

## REACH OUT AND READ HEALTHY EATING/ACTIVE LIFESTYLE INITIATIVE

Dear Reach Out and Read Volunteers,

One of the ways to make reading an engaging activity for children and to encourage language development is to elicit conversations about the book by asking the children questions or responding to their questions or comments. As part of our new Healthy Eating/Active Lifestyle Initiative, we would like to share with you a couple of ideas on how to bring up issues related to healthy eating and being active, using some of the books you already know.

Please note that the following suggestions are not meant to be a script but just guidelines. We also want to remind you to stay true to the Reach Out and Read mission of having fun while you are reading with the kids. The discussions about healthy eating should happen within this context and should never be meant as a “lesson”. Pick only one or two healthy eating “messages” to introduce into the discussion, if it seems appropriate.


Here are some of the books that you are already using and how you can incorporate discussions on these topics while you are reading. Suggested “messages” are at the bottom of each group of questions. Please add your suggestions/observations on this Google Readers Log.



### ***The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle***

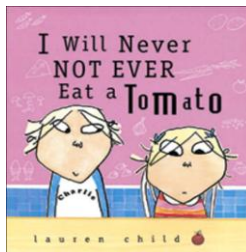
This book has been a children’s favorite for over 40 years. One of the reasons why it’s so great is because it lends itself to discussion about different concepts: birth and growth, recognition of feelings of hunger and fullness, types of food, those that might be good to eat and those that might not; days of the week, colors, etc. Here are a couple of questions you can ask when reading this book:

- 🍎 Knowing when you are hungry and when you are not are important concepts in preventing overeating or “mindless” eating. On the page with the text “And –pop!-out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry caterpillar.”
  - 🍎 How do you know you are hungry? Does your stomach growls?
  - 🍎 How do you know when you have had enough to eat? Do you have to stop and think “Do I need to eat any more?”
- 🍎 “On Monday he ate through \_\_\_\_\_...” Let the children complete the sentence. “Apple!”
  - 🍎 Do you like to eat apples? What kind of apples? How do you eat the apples? With peanut butter?

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- 🍎 You can continue the same way through each fruit. Most children do not recognize the plum. Some children think it is a grape or a blueberry. You could talk about that too.
  - 🍎 What's your favorite type of fruit? Ask them to name it even if the fruit is not in the book.
  - 🐛 “On Saturday....”
    - 🍎 Oh, oh! What happened to the caterpillar? Why? Has that happened to you? (He ate too much! Or the wrong things)
    - 🍎 What is a caterpillar supposed to eat? Leaves are healthy for caterpillars but all that other food is not healthy for caterpillars. What happens when you eat too much food that is not healthy for you?
    - 🍎 What foods do you think are not so healthy for kids?
    - 🍎 What foods do you think are healthy?
  - 🐛 “The next day was Sunday again...” The caterpillar got big and strong after eating what he was he was supposed to eat. Healthy food helps you grow healthy and strong.
    - 🍎 What are other types of healthy foods do you like to eat?

**Possible Messages:**

- “Eat the rainbow”—(fruits)
- **Eat healthy food when you are hungry. Stop eating as soon as you feel full.**
- **Some foods are healthy and some are not**
- **Go, Slow, and Whoa!**
- **Mindless eating/mindless munching**



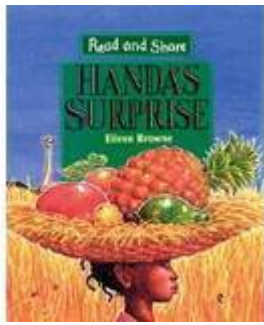
### *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child

This is a great book to discuss two themes that are very common among children: Having very strong likes and dislikes and the unwillingness to try new foods. We can all relate to these themes and I am sure the children have a lot to say about it. Here are a couple of suggestions:

- 🍌 Charlie says Lola is a fussy eater.
  - 🍎 Do you know what that means?
  - 🍎 Do you know a fussy eater?
- 🍌 Lola won't eat carrots or peas.
  - 🍎 Do you like carrots and peas?
  - 🍎 If you don't, what vegetables do you like? If you do, what other vegetables do you like?
- 🍌 Lola has a long list of foods she says she doesn't like but she especially hates tomatoes. (:”Lola was sitting at the table, waiting for her dinner, and she said, I do not eat...”)
  - 🍎 Let's see what Lola doesn't like. (Read each one-Like or Don't Like)
  - 🍎 Do you have any foods that you don't like? Have you tried this food? How many times?
  - 🍎 How do you decide you don't like something?
- 🍌 After Lola tries all the food that Charlie gives her, she realizes she does like them!
  - 🍎 Has that happened to you? What food did you think you didn't like but when you tasted it, you really did.
  - 🍎 Maybe you could try something new next time your mom gives you dinner? Maybe it would taste better if you make up a name or story about it!
  - 🍎 Is there any food that you never tried that you would like to try?
- 🍌 Charlie thought of fun ways to get Lola to try food she thought she didn't like.
  - 🍎 Do you think it would be fun to make up names for foods? Let's try with this page.....(go back to the page with all the foods Lola doesn't like and make funny names)
  - 🍎 Do you have a younger brother or sister? Do they like to copy what you eat?

#### **Possible Messages:**

- **Do you ever try new foods? You may need to try a new food lots of times before you learn to like them**
- **Eat food from the different food groups each day**
- **Everyone needs 5 vegetable and fruit servings in a day—these foods keep us healthy! Eat the rainbow.**



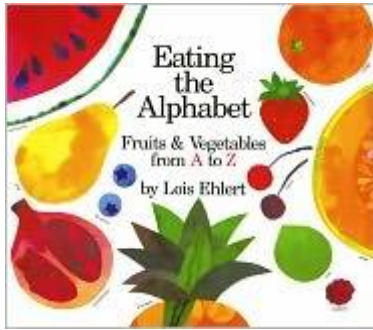
### **Handa's Surprise** by Eileen Browne

This is a very simple but beautiful book. Handa has packed a basket of fruits for her friend Akeyo. We are introduced to eight different fruits. Children might not know some of them like guava or passion fruit and this book gives you the chance to talk about them. The book also uses wonderful simple words to describe the fruit.

- 🍎 Do you know the names of the fruits Handa is putting in the basket?
- 🍎 Have you tried any of them?
- 🍎 Which is your favorite?
- 🍎 Which would you like to try for the first time, if you could?
- 🍎 Do you eat fruits everyday?
- 🍎 How do you eat your fruits?
  - 🍓 Mixed with something else or by itself?
- 🍎 Can you think of different fruits?, i.e. “a crisp, hard apple”, “a red ripe strawberry” (You can go back to the front page that has all the fruits and let them name and describe them as they want-color, texture, etc)

#### **Possible Messages:**

- Everyone needs **5 vegetable and fruit servings in a day**—these foods keep us healthy! **Eat the rainbow** of fruits.
- **Do you ever try new foods? You may need to try new food lots of times before you learn to like them.**
- **Snacks are little healthy meals**
  - Bring healthy fruit snacks from home when you go out.



**Eating the Alphabet by Lois Ehlert**

There is no story in this book but you would be surprised to see how much conversation a “naming book” like this can elicit.

- 🍌 You could start in the cover page. There is a silly face that has been formed using different fruits and vegetables. See if the children can recognize and name them.
- 🍌 As you go through the pages, you can:
  - 🍓 Ask the children if they know the different fruits and vegetables.
  - 🍓 You can also talk about their flavor, texture or color inside.
  - 🍓 They could go through and play “Eating the Rainbow” –go through and name all the red, purple, green, etc.
- 🍌 Do you know how to tell if something is a fruit or a vegetable?
- 🍌 Which one would you like to try?
- 🍌 Have you seen any of these at the supermarket?
  - 🍓 Maybe your grown-up will let you pick a fruit or vegetable to bring home and try.
- 🍌 Do you think you could help your grown up get the fruit or vegetable ready to eat:
- 🍌 Do some fruits vegetables look like each other? For example, huckleberries look like blueberries or the jicama looks like a potato, etc.
- 🍌 How do you like to eat your vegetables or fruits? How does your grown-up prepare them for you?
  - 🍓 In soup? Salad? Cooked? Raw?

**Possible Messages:**

- Everyone needs **5 vegetable and fruit servings in a day**—these foods keep us healthy! **Eat the rainbow** of fruits.
- **Help your grown up get ready for your meal—it can be fun!**
- **Snacks are little healthy meals**--fruits and vegetables can be great snacks
- **Do you ever try new foods? You may need to try new food lots of times before you learn to like them.**



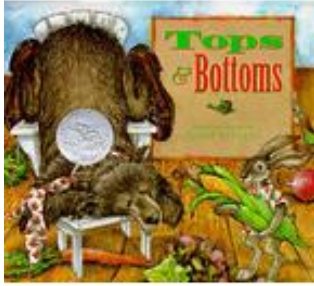
### **Bebé Goes Shopping by Susan Middleton Elya**

In preparing our curriculum for the Healthy Eating Initiative, we interviewed parents about their eating habits and routines. One of the questions we asked was if parents usually take their children with them to buy the groceries. The answer was overwhelmingly “yes”! Another question was if their children ask them to buy items that they had not planned to buy and once again the answer was that they did. We also asked parents if they make a written list of what they need to buy and most of them did not. **Bebé Goes Shopping** can tap into all of these questions and explore from the children’s perspective, what happens when they go to the supermarket. You might even be able to encourage the children to ask for a new fruit or vegetable instead of candy next time they go to the supermarket with their parent. Here are a couple of questions you can ask when reading this book:

- 🍎 Do you go with your grown-up to the supermarket?
- 🍎 Do you help find what is needed?
- 🍎 Do you see any of the things you usually buy on this page? What are they?
- 🍎 On the page where Bebé is looking for sweets, you could ask :
  - 🍎 “Do you usually ask your grown-up to buy something for you at the supermarket or Bodega?” What do you usually ask for?
- 🍎 The mom in the story did a list of the things she needs to buy.
  - 🍎 Does your grown-up make a list?
  - 🍎 Do you ever help make the list?
  - 🍎 Would you like to help make the list next time?
- 🍎 On the page where the mom is buying cheese, there are a couple of different types of cheese. The names of the cheeses are not clear enough to read but you could ask the children:
  - 🍎 Do you like to eat cheese? What kind do you like? Have you tried other types of cheeses?
- 🍎 When you go to the supermarket, do you ever see new foods that looks different or interesting and that you would like to try?
- 🍎 At the end of the story, mom is asked if she would like paper or plastic bags. You could see if the children have any ideas on what type of material would be better? Recycling is not part of healthy eating but it is part of healthy living and that’s the main goal--living healthy lives.
  - 🍎 Do they recycle bags at home?
  - 🍎 Do they bring their own bags to the supermarket?

#### **Possible Messages:**

- **Help your grown up get ready for your meal—it can be fun!**
- **Go, Slow, and Whoa! A Kid's Guide to Eating Right**
- **Snacks are little healthy meals**
- **Eat food from the different food groups each day**



Tops & Bottoms adapted and illustrated by Janet Stevens

This is my new favorite book for the Healthy Eating Volunteer Reader Project! It is charming and gets to many issues other than eating-problem solving, negotiations, being careful what you ask for, and how to learn from your mistakes and change your behavior. But for purposes of this project we get to see lots of different “vegetables” and discuss the different plant parts and their positions (tops, bottoms, or middle) -- Roots, leaves, stems, flowers and seeds as you are reading.

- 🍷 *The inside cover gives you so much to talk about*
  - 🍷 *Names of the vegetables, colors, parts of the plant*
  - 🍷 *Which is their favorite?*
  - 🍷 *Which would they like to try?*
- 🍷 *What types of vegetables do you think Hare will plant (next)?*
  - 🍷 *Why do you think he would plant this vegetable?*
- 🍷 *The whole family is working together*
  - 🍷 *What do they need to do to grow food?*
  - 🍷 *So you ever help with getting meals ready?*
- 🍷 *How long do you think it takes to grow food?*
- 🍷 *What are the best “bottoms” to grow?*
- 🍷 *What are the best “tops” to grow*
- 🍷 *What is the best “middle” to grow*
- 🍷 *Do you think you can eat tops and bottoms of the same plant?*
- 🍷 *What did Bear learn?*

#### **Possible Messages:**

- Everyone needs **5 vegetable and fruit servings in a day –eat the rainbow: vegetables**
- What is the difference between a fruit and a vegetable?
- Vegetables have many different parts
- **Do you ever try new foods? You may need to try a new food lots of times before you learn to like them**
- **Help your grown up get ready for your meal—it can be fun!**