a fruit or veggie isn't first or second on the ingredient list, opt for a different food. Fresh, frozen, or canned fruits and veggies in whole form are best.
10. **Reward in creative ways.** Food is an essential need, not a special treat. Remove candy from your reward box. Instead, motivate kids with extra time outside, a silly song, or colorful stickers.
11. **Create a physical environment that supports healthy habits.** Develop and display nutrition policies that encourage parents to choose healthy options for class celebrations. Display up-to-date and attractive nutrition messages. Provide health-promoting foods, books, and props in free-play areas.
12. **Encourage families to take an active role.** Discuss family eating habits at home visits and conferences. Invite parents to help with classroom food experiences and meals.

