Note to the child care provider: To meet the child’s needs, you should work closely with the parents. This form letter will help you to share ideas for teaching children about food.
Dear Parent,

“Why ...?” is every child’s favorite question. One of the ways children discover their world is by asking questions. The natural curiosity of a child leads to unplanned times for learning. These unplanned times are called teachable moments, when a child is ready to learn something new.

A parent is a child’s most important teacher. Your child will have other teachers over their lifetime, but you have more times than anyone else to teach your child. You teach your child by answering questions, by playing with your child, and by being a good example.

You can use everyday events as valuable learning times for your child. Discover what you child has learned and take time to reinforce that learning. Keep it fun! If your child begins to lose interest, move on to something else.

At child care your child is learning about foods and how they are important to health. The examples below can give you some ideas of how you can use teachable moments to help your child learn healthful eating habits.

**During story time:** Sometimes an event in a story will lead to a natural discussion about food. For example, in the well-known story *Little Red Riding Hood*, the girl is taking a basket of healthful foods to her grandmother who is sick. After reading this story, you could play an imaginary game with your child. Pretend you are putting together a basket healthful foods. Talk to your child about the foods. Ask your child what Little Red Riding Hood should take to her grandmother. Ask the child to describe the taste and appearance of the foods.

**During active play:** Talk with your child about how playing is good exercise that helps them grow and feel good. Food gives children energy to run and play. Offer and encourage children to choose fresh fruits and vegetables as snacks, rather than sweets or high-fat, salty snacks.

**During mealtime:** Food is often a point of discussion at mealtimes. Talk about foods in a positive way. Ask your child to name foods and describe them (color, taste, smell). Be an example for healthy eating habits.

**Meal preparation:** Children like to help and they like to watch adults prepare foods. This is a good time to talk about foods. Children use all of their senses when learning about food. Think of ways to let them touch, smell, taste, hear, and see the food.

Have fun.

Your Child’s Caregiver