

# KIDS BOOK CLUB

## READING TIPS AND ACTIVITIES

**Jumpstart**  
Children first.®

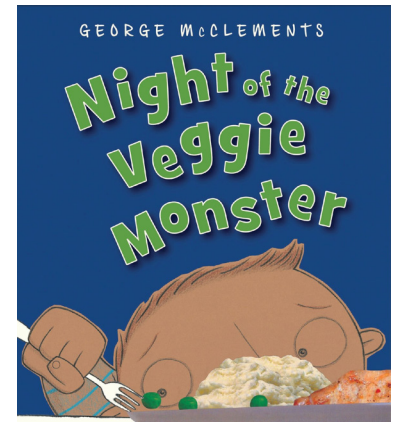
Reading with children can improve their language, literacy, and social-emotional skills, increasing their knowledge of the world around them. With the right book choices, reading can introduce children to healthy eating habits too!

### NIGHT OF THE VEGGIE MONSTER

by George McClements

#### What It's All About

Have you ever seen a veggie monster at your dinner table? One night, a little boy eats just one tiny pea and something strange happens. Will he turn into a veggie monster?



#### Discover a World of Words

Throughout the story, introduce new vocabulary words using gestures, tone of voice, pointing to illustrations, or providing brief explanations. Examples include:

- *performance*: an act or show that is done in public
- *tiny*: very small
- *transform*: to change into something else

#### Dig into the Story

Develop children's comprehension of the story by discussing higher-level information (e.g., link characters' feelings to their actions and /or events in the story, predict what might happen, or summarize chunks of text). Use prompts throughout the story, such as:

- *Why do you think the boy does not want to eat his peas?*
- *How does the boy turn into a veggie monster?*
- *Do you think the boy turns into a real veggie monster or is he just pretending to be a monster?*
- *What do you think will happen when the boy eats broccoli on Wednesday night?*

#### Make Connections Beyond the Book

After reading the story, make connections to an aspect of the child's real life by:

- Asking the following questions:
  - What vegetables do you remember trying for the first time?*
  - What did you like about these new vegetables?*
- Trying some peas to see if they will turn into a veggie monster too!

**Jumpstart**

Jumpstart is a national early education organization working toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Learn more at [jstart.org](http://jstart.org).

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Some definitions taken from Biemiller, A. (2010). *Words worth teaching: Closing the vocabulary gap*.

## Together Time Activity

### “ACT HOW YOU EAT” TASTE TEST

How does it feel to try a new food? What kind of character do you turn into—a monster, a superhero, or a magician who makes the food disappear? Pick out some fruits and vegetables for a taste test and act out how you feel before and after.

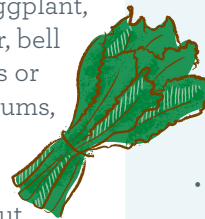
**NOTE TO PARENTS:** Trying a new food can be an intense sensory experience for a child. Mealtimes are perceived as required eating, which makes some kids even more reluctant. This game exposes kids to new food tastes and textures in a fun, voluntary way, while also allowing them to express discomfort. In general, movement can also help children process sensory input.



1

**Pick 3-5 vegetables and fruits to taste (one serving of each).** Choose some you’ve never tried and some you’ve tried, but didn’t like the first time.

**Ideas for varied textures/flavors:** peas, corn, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, fresh spinach leaves, kale leaves, different lettuces, sprouts, radishes, okra, eggplant, zucchini, yellow squash, cucumber, bell peppers, avocado, oranges, lemons or limes, blueberries, strawberries, plums, peaches, bananas, or figs.



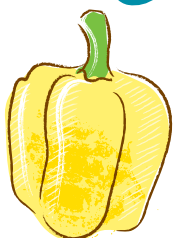
2

**Prep your foods.** Rinse all produce, or ask an adult to help cut or peel any that need it (you might want to taste some both ways: with and without the skin). No need for cooking—go ahead and taste them raw.

3

**Get into character.** Before tasting each food, notice its color and texture. How do you expect it to taste? Act out the character you think you’ll turn into when you eat this food. Now taste it! Is it different than you expected? Now what character are you? Repeat until you’ve tasted all the foods.

**Bonus:** Repeat with a different group of foods!



### Talking Points

- Which foods did you like and dislike? Talk about any sensations experienced with each food. Was it soft, crunchy, smushy, slimy, wet, dry, smooth, or rough? Did it have a skin and did you like the skin? Are there similarities among foods you like or don’t like? Try some other new foods with similar textures.
- Talk about how important it is to try a food more than once. Sometimes it takes several tries to develop a taste for something new!
- Try some of the foods a different way next time: steamed, baked, grilled, mashed, or as an ingredient in a recipe with other flavors.
- Talk about how food makes you feel, not just when you’re eating it, but also all day long! When you eat foods that are good for your body, you have more energy, focus better, and feel better. Ask your child to act out how they feel after eating their different foods: a salad, a sandwich, an apple, a slice of birthday cake, etc.

