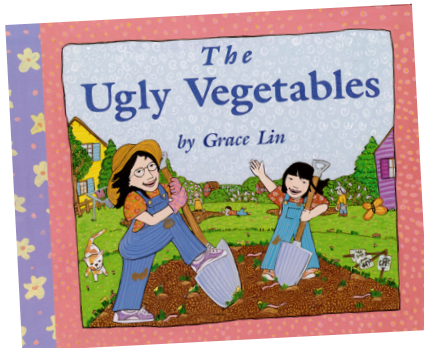


Reading with children can improve their language, literacy, and social-emotional skills, increasing their knowledge of the world around them. With the right book choices, reading can introduce children to healthy eating habits too!



THE UGLY VEGETABLES

by Grace Lin

What It's All About

A girl and her mother plant a garden. To the little girl, the neighbors' flowers seem much better than their plain green vegetables. Only after the neighbors come to share her mother's delicious vegetable soup does the girl gain an appreciation for the "ugly vegetables" from her garden.



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:

- *Vegetable*: plants whose leaves, roots, stems, and other parts are used for food
- *Vines*: plants with long curling stems
- *Chop*: to cut up into pieces

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, summarize chunks of text). Use prompts throughout the story, such as:

- *How does the little girl feel about her family's garden when she first realizes it is different than what the neighbors are growing?*
- *After they eat the soup, what does the little girl learn about the vegetables they grew in their garden?*

Make Connections Beyond the Book

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

- Plants or vegetables in your family's garden
- The funniest looking or ugliest vegetable you ever ate
- Traditions that are special to your family or that might be different than your friends or neighbors



Jumpstart

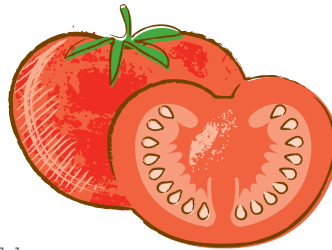
Jumpstart is a national early education organization working toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Learn more at jstart.org.

Together Time Activity

SERVE UP A NEW TRADITION: Food plays a major role in bringing families together for daily rituals and special occasions. Giving kids a role in creating and maintaining food traditions empowers them and helps them build cooking and nutrition knowledge and skills.

Collaborate with your child to invent a new food tradition for your family.

1 Talk about your family's existing routines and rituals from setting the table to special holiday meals. What do you enjoy about these traditions?



2 Brainstorm ideas for a new family food tradition. It could be daily, weekly, monthly, related to a season, event, holiday, anniversary, etc. Think about ways it will help family members connect with each other, your family's heritage, the environment around you, or the community in which you live. Stay focused on nourishing whole foods, especially veggies.



3 Guide your child to the idea that is practical and do-able for your family. (They're likely to come up with some that are pretty elaborate!) Invite them to be responsible for planning it, with adult support, of course.

4 Make a to-do list! Help your child search for recipes, delegate tasks, make a shopping list, and purchase items. Draw your new tradition. If it's a meal, invite them draw and label all the foods on a paper plate. If it's an event, let them make invitations or place cards.

5 Put it on the calendar and share it with the whole family. Hopefully it will inspire other beautiful family traditions.

Talking Points

- Talk about what your family can do on a daily basis to focus mealtimes on family togetherness. Ideas: turn of the TV, turn on soft music, set the table together, light a candle, ask everyone to share three things about their day.
- Tell your child about food traditions from when you were a kid and what they meant to you. Are there any you'd like to re-create?
- When the meal is homemade, tell about where or how you learned to make it and all the different ingredients and steps that went into it.
- Explain where and how each ingredient grew. If you aren't sure, look up the answers together. Did it grow on a tree, on a vine, in a greenhouse, in another country? Does it relate to your family's cultural or ethnic background? Was it grown on a local farm by someone else's family?
- Cooking together is a part of many family meal traditions. Pick a certain night of the week for family cooking night.

