**Provider Guide** Many families may find it difficult to pay for — or get access to — nutritious foods. In such situations, they may find it especially hard to make healthy choices. As a provider working directly with families, you can help them know that they can eat well. And you can help them do so no matter their budget or time constraints.

Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, has designed *Food for Thought: Eating Well on a Budget* as a resource for you to use with families facing limited food choices. This guide will give you the tools you need to help families communicate. It can also help you offer them emotional support.

This guide can be used in a number of ways. You can use it as the basis for family workshops. You can refer to it when talking with families one-on-one. You can also use it when leading caregiver discussion groups.

On the following pages, you’ll find...

- **FAMILY WORKSHOPS**: These 30- to 45-minute workshops include video clips with key messages that families will learn from the sessions. The “Talk About It” questions will help families discuss their concerns about food. You’ll also find Family Handout pages, which you can photocopy and share. These pages will help parents connect with children.

- **ONE-ON-ONE TIPS**: You can offer these ideas when counseling individuals. You can also offer them to families when time is short.

- **CAREGIVER DISCUSSION GROUPS**: This 30- to 45-minute workshop begins with the “Family Strategies” video. It includes questions to help adults discuss concerns about limited food choices. It can also help them find solutions together.

The Food for Thought resources include:

- a **CAREGIVER GUIDE**, which helps families deal with emotions that may come with facing limited food choices. It also includes tips for shopping and making healthy meals.

- a **SESAME STREET VIDEO** featuring Elmo, Super Grover, and their new friends, the Super Foods! (The video also includes a segment called “Family Strategies.” This special section can help parents find strength in the stories of others facing the same kinds of situations.)

- “A Delicious Day,” a **CHILDREN’S STORY** about Big Bird’s trip to a food pantry and a grocery store.

- **SESAME STREET RECIPE CARDS** providing ideas for healthy meals and snacks.

You can find these materials (and more!) online at sesamestreet.org/food.
Healthy Eating  These 30- to 45-minute workshops teach families about healthy foods. The activities focus on trying new foods and choosing “anytime” foods. These activities work with large or small groups. Watch just one video clip, or both, if you have time. The Family Activity (pages 3 and 4) can be used with either clip.

Key Message:
Children may need to try a new food again and again before deciding they like it.

Trying New Foods

**STORY SUMMARY:** Elmo, Super Grover, and the Super Foods figure out what a kiwi is. This fuzzy fruit is strange to Elmo. He thinks he won’t like it. But after trying a kiwi a few times, he decides that he loves it!

**VIEW THE VIDEO:** Watch “Elmo Tries a Kiwi” and “Let’s Go Food Shopping.” On the DVD, choose “Select a Scene,” then “Elmo Tries a Kiwi.” Or watch these clips online at sesamestreet.org/food. Stop the video after you see the family eating watermelon.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** Ask “Why is it important to try foods again and again, like Elmo did? What foods did the families choose at the food pantry and farmer’s market? How does your family choose foods when shopping?”

Key Message:
Eating a rainbow of anytime foods helps keep minds and bodies strong. It’s important to eat anytime foods at snack time, too.

Anytime Snacks

**STORY SUMMARY:** When Rosita is hungry for a snack, The Super Foods give her a rainbow of anytime foods that help her feel great!

**VIEW THE VIDEO:** Watch “Rosita’s Rainbow of Snacks” and “It’s Snack Time.” On the DVD, choose “Select a Scene,” then “Rosita’s Rainbow of Snacks.” Or watch these clips online at sesamestreet.org/food. Stop the video after you see the little boy and his grandmother share apples and peanut butter.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** To help guide discussion, introduce “sometime” and “anytime” foods (see page 10). Ask “What is an ‘anytime’ food? What are some of the healthy anytime foods that Rosita and the children in the video eat? Which of these foods do children in the group like to have for a snack? Why is it important to eat lots of anytime foods?”

In Print

* See page 10 of the Caregiver Guide for tips on making healthy choices at home and on the go.

* Read the children’s story, “A Delicious Day.” Ask “What healthy foods does Big Bird’s family find at the food pantry and grocery store?” Have children point to the fruits and vegetables in the pictures. Ask “How many can you name?”
My Super Foods Help families talk about healthy food choices.


2. Ask families to draw a plate of “super” anytime foods. They can create a healthy snack or meal. Adults can help children think about what makes something an anytime food. On the plate, draw one new food that children would like to try. Or invite children to draw a food they didn’t like at first but could try again.

3. Ask “What does your plate look like? How many different anytime foods did you use?” Children can talk about foods they want to try (or try again). They can also name the anytime foods they drew.

TAKE IT FURTHER: Keep exploring healthy eating by watching “Super Grover Eats Breakfast.” On the DVD, choose “Select a Scene,” then select “Super Grover Eats Breakfast.” Or watch the clip online at sesamestreet.org/food. Ask “How does Super Grover feel before he eats breakfast? How does he feel after he eats a healthy breakfast? Why is it important to eat a healthy breakfast?”
My Super Foods Together, build a plate of super “anytime” foods. You could draw healthy snacks or create a whole meal. Which are your favorite foods? What do they taste like?

“Anytime” foods are super foods because they keep your body healthy and strong. They are so good for you that you can eat them anytime. “Sometime” foods are usually fatty, sugary, or salty. Eat these foods once in a while.
Mealtime Is Family Time

These 30- to 45-minute workshops can help families find ways to spend time together. The workshops can also help them feel good about food. These activities work with large or small groups. Watch just one video clip, or both, if you have time. The Family Activity (pages 6 and 7) can be used with either clip.

**Key Message:**
Eating together is a great way for family members to connect and enjoy one another’s company.

**Spending Time Together**

**STORY SUMMARY:** The Bear family is so busy! They hardly have time to see one another. The Super Foods show the Bear family that mealtime is a great time to share together.

**VIEW THE VIDEO:** Watch “Bear Family Mealtime.” On the DVD, choose “Select a Scene,” then “Bear Family Mealtime.” Or watch the clip online at sesamestreet.org/food. Stop the video after the song.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** Ask “How does the Bear family feel when they are too busy to see one another? When could your family share a meal or cook together? How could everyone in your family help to make a meal?”

**Key Message:**
Shopping for and preparing healthy foods can be fun for the whole family.

**From the Market to Your Table**

**STORY SUMMARY:** Chef Art Smith visits the farmer’s market with a family. With the family, he uses one chicken to cook four healthy dishes.

**VIEW THE VIDEO:** Watch “Cooking With Chef Art Smith.” Select it from the DVD’s Main Menu. Or watch the clip online at sesamestreet.org/food.

**TALK ABOUT IT:** Ask “How can your family shop or make meals together? Marianne’s chicken recipe is a family favorite. What are your family’s favorite healthy recipes? Can you think of other ways to serve these foods?”

**In Print**

- Point out the following pages of the Caregiver Guide:
  - pages 2-5, which offer ways to talk to children about food and about their feelings.
  - pages 4 and 11, which list fun family mealtime ideas.
  - page 9, which includes tips for leftovers.
- Read the children’s story, “A Delicious Day.” Ask “How do Big Bird and his cousin Natalie help Granny Bird shop for food and make dinner? How can adults and children help at home?”
My Family Meal Book

Invite families to share stories about food.

1. Photocopy the “My Family Meal Book” on page 7.
2. Ask families to draw a favorite family meal or mealtime tradition on each page of the book. They could also draw a cultural dish or a special holiday meal.
3. Ask adults to help children cut out the pages and staple them to make a book. Families can take their books home and look through them together. At home, parents can share more stories about family traditions or recipes.

TAKE IT FURTHER: Mealtimes can be great story times!
Encourage parents and children to share a story about a favorite food (“Broccoli is my favorite food because...”), or to make up a tale (“Once upon a time, there was a carrot...”). This can help make talking about food fun for families.
My Family Meal Book

Draw or write about a favorite family meal or a mealtime tradition. Cut apart the pages and staple them to make a book.
One-on-One Tips

Sometimes you may have only a few minutes to talk with a family. If so, you can still give out kits or Family Handout pages. Encourage families to explore important messages at home with these tips:

Explain the DVD
The Sesame Street children's story can help adults and children talk about healthy eating. Adults can watch the “Family Strategies” video. They may find strength in the stories of other families facing limited food choices.

Highlight the Caregiver Guide
It offers simple ways for families to eat well and save money. Point out pages that families can use right away, such as “A Simple Start” on page 6. “Healthy Choices Anytime” on page 10 lists quick tips. “Making Connections” on page 12 can help families find support.

Extend the Messages
Point out clips on the DVD, such as “Elmo Tries a Kiwi.” Encourage children to sing along with the Super Foods at home. The fun songs will help them remember key messages.

Provide a Family Handout
It can be hard for caregivers to talk with children about food access and affordability. See the Family Handout sheets on pages 4 and 7 of this guide. They give families a chance to talk about what can be emotional subjects. Adults can use pages 4 and 5 of the Caregiver Guide for help answering their children’s tough questions.

Ask the Hard Questions
Sometimes families won’t ask for help locating or paying for nutritious foods. When you’re with a family, ask how you can help them. Give them the chance to open up by asking how they feel.
ProVidEr GuidE
Caregiver Discussion Groups

Providing food for one's family can be tough. With a group of caregivers, you can talk about feelings they may have. Watch the “Family Strategies” video together. This video is recommended for adults only because of the emotional subject. Use the questions on this page to start conversations.

Family Strategies

VIDEO SUMMARY: Caregivers talk about having limited food choices. They share their difficult feelings and offer hope to others. The caregivers discuss money-saving ideas and healthy eating. They also talk about ways to help children try new foods.

VIEW THE VIDEO: Watch “Family Strategies.” Select it from the DVD’s Main Menu. Or watch the clip online at sesamestreet.org/food.

TALK ABOUT IT: Explore how caregivers feel. Ask them:

• “What emotions do the caregivers in the video have? Which feelings do you relate to? How does your family talk about feelings?”
• “In the video, one young girl’s dad says that it was hard to ask for help to get food. Do you think it is often hard to ask for help? How can you deal with this difficulty?”
• “How do the families in the video get food? What actions have helped you feel good about your food choices for your family?”

Help caregivers connect with their children about food. Ask them:

• “In the video, the grandmother says that sometimes her grandson asks for things at the store that she can’t afford. How can you respond to your children if this happens?”
• “How can you reassure your children, even if you feel you don’t have all the answers?”
• “In the video, a single mother got her two sons to try new fruits by making juices. How can you introduce new foods to your children? Why is this important?”

Provide caregivers with ideas for sharing family time. Ask them:

• “How did the families in the video use mealtimes to connect?”
• “How can you involve your children at mealtime?”
• “It’s not always easy to make mealtime family time. What challenges has your family faced in doing this?”
Anytime & Sometime Foods

“Anytime” Foods These are foods that are good to eat anytime. They are the healthiest foods with nutrients to help you grow up healthy. Examples: fruits and vegetables, nonfat and lowfat milk.

“Sometime” Foods These foods are the least healthy. That’s why they’re once-in-awhile foods. Examples: French fries, cookies, ice cream.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FOOD GROUP</th>
<th>“ANYTIME” FOODS</th>
<th>“SOMETIME” FOODS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>Fresh, frozen, steamed, or canned vegetables (low sodium) without added fat (such as butter) or sauces</td>
<td>Any vegetable fried in oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>Fresh and frozen fruits, canned fruits packed in their own juice, dried fruits</td>
<td>Fruits canned in syrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breads &amp; Cereals</td>
<td>Whole-grain breads, pitas, and tortillas; whole-grain pasta, brown rice, oatmeal; hot and cold unsweetened whole-grain breakfast cereals</td>
<td>Doughnuts, muffins, croissants, and sweet rolls; sweetened breakfast cereals; crackers, cookies, and chips; cakes and pies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk &amp; Milk Products</td>
<td>Nonfat and lowfat milk; nonfat and lowfat yogurt; lowfat and nonfat cheese; lowfat and nonfat cottage cheese</td>
<td>Whole milk; full-fat cheese and cheese spreads; cream cheese; yogurt made from whole milk; ice cream, ice milk, and frozen yogurt; puddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meats, Poultry, Fish, Eggs &amp; Beans</td>
<td>Beef and pork that have been trimmed of their fat; extra-lean ground beef; chicken and turkey without skin; tuna canned in water; fish and shellfish that have been baked, broiled, steamed, or grilled; beans; split peas and lentils; tofu; egg whites and substitutes</td>
<td>Beef and pork that haven’t been trimmed of their fat, fried hamburgers, ribs, bacon, fried chicken, chicken nuggets, hot dogs, deli lunch meats, pepperoni, sausage, salami, fried fish and shellfish, whole eggs cooked with added fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>Water, nonfat and lowfat milk, unsweetened iced teas and lemonade</td>
<td>Whole milk, regular soda, sweetened iced teas and lemonade, fruit drinks with less than 100% juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>