

A brief pilot intervention enhances preschoolers' self-regulation and food liking

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Mindfulness training and engaging in classroom-based games can influence self-regulation and food liking when introduced during the preschool years according to a new study in the *Journal of Nutrition*

Education and Behavior.

"For this study, we were interested in developing and evaluating a brief five-week intervention that incorporated [best practices](#) for supporting two important indicators for [children's](#) development: [self-regulation](#) and food liking, particularly liking fruits and vegetables," said Sara A. Schmitt, Ph.D., Department of Human Development and Family Studies, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN, U.S.. "As part of the intervention we were focused on mindfulness activities and classroom-based games, and all the activities had embedded exposure to fruits and vegetables. We also included sensory learning techniques like tastings throughout many of the sessions."

After developing the intervention, researchers from Purdue University, Central Michigan University, and Yale University assessed 39 children from two Head Start centers serving children from low-income families. Children from one center received the intervention while children in a second center did not. All children were assessed on self-regulation skills and liking of fruits and vegetables pre- and postintervention.

"What we found was that children who participated in the intervention experienced significant gains in their behavioral regulation and in their liking of fruits and vegetables from pre- to postintervention. Children in the comparison group who did not receive the intervention did not achieve similar gains in those skills. What this tells us is that there is promise in this intervention in terms of improving our targeted outcomes," commented Dr. Schmitt.

More information: Pilot Intervention Enhances Preschoolers' Self-Regulation and Food Liking, *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior* (2020). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jneb.2020.08.008](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jneb.2020.08.008)

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