

THE GAME OF VEGGIELAND

CLIENT	BEHAVIORS	TOOLS
Parents of children 1 and older	Eat more vegetables	Photos, VeggieLand game board Client Gift: Stickers

TOOLS



OPENING ACTIVITY

Show two photos. One photo shows a child enjoying veggies, and the other shows a child refusing veggies.

TRIGGER EMOTIONAL DRIVERS:

“Here’s a child who enjoys veggies and eats them without hesitation. How does her mom (parent) feel when she sees her child enjoying veggies?” (Discussion.) “Here’s a photo of a child who refuses to eat veggies. How does this child’s mom feel when her child refuses to eat veggies?” (Discussion.) “All moms/parents intuitively want their children to eat veggies. They know it’s a gift to their children, and it makes them feel successful at parenting. They want to reinvent a better life for their children, one where kids enjoy, rather than resist veggies.”

VEGGIELAND GAME

Lay large VeggieLand game board on the table or hold smaller game board.

SAY: *“Today, we’re going to play a game. Instead of Candy Land, this is VeggieLand. In this game, you get to decide which game strategies work—or don’t work—to get your child to VeggieLand, the place where kids enjoy veggies and parents feel successful. I’m going to share four strategies—game plans—that parents use to try to get their kids to eat veggies. Let me know if you feel each game plan will be successful or not.”*

Game Plan #1 • Rewards

“The first game plan is called ‘Rewards.’ You promise your child some sweet treat as a reward for eating their veggies. Good or bad game plan?”

Listen to parental comments on this game plan.

SAY: *"Your child's desire for the 'reward' increases the value of the sweet treat and makes veggies the bad guy. That often leads to a greater dislike of veggies and keeps kids out of VeggieLand. It also sets kids up for a lifetime of rewarding themselves with food."*

Summarize: *"So, rewarding a child for eating veggies by offering another food is not a plan that leads them to VeggieLand."*

Game Plan #2 • Modeling

"Game Plan #2 is called 'Modeling.' Parents eat and enjoy veggies with children at meals and snacks. Good or bad game plan?"

[Listen to parental comments on this game plan.](#)

EXPLAIN: *"Research tells us that parents have the biggest influence in their child's life when the child is very young, so setting a good example is a smart plan for getting your child to VeggieLand. Children are more likely to try unfamiliar foods if they see someone else eating them, especially a parent. Children are more likely to try veggies if parents take a bite of their children's veggies and show they enjoy it."*

Summarize: *"So, eating veggies with your child, taking a bite of your child's veggies and showing you enjoy it is a plan that leads to VeggieLand."*

Game Plan #3 • Pressure

"Game Plan #3: This involves pressuring your child to eat veggies and saying things like, 'Eat your veggies, or no story tonight.' Good plan or bad?"

[Listen to parental comments on this game plan.](#)

EXPLAIN: *"Applying pressure is not a good game plan. Pressuring children to eat is associated with picky eating. Pressuring children creates a negative, stressful eating environment, not the happy mealtime memories that parents want for their children. Children who are pressured to eat are not able to learn how to self-regulate their hunger. This can lead to overeating later in life, as they haven't learned how to listen to their own cues."*

Summarize: *"Pressuring kids to eat veggies is not a plan that leads them to VeggieLand."*

Game Plan #4: *"Our final game plan involves offering rewards, but not food rewards. Parents reward their child for trying veggies by giving them non-food items, like stickers."*

[Listen to parental comments on this game plan.](#)

EXPLAIN: *"Children often need rewards for motivation to try something new—but not food rewards. Research suggests that giving them a sticker for trying veggies is more effective at increasing veggie intake than just giving them veggies without comment, and is also more effective than praising the child for trying the veggies."*

[Share fun veggie stickers with moms to use as rewards for trying veggies.](#)

"What are other non-food rewards you could use to help your child try veggies?" Possible answers: After-dinner dance-off, read a favorite book, bath time, family walk, scavenger hunt, etc.

Summarize: *"Offering non-food rewards, like stickers or dancing, is a strategy that gets you to VeggieLand."*

ACTION PLAN

"We talked about a lot of things you can do to get your children to VeggieLand. What would you like to do first?"

Offer each participant an "I'm a great mom" sticker as they leave, reminding them that giving their child a love for veggies is the gift of a lifetime.