Dear Head Start Family:

Over the past few weeks, your child has been tasting bell pepper and melon in classroom activities, meals, and snacks offered by the Head Start. By providing these repeated opportunities to try new foods, your child is more likely to enjoy the taste of bell pepper and melon and to eat more of these foods in the future. Enclosed are two recipes for snacks that include bell pepper and watermelon and a shopping list. Most, if not all, of the ingredients should be available at your local CHILE participating grocery store. Bring your child along to the grocery store and pick out the ingredients together. Finally, a handout with tips on how to prevent choking is included. Please review to ensure that your child has safe eating experiences.

Make sure to look for the CHILE shelf label for ingredients that have an asterisk (⭐️) next to them.
2 bell peppers (any color)
15-oz can black beans
frozen or canned corn
brown rice
1 onion
cumin (in the spice aisle)
garlic cloves
cilantro

non-stick cooking spray
part-skim mozzarella cheese or reduced-fat cheese of choice
1 seedless watermelon
plastic zip top bags
straws with rounded ends
Ingredients:
- 2 bell peppers (any color)
- 15 oz can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup corn
- 1 cup cooked brown rice
- ½ cup onion, finely chopped
- 1½ teaspoon cumin
- 2 oz part-skim mozzarella cheese or reduced fat cheese
- 2 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon cilantro
- ¼ cup water
- non-stick cooking spray

Directions:
1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Ask your child to spray a 9” X 13” pan with nonstick cooking spray.
2. Cut peppers in half lengthwise and ask your child to help you remove all seeds.
3. In a large bowl, combine remaining ingredients except cheese. Ask your child to mix the ingredients.
4. Ask your child to fill each pepper half with bean mixture and place in pan.
5. Pour ¼ cup water into bottom of pan.
6. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes.
7. Remove foil and sprinkle each half with cheese. Bake uncovered for 5 minutes or until cheese is melted.

SAFETY TIPS!

Never leave a knife within reach of a young child.
Keep children away from hot stove and hot pans.
After your child has eaten the rice and bean filling, cut the bell pepper into pieces no larger than ½ inch to prevent choking.
Ingredients:

- small pieces of watermelon (preferably seedless)
- zip top plastic bags
- straw with rounded ends

Directions:

1. Remove the rind of the watermelon and cut into small pieces. If the watermelon has seeds, carefully remove each seed. Seeds are choking hazards for young children.

2. Place several pieces of watermelon into the zip top plastic bag. Lock the bag and instruct your child to squish the watermelon.

3. Provide a straw with a rounded end and encourage your child to try his/her own watermelon slush. Use a spoon to dish out leftover large pieces.

REMEMBER:
Your children are more likely to try a new food if you try it with them!

SAFETY TIPS!

- Remove all seeds to prevent choking if seedless watermelons are not available.
- Never leave a knife within the reach of a young child.
Foods can be choking hazards based on size, shape, and texture. Avoid serving children foods that are small, round, smooth, and/or slippery (such as cherry tomatoes, grapes or hot dogs) since they can be swallowed whole and are the perfect shape to plug a child’s airway. Chunks of hard or fibrous foods, such as raw fruits and raw vegetables, can also be choking hazards if children are not able to chew the food completely. Avoid sticky foods, such as spoonfuls of peanut butter, since they can form to a child’s airway and cause a child to choke.

The following foods are a choking hazard, according to the American Academy of Pediatrics:

- hot dogs
- nuts and seeds
- chunks of meat
- hard cheese
- whole grapes
- hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- popcorn
- chunks of peanut butter
- raw vegetables
- raisins
- chewing gum

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends cutting foods into small, easily chewed pieces no larger than one-half inch.
Avoid serving foods that are choking hazards or prepare them in a way that reduces the risk of children choking on them (for example, slice hot dogs lengthwise and into small pieces no larger than ½ inch; cut a cherry tomato or grape into quarters).

**In general:**
- Cut foods into pieces no larger than ½ inch.
- Do not rush children to finish a meal or snack.
- Children should not eat while they are walking, running, or laughing.
- ALWAYS keep a watchful on children while they are eating.
- Finally, take a course in basic lifesaving skills and first aid so that you are prepared in case of a choking emergency.