



Summer is the Perfect Time to Grow Food Confidence

Summer offers endless opportunities to help children become more comfortable with new foods without adding pressure. Whether you're visiting farmers markets, picking berries, grilling outside, or packing picnic lunches, every interaction with food is valuable.

Remember: **accepting a new food starts long before eating it.** Looking, touching, smelling, stirring, washing, cutting (with help), or serving food, are all important steps toward eventual tasting.

Try incorporating these simple activities throughout the summer:

- Wash fruits and vegetables together before putting them away.
- Let your child help stir, pour, mix, or assemble meals.
- Visit a farmers market or local farm and choose one new fruit or vegetable to bring home.
- Encourage sensory food play using yogurt "paint," fruit kabobs, veggie stamping, or edible crafts.
- Pack a picnic with both familiar favorites and one or two new foods.

The key to expanding food variety is **consistent, repeated exposure**. Aim to offer at least one familiar "safe" food alongside one or two learning foods at every meal or snack. If we only offer preferred foods, children only get practice eating those foods. When we regularly include new foods, even if they aren't eaten yet, we naturally increase opportunities for learning, flexibility, and eventually acceptance.

Keep mealtimes low-pressure, model eating a variety of foods yourself, and celebrate curiosity rather than bites. Small, consistent experiences add up over time!