

Pointers for Parents

Put The Wild Into Your Child: Use A Trip To The Farm To Spark A Healthy Change

(NAPSA)—Does your child know where fruits and vegetables come from?

Does she realize that carrots grow in the ground?

Has he ever seen a tomato or a watermelon ripening on the vine?

If the answer is no, a trip to a nearby farm for more than the pony rides and a petting zoo may be a way to enlighten the whole family to the benefits of fresh-grown foods, and to encourage your children to make healthier food choices.

Here's how to start your adventure:

- First, find a “pick-your-own” farm. Local Harvest (www.localharvest.org) offers a farm-finding tool and tips.

- Sign up for hands-on activities if available, such as making applesauce or churning butter from fresh milk.

- While at the farm, encourage everyone to try new foods and ask questions. You might be surprised by how willing your children will be to taste a radish, a purple tomato or a blackberry that they've picked themselves. Chances are, they'll be more excited about plucking an apple from a tree than picking one off the grocery store shelf.

Other options include growing your own produce—pots and planters work if you don't have a garden. You can also visit a farmers' market, where kids can see a variety of locally grown produce, ask questions of the farmers directly and (perhaps best of all) taste free samples.



Youngsters are more likely to want to eat fruits and vegetables they've picked or at least picked out themselves.

Another benefit of having your children pick or grow their own food is that it may make them more eager to help you out in the kitchen. When you're looking for healthy recipes for those extra helping hands, visit the We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)[®] website (<http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>). Developed by the National Institutes of Health, We Can! provides resources for parents, caregivers and communities to help children ages 8 to 13 maintain a healthy weight by improving food choices, increasing physical activity and reducing screen time.

You can explore both the website and “the wilds” together with your family; by doing so, you just might have them trying new, healthy foods and helping you with supper, too.