

*Dear Parents and Providers,*

Children's Hunger Alliance hopes you are enjoying the late spring warmth. We are providing this newsletter in conjunction with **Honda of America** to provide you with some suggested activities to help keep your little ones busy and happy during the up coming summer months.

Visit your local library and borrow the following books: **GROWING VEGETABLE SOUP** by Lois Ehlert, **BUSY, BUZZY BEE** by Karen Wallace, and **BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL** by Robert McCloskey.



## **Sprouting Seeds**

Read **GROWING VEGETABLE SOUP**, by Lois Ehlert to your children. After reading the book try sprouting the types of seeds planted in the book. Sprout seeds in a Zip-lock bag containing a wet paper towel. Check each day for changes. Plant sprouts in paper cups filled with soil and then in larger pots or in your yard. Record changes on a chart. Have fun with your children by completing a growing chart and share the chart with other family members. Children will enjoy watching the seeds grow and will be thrilled when they are able to partake of the food that they have grown.



## **Activity to Stay Fit Growing Vegetable Kids**

Let each child decide which vegetable is their favorite. Have the children start by curling up on the floor, making themselves as small as possible, to be newly planted seeds. The "gardener" pretends to water the seeds and they start to grow. The sun shines on them and they grow and grow until the children are standing and waving their carrot tops or corn tassels. Have the children pretend to dig up potatoes, wash them and do the same with the other vegetables. This activity gets children moving and using their imagination, which is key in critical thinking in their futures.

## **Family Meals**

In the book **BLUEBERRIES FOR SAL** by Robert McCloskey, Sal and her mother had a good time picking and eating blueberries together. Involve your kids in selecting food, cooking and meal time preparations. Also, don't just feed your kids, sit down and eat with them. Model good eating habits by eating the food that you serve and using good table manners. At the table, serve your meals and snacks "family style." In other words, place a serving of food for each child all together in a serving bowl. Pass the serving bowl or plate around the table and let each child decide if he or she wants the food and let him/her take a serving or spoonful using appropriately sized serving spoons. Don't force kids to eat the food they place on their plates or to clean their plates. If food remains in the serving bowl, allow kids who ask, to have second servings.

## Serving Sizes

The food guide pyramid tells us what a serving size is from each food group. Go to [www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov) for serving sizes and other valuable information. Serving sizes should be used to help in meal planning and preparing enough food for serving. A serving size for a small child for most foods is  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup or 1 to 2 tablespoons. Compared to how adults eat, that may not seem like very much. Don't have unrealistic expectations as to how much your children can eat. Let your children tell you how much they want to eat from what is being served.

## Feeding and Eating Jobs

Like the bees in the book, **BUSY, BUZZY BEE** by Karen Wallace, each person in a family has a job to do when it comes to eating and feeding. If one bee tries to do the job of another, there would be problems in the hive and honey production would be affected. This is the same for the feeding and eating relationship between parents and kids. If given the chance, kids will eat the amount of food they need each day to grow. Some days that will be a lot and some days it will seem like they ate very little. That is okay. If you offer a variety of good, healthy foods, you will not have to worry about kids eating too much! And if they did not eat very much that day, at least you know that what they ate was good for them. The key to success is to establish the correct roles for you as the caregiver. Here they are:

- \*\*You are responsible for the what, when, and where of feeding your kids.
- \*\*Your kids are responsible for how much they eat and whether they eat a food or anything at all, at that meal.

## Berry Picking

Take a trip to a 'pick your own' blueberry farm. The children will probably eat most of the berries they pick. Teach them how to pick the fruit without damaging the bushes. This is an opportunity for the children to gain understanding and respect for the source of their food. Bring enough berries home so the children can try them in combination with other foods such as yogurt, cereal, pancakes, etc.



## Do the Busy Bee Dance

Ask your child to tell you about the bee's dance. When you are outside in the yard or at a park pretend to be bees with your child and "fly" in follow the leader fashion to admire the flowers. Remind your child that bees do not harm the flowers in any way.

