



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **FUN WITH PLANTS!**

Your child has learned that plants are the basis of the food chain. You can use the activities below to reinforce your child's understanding of the role plants play in our diets. As a precaution, remind your child to never taste other kinds of plants without checking with an adult first.

The next time you're at the market with your child, point out foods that are examples of roots, stems, leaves, fruits, flowers, and seeds. As you locate these items at the store, discuss with your child how each looks like a leaf, a stem, and so on. For example:

- Talk about how the root vegetables grow underground, just like the roots of plants at home or in the garden.
- Look closely at the broccoli florets. Point out how each is a bud, like a flower waiting to open.
- At home, you can cut open an orange and point out the seeds inside. Explain to your child that a fruit is any edible seed-bearing part of a plant.

Another activity after you return from your shopping trip is to challenge your child to use the various plant parts to construct a complete plant. For example, take a parsnip (a root), connect it to a piece of asparagus (a stem), add some sprigs of parsley (leaves), cherries (fruit), broccoli (flower), and finally a few grains of rice (seeds). Ask your child to draw a picture of your colorful creation as a reminder of the plant you created together. Try this experiment, along with your child, to show how roots and stems pull water up into a plant.

- Take a stalk of celery (or a carrot) and cut off 1 inch from the bottom end.
- Place the stalk in a jar of water.
- Add food coloring to the water (blue or red are best) until the water becomes dark.
- Let the stalk sit in the water for 24 hours.
- With your child, look at the stalk the next day.
- Discuss the color of the leaves at the top of the stalk. Scrape the surface of the celery stalk with a knife--do you see the colored tubes? Discuss their role in "feeding" the plant. Cut the stalk in half and discuss what you see. Challenge your child to explain how the water reaches all the parts of the plant.

Source: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Parents/roots.html>