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Contact: Elisa Bupara
(916) 263-1044

NEW STUDY DEBUNKS CONVENTIONAL WISDOM THAT KIDS HATE EATING VEGGIES

Some Preschoolers Say They Even Prefer Fruits and Veggies to Candy

(Sacramento) – Contrary to popular belief, a new study released by First 5 California found that parents don't need to sneak fruits and vegetables into their children's meals – kids say they actually like them! Interviews with more than 100 preschoolers across California revealed that kids not only know it's important to eat fruits and vegetables, they frequently prefer them to candy.

"The research found the common belief that it's an uphill battle to get young kids to eat healthy foods like broccoli or carrots is false," said Kris Perry, executive director of state agency First 5 California. "We were thrilled to see preschoolers express real enthusiasm for a variety of fruits and vegetables as well as healthy drinks like milk."

Kelton Research, a national polling firm, conducted interviews in English and Spanish with 4- and 5-year-olds attending preschools in Fresno, Los Angeles and Sacramento counties between Sept. 22 and 26.

Fewer than half of California's children ages 2 to 11 eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetable servings daily (5 or more servings), according to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research. Further, almost 25 percent of them eat two or more servings of cookies, candy, doughnuts or popsicles every day.

Lack of proper nutrition contributes to certain health problems, such as the rising trend in childhood obesity. In California, one in three children is overweight or at risk of becoming overweight – far worse than the national average.

"While there has been a lot of research on barriers to childhood nutrition, this study dispels the myth that kids are predisposed to dislike healthy foods," Perry said. "Now our challenge is to help parents find simple, affordable ways to prepare nutritious meals and snacks for their kids."

To help children eat healthier, First 5 California published a free mini cookbook with easy, inexpensive and delicious recipes developed by nutritionist and popular Latina TV personality Chef LaLa. The bilingual booklet also includes important nutrition tips for families with young children, such as healthy portion sizes and how to read nutrition labels.

(more)

Starting today, *Yummy for Your Tummy* is available for free to all Californians by calling 1-800-KIDS-025 or visiting www.first5california.com. Soon the booklet also will be available at Albertsons stores in California.

“There’s a widespread misconception that healthy food is harder and more time-consuming to make,” said Chef LaLa. “It’s my hope that *Yummy for Your Tummy* will help families see that they can get delicious food on the table without a lot of hassle or emptying their wallets.”

About First 5 California

First 5 California, also known as the California Children and Families Commission, was established after voters passed Proposition 10 in November 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to fund education, health, child care and other programs for expectant parents and children up to age 5. For more information, please visit www.first5california.com.

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